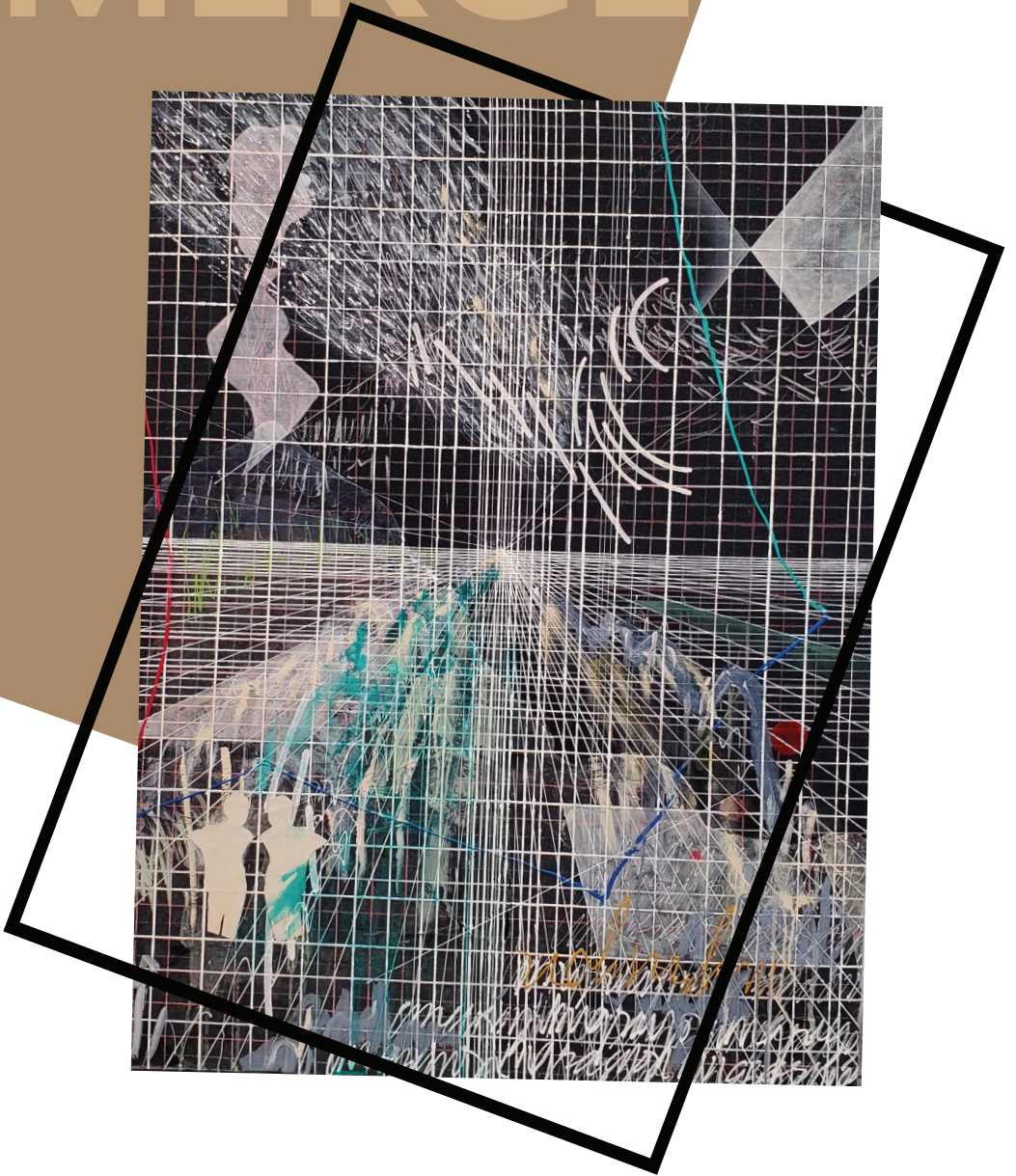


EMERGE



Art on Demand 6.4

GLORIA WONG & KARL M. HIPOL

ART ON DEMAND 6.4

Now more than ever, as the world shelters in place due to a global pandemic, people are spending increasing amounts of time at home, reflecting on new depths within and exploring with new eyes the common elements of our everyday surroundings. Through an exploration of these familiar environments, we can perhaps discern elements of the self and consider how they relate to family traditions and heritage.

Such explorations are evident in the work on display in *Art on Demand 6.4*, in which photographer Gloria Wong and painter Karl M. Hipol each explore their personal experiences navigating a hyphenated identity, through two very different mediums. Wong's intimate, domestic photographs

Born and raised in the Philippines, Karl M. Hipol moved with his family to Vancouver in 2015. With a background in architecture, Hipol incorporates elements of architectural drawing into his work, and integrates that with painting to create a new artistic path that reflects his current identity. Hipol's paintings use abstraction to situate the viewer in an unfamiliar setting, while also using elements of symbolism to reference the artist's lived experiences. Using the grid markings common to architectural drawings, he builds a blueprint of material to document and convey his immigration journey.

Hipol makes marks on stretched denim, which he describes as a reference to the trope of the "Canadian Tuxedo." This material acts as a metaphor for the environment in which the artist's lived experiences of migration are happening: on Canadian soil. He then pastes onto this ground a series of "acrylic skins"

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are a timely reminder of how much the viewer's relationship with the home has been recalibrated by the pandemic, but they also articulate a balance struck between the family stories hinted at in the images and the artist's own lived experiences. Similarly, Hipol's paintings create visual maps that chart the journey of those experiences, and how they shape the development of identity. Both artists explore the experience of holding onto a particular family culture while growing up in the thick of another.

made of layers of acrylic paint, which the artist describes as a symbol of the body being cut out of its surroundings and pasted somewhere new. The work *Mirroring Silhouette* features two of these forms, referencing the artist's relationship with his brother and the navigation of new shared experiences of relocating among new peers at a young age. These stand-ins for the human figure create the landscape in which Hipol's visual memoir is built.

Photographer Gloria Wong explores the complexities of her Asian-Canadian hyphenated identity, the domestic space, and Asian diaspora in her work. Wong's parents immigrated to Canada from Hong Kong, and in her series *sik teng mm sik gong* ("pardon my Chinese") Wong articulates the experience of understanding a language closely tied to her family history but not being able to speak it. The gentle nuances of her portraiture portray not only family members but also familiar, seemingly mundane objects. These large format photographs strike a balance between the ever-present history of her family and the integration of Canadian culture as a result of migration.

In the photograph *Socks* from this series, the artist presents a pair of worn and distressed nylon socks hung limply out to dry. The work is inspired by the intentionality and care displayed by the artist's grandmother, who took pains to conserve and reuse items usually considered to be single-use. A gesture of care is similarly displayed in the image *Hold*, in which the weathered hand of Wong's grandmother holds onto the arm of her daughter (the artist's mother). This grasp mirrors but flips the supportive grip Wong's family employs when assisting her grandmother down the stairs, in order to demonstrate the cross-generational care that characterizes the family, and the mutual sharing of support and teachings that each generation has to offer.

Both Wong and Hipol create visual mappings of their experiences of migration, and they explore notions of identity that are formed by a family history that exists a world away. The viewer is given an intimate view of these worlds, and is prompted to consider what is familiar to themselves, and how their own personal narrative is shaped by a combination of family history and lived experience. Their work is particularly relevant given the current circumstances in which collectively, as a society, we are being called upon to constantly adapt to new environments, and to reconsider our notions of home and shelter. They speak to a universal desire to build a fulfilling life and sense of place in an environment, using art to create a personal archive of lived experiences in order to map a visual memoir.

Karl Mata Hipol's artistic practice is primarily rooted in drawing and painting. Influenced by his personal narrative of immigration, Hipol combines his artistic and architectural background to create his gestural, perspectival abstract *blueprint paintings*. Currently, Hipol is completing his BA in Fine Arts, with a major in Visual Art and a minor in Curatorial Practices, at Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

Gloria Wong is an emerging visual artist and curator based on the unceded territories of the Katzie, Semiahmoo, and Kwantlen Nations (Surrey). Her practice primarily uses photography to explore the complexities and nuances of East Asian diasporic identities and the ways they are shaped by different relationships. She holds a BFA in Photography from Emily Carr University of Art + Design.



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Image credits: Cover: Karl M. Hipol, *Mirroring Silhouette*, 2019, acrylic, marker, pencil, pen, correction fluid, canvas collage on denim, 48 x 36 in. Inside: Gloria Wong, *Hold*, 2019, archival inkjet print, 24 x 20 in. Images courtesy of the artists.

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