

BAIK + KHNEYSSER

if still ourselves, a thing to become

Curated by Joey Lico

Artists: Park Chel Ho, Francisco Donoso, Hiroyuki Hamada, Phaen Howng, Yang Jung Uk, Carmen Mardóñez, Glendalys Medina, Harold Mendez, Emily Oliveira, Claudia Paneca, and Rodrigo Valenzuela

Opening Reception: 5 – 7 pm, July 17, 2021

Exhibition Dates: July 17 – 31, 2021

1148 South Victoria Ave LA CA 90019, Los Angeles, US

BAIK+KHNEYSSER is pleased to present *if still ourselves, a thing to become*, a group exhibition at The Little City Farm LA.

if still ourselves, a thing to become borrows its title from a poem by Canisia Lubrin and points towards how landscape unfolds its own movement in time and space from a central point of origin, and folds back on itself to disclose utopian fantasies of the perfected imperial prospect.

Exhibiting the work of eleven artists, this exhibition calls attention to the ways that both identity and landscape have been filtered through the eyes, lenses, and brushes of colonial interests—a landscape that has been imagined and represented so much that, as WJT Mitchell has expressed, “it operates as the dreamwork of imperialism.” Each work in this exhibition contends to seeing diasporically and manifests the haunted and inherited relationship that many of us have to both the landscape and its representations.

Artists Park Chel Ho and Claudia Paneca examine the way landscape circulates as a medium of exchange. Their works push against the picturesque European tradition with intimate abstractions based on personal experiences within nature. They bring to question the ambiguity of the word “landscape” as denoting a place—perhaps knowing that the appreciation of natural beauty and the painting of landscape is a historically unique phenomenon, which is both fabricated and often veils the violence within pastoral frameworks.



Hiroyuki Hamada, #89, 2020, Painted resin and wood, 48 x 20.5 x 27 inches

Phaan Howng, Harold Mendez and Rodrigo Valenzuela point towards landscape as a site of visual appropriation. Whether “nature” is put there by a physical transformation of a place via gardening, as Howng explores with her snake plant series; or by architecture, as implicated in Valenzuela’s Hedonic Reversal photographs; or found in a place formed “by nature,” as with Mendez’s obsidian sculpture—they shine a light on the dark side of landscape that is not merely mythic, but a moral, ideological, and political darkness that covers itself with innocent idealism. Picking up from John Barrell’s 1980 observation that “a working country is hardly ever a landscape,” this exhibition showcases works that reveal the way laborers are kept hidden from the Westernized landscape in order to keep their work from spoiling the philosophical contemplation of “natural beauty.”

While a majority of works in this exhibition dually point to this invisible labor, several artists further investigate landscape as a focus for the formation of identity. Francisco Donoso, Carmen Mardónez, Emily Oliveira, Glendalys Medina, Hiroyuki Hamada and Yang Jung Uk are all acknowledging that, regardless of the frame they’ve set before us, we are not all standing on the same ground—that there is no universal, unproblematic “we” with which to observe. Hamada eloquently states about his own work “I see art as having connections to a larger framework of the universe beyond our immediate social formations.” And whether these artworks hold the viewer: behind fences (Donoso); an invented language (Medina); poetic formations of material (Hamada); narration (Jang Uk); unlive and mythic futures (Oliveira); or the politics of domestic objects (Mardónez), they join the other artists in suspending us in the periphery of the “American Landscape” each activating their own diasporic territories.

for press inquiries reach out to:

baik@baikart.com | baikkhneysser.com | baikart.com