

ON GOING HOME
CURATED BY DEBRA SCACCO



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ON GOING HOME

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Charlie James Gallery is delighted to present *On Going Home*, a group exhibition curated by Debra Scacco, featuring works by Tanya Aguiñiga, Carmen Argote, Shagha Ariannia, Regina Mamou, and Alexis Zoto.

On Going Home is a study of the intertwined relationship of origin, memory and place. In the essay by the same name, Joan Didion reflects on “the emotional charges between me and the place that I came from”. These places are imbedded in our psyche, memory, and identity. These places shape our ideals and perceptions; they form the eyes that see the world around us. Our relationship with the very concept of this place is multi-layered: constructed over time through the lens of experience and circumstance. *On Going Home* explores our relationship with the truths of our past, and the ways we process, interpret and present these truths in the context of our current day self.

Bringing together a group of multi-cultural artists now resident in Los Angeles, works in *On Going Home* examine personal and cultural heritage; and the unique, tertiary culture born from experience in these multiple worlds.

Carmen Argote’s work discusses the nuance of class structure through architecture and inhabited space. Her work in *On Going Home* examines architecture, ritual and the embodied space; raising questions of cultural statements conveyed through domestic systems of display. In the work, coffee makers are carefully placed on a dressed one-way staircase, inviting the viewer to become a ritual participant. A self-portrait of sorts, the scale of the staircase mirrors the scale of the artist’s body. Exquisitely crafted garments are tailored specifically for this displaced architecture. As one might dress a wedding chair, Argote cloaks the architectural form: a means to imprint cultural heritage and immigrant identity on the fabric of the spaces in which we live.

Having spent her childhood traversing the Mexican / American border, works by Tanya Aguiñiga are rooted in conversations of heritage and tradition in relation to our contemporary experience of place. Aguiñiga’s *Cradle* works

are exquisitely crafted open work baskets: a traditional medium with a perceived relation to the feminine. Countering this is Aguiñiga’s *Structures of Oppression*. Simultaneously weighted and weightless, the work calls to question perceptions of masculinity. The works in conversation interrogate societal gender perceptions; and how these may imprint our personal experience of place.

In *Two Americas Away*, Shagha Ariannia raises questions of time and distance. The video is taken from a security system installed in the home of the artist’s grandparents in Shahrood, Iran. The cameras, installed by her Los-Angeles-based parents to look after aging loved ones from afar, enable Ariannia’s family to be present while absent. Yet the nature of surveillance footage and location in war-time Iran leads us to a sense of anticipation, and the ultimate question: how, from the distance of another country, can we protect those we love? In Ariannia’s audio work *Our Future is The Approaching Past*, we hear the artist learning to speak English as a young child, interspersed with Iranian revolutionary songs. The family cassette tape was recorded and re-recorded from 1978 to 1993: conveying revolution one moment, a mother’s love the next.

Regina Mamou’s interest in political ideology is rooted in her Iraqi father’s history. As a former priest, the artist’s father left the clergy, and Iraq, for fear of persecution. In *An Island Is Just An Island*, Mamou explores the construct of physical boundaries and the physicality of space. With ideological utopias often referred to as islands of idealism, Mamou is creating forced utopias through material explorations; thereby highlighting the arbitrary nature of boundaries, and social constructs that exist within them.

Works on paper by Alexis Zoto are inspired by her Albanian Orthodox heritage and her experiences as a woman, artist, educator, wife and mother. Drawing from research on motifs from traditional Albanian kilims (flat woven rugs), her work discusses acculturation and feminism, often pairing stories from antiquity with family lore.

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ON GOING HOME
TANYA AGUIÑIGA



Cradle 2
Copper-coated cotton rope,
epoxy
34 x 10 x 10 inches
2015

Cradle 3
Copper-coated cotton rope,
epoxy
33 x 14 x 14 inches
2015

Cradle 1
Copper-coated cotton rope,
epoxy
32 x 15 x 17 inches
2015

ON GOING HOME
TANYA AGUIÑIGA



Structures of Oppression
Cotton rope, cotton
thread, foam, gauze, self-
drying clay, wool, nylon
and beeswax
49 x 13 x 4.5 inches
2016

Image courtesy of the
artist and Joshua White
Photography

ON GOING HOME
CARMEN ARGOTE



Staircase dress
Acrylic on muslin fabric
over cardboard and
thermoplastic, 12 coffee
makers, ground coffee,
filters
48 x 18 x 72 inches
approx.
2017

ON GOING HOME
CARMEN ARGOTE



Staircase dress (soft)
Acrylic on muslin fabric, wooden hanger
96 x 18 x 3 inches approx.
2017

ON GOING HOME
SHAGHA ARIANNIA



*Our Future is the
Approaching Past*
Cassette tape, tape
player, audio recording
(Revolutionary songs/home
recordings 1978-1993, Iran)
20 minute loop
Edition of 5
2012

ON GOING HOME
SHAGHA ARIANNIA



Two Americas Away
Security camera data archive
(single channel video)
27 minute loop
Dimensions variable
Edition of 7
2012

ON GOING HOME
REGINA MAMOU



*Untitled from the series An
Island is Just An Island (1)*
Mixed media on paper
22 inch circumference
2017

*Untitled from the series An
Island is Just An Island (2)*
Mixed media on paper
22 inch circumference
2017

*Untitled from the series An
Island is Just An Island (3)*
Mixed media on paper
22 inch circumference
2017

ON GOING HOME
ALEXIS ZOTO



Habitué
Acrylic, ink, marker, and
vinyl on found photo transfer
8.5 x 13.5 inches
2017



Ghost
Acrylic, ink, and marker on
found etching
13 x 14 inches
2017

ON GOING HOME
ALEXIS ZOTO



Heirloom Idea
Ink and acrylic on paper
8 x 13 inches
2015



Not Everything Is
Acrylic, ink, and marker on
found etching
11 x 12 inches
2016

ON GOING HOME
ALEXIS ZOTO



Help to Endure
Acrylic, ink, and marker
on found etching
10 x 11 inches
2017



Open and Closed
Acrylic, ink, marker and
vinyl on paper with found
doodles
27.5 x 31 inches
2017

ON GOING HOME
ALEXIS ZOTO



Ideal Marriage
Acrylic, ink, gesso, marker,
and vinyl on paper with found
doodles
15 x 35.5 inches
2016

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ARTIST BIOS

Tanya Aguiñiga (b. 1978) is a Los Angeles based artist/designer/craftsperson who was raised in Tijuana, Mexico. She holds an MFA in furniture design from Rhode Island School of Design and a BA from San Diego State University. In her formative years she created various collaborative installations with the Border Arts Workshop, an artists' group that engages the languages of activism and community-based public art. Her current work uses craft as a performative medium to generate dialogues about identity, culture and gender while creating community. This approach has helped Museums and non-profits in the United States and Mexico diversify their audiences by connecting marginalized communities through collaboration.

Aguiñiga is a United States Artists Target Fellow in the field of Crafts and Traditional Arts, a NALAC and Creative Capital 2016 Grant Awardee. She has been the subject of a cover article for American Craft Magazine and has been featured in PBS's Craft in America Series. She is the founder and director of AMBOS (Art Made Between Opposite Sides), an ongoing series of artist interventions and commuter collaborations that address bi-national transition and identity in the US/Mexico border regions. AMBOS seeks to create a greater sense of interconnectedness while simultaneously documenting the border.

As part of PST LA/LA, Aguiñiga's work can also be seen in The US-Mexico Border: Place, Imagination, and Possibility at the Craft and Folk Art Museum (CAFAM) (opening September 10, 2017).

Carmen Argote received her MFA from UCLA in 2007 and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2009. Argote has exhibited at the Vincent Price Museum 2013, and is currently showing work at The Denver Art Museum as part of Mi Tierra: Contemporary Artist Explore Place, The Orange County Museum of Art as part of The 2017 California Pacific Triennial: Building as Ever, Tierra, Sangre, Oro at Ballroom Marfa, and The Los Angeles County Museum of Art as part of Home: So Different, So Appealing. She was commissioned for the Metro Expo Line station at 17th/SMC station in Santa Monica.

Argote will be an Artist Lab resident artist at 18th Street Art Center in January 2018.

As part of PST LA/LA, Argote's work can also be seen in proyectosLA with Instituto de Visión. Related to her work in On Going Home is Pyramids, on view at Panel LA.

Shagha Ariannia (b. 1984, Tehran) is an interdisciplinary visual artist whose work has been exhibited at University of California Irvine, 18th Street Art Center, Kchung TV as part of Made in LA 2014, Commonwealth and Council, Art Platform, Co/lab, PØST and the Torrance Art Museum in Los Angeles and Galerie der Hochschule in Braunschweig, Germany. Ariannia holds a MFA from CalArts and a BA from the University of California, Irvine. She is a 2016 recipient for the California Community Foundation Fellowship for Visual Artists and 2017 recipient of Rema Hort Mann Artist Community Engagement Grant foundation.

Regina Mamou (b. 1983) holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design, and was a Fulbright fellow to Jordan. Mamou grew up with the awareness of the implications of political ideology intertwined with religion. Mamou's mother, who is Polish-American, and Mamou's father, who is a Christian-Chaldean from Iraq, raised her multiculturally. This need to understand cultural systems has been the focus of her work since she started investigating utopias throughout the US. Mamou's travels have allowed her to not only examine the implications of social utopias but also the struggle to create community through a dystopian future.

Alexis Zoto's work is inspired by her Albanian Orthodox heritage and her experiences as a woman, artist, educator, wife, and mother. Her art deals with themes of acculturation and feminism. Often she pairs stories from antiquity with family lore to create works that manifest themselves as contemporary baroque assemblages or works on paper. Her most recent work draws from research on motifs from traditional Albanian kilts (flat woven rugs).

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ARTIST BIOS

Zoto's site specific installations have been exhibited widely including at the Venice Biennale (Italy) and Tom Bradley International Terminal at the Los Angeles International Airport. She is a 2017-2018 recipient of the Zumberge Innovation Grant to continue her research on kilims in Albania next spring. This year the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs named her a 'Cultural Trailblazer'. Alexis Zoto is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Southern California Gayle Garner Roski School of Art and Design.

About the curator

Debra Scacco (b. 1976, New York) is an interdisciplinary artist creating work about the relationship between time, memory and place. She has exhibited extensively, including solo exhibitions at Klowden Mann (Los Angeles) and Marine Contemporary (Los Angeles), and group exhibitions at Royal Academy of Arts (London), Charlie James Gallery (Los Angeles), Patrick Heide Contemporary (London), and Royale Projects (Palm Desert). Scacco's work has been written about and featured in the Los Angeles Times, Huffington Post, and Art in America. Public collections and commissions include Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Hammer Museum, and Los Angeles State Historic Park. In 2012, Scacco was the first Artist-in-Residence at the Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island Museum. Scacco lives and works in Los Angeles.