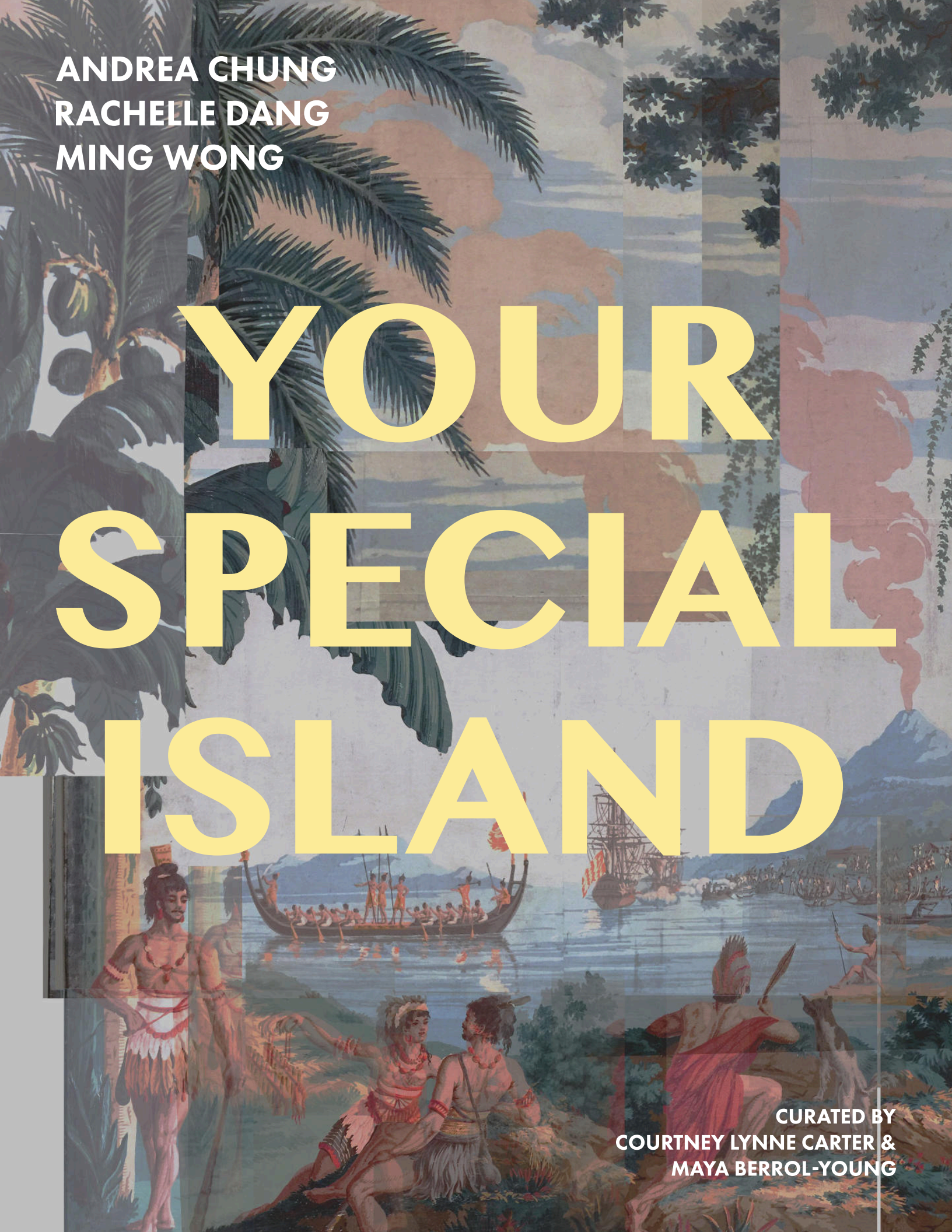




ANDREA CHUNG
RACHELLE DANG
MING WONG

YOUR SPECIAL ISLAND

CURATED BY
COURTNEY LYNNE CARTER &
MAYA BERROL-YOUNG

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February 7 — March 8, 2019
Lower Create Space 006
VCAM (Visual Culture, Arts, and Media)
Haverford College

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“From what I have said of the Natives of New-Holland they may appear to some to be the most wretched people upon Earth, but in reality they are far more happier than we Europeans; being wholly unacquainted not only with the superfluous but the necessary Conveniences so much sought after in Europe, they are happy in not knowing the use of them. They live in a Tranquillity which is not disturb’d by the Inequality of Condition: The Earth and sea of their own accord furnishes them with all things necessary for life, they covet not Magnificent Houses, Household-stuff, they live in a warm and fine Climate and enjoy a very wholesome Air.”

— James Cook, Log Book of James Cook, 1770¹

“Bali Hai mean I am your special island. Mean here I am. Bali Hai your special island, Lieutenant, I know. You listen, you hear island call to you. Listen. You no hear something?”

— Bloody Mary, South Pacific, 1949²

“Sandals Royal Caribbean is renowned for its refinements and British traditions of a bygone era, such as high tea, croquet and continental breakfast in bed. Surrounded by manicured gardens and roaming peacocks, this elegant resort features innovative suites including Swim-up Crystal Lagoon Suites and the highly anticipated Over-the-water Suites. Just offshore, Sandals' own exotic private island offers a romantic retreat featuring a pool with a swim-up bar, a secluded private beach and an authentic Thai restaurant.”

— Sandals Royal Caribbean Jamaica Brochure, 2019³

YOUR SPECIAL ISLAND

Courtney Lynne Carter

Maya Berrol-Young

The 'tropical island' has persisted in popular imagination and global culture as a place of escape. Palm trees, beautiful beaches, and fresh coconuts are some of the images that represent 'the tropical island.' Across diverse geographies and histories, there is an idea of what tropical islands promise—utopia, primitivity, romance, adventure, and an escape from 'the rest of the world'—that flattens culture and packages place to form 'the tropical imaginary.' The construction of this fantasy and its tropes can be traced back to periods of settler colonialism, military occupation, and other imperial conquests, during which empires used visual media and knowledge production as tools to mediate and effectively mask their own violent expeditions. These imperial impulses manifest in residual forms today, namely Western-oriented tourism, militourism, and in global popular culture, and continue to impact the realities of many colonial and post-colonial tropical sites. Sourcing materials from resort advertisements, colonial wallpaper, and Hollywood film, artists Andrea Chung, Rachelle Dang, and Ming Wong defamiliarize visions of the tropics to redirect attention onto their imperial construction.

Travel to the Caribbean, to Pacific Islands, or to Southeast Asia, among other tropical island locations, is often portrayed as a getaway in both geographic location and in temporality, and comes with the promise of a trip to another world, to a place frozen in time, or to an ahistorical landscape. Like much of the Global South, the tropics have long represented a series of paradoxes: intriguing and disgusting; erotic and rotten; exotic and abject. To these contradictions, the Western market offers a solution: the intervention of a sanitary, hygienic Western resort where visitors can take pleasure in the 'pure, untouched' land without risking an encounter with the imagined danger of its people and its history. The selective presence and marked absence of the post-colonial subject in these artists' work is a reaction to such paradoxical expectations. These artists deconstruct and reconstruct figuration and landscape to make visible the inherent multiplicities of the 'tropical imaginary.' Collage, performance, and appropriation of historical material are strategies adopted by the artists to reveal this artifice.

To avoid the easy collapse of these artists' diverse geographies and imperial histories under the categorical weight of 'the tropics,' we intentionally foreground the artists' disorienting and discursive work. However, it is also important to note the imperial histories that connect these diverse tropical sites, which contributed to their thematic conflation in the Western imagination. The historical trajectory of the 'tropical imaginary' comes out of the intra-imperial trade of resources and people between tropical sites across the world, which created what Ming Wong describes of populations in the South Pacific, "the colonial swamp of migrants," from which the characterization of local and indigenous populations is "concocted."⁴ All three artists note the historical, as well as thematic, connections between seemingly disparate post-colonial tropical sites. For example, Rachelle Dang and Wong both address the migration and conflation of Pacific Island peoples. Andrea Chung and Dang both treat the systematic trade routes between Caribbean and Pacific Islands as subjects of inquiry in their work: in her breadfruit sculptures featured in this exhibition, Dang traces imperial botanical histories; and in Chung's broader practice, she traces enslaved or otherwise forced migratory patterns across Caribbean, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. In Wong's practice more broadly, he explores a range of identities across Southeast Asian and South Pacific island cultures. The flattening of these complex global relationships into a 'tropical imaginary' evidences the imperial history that constructed it.

Ceramic sculptures of breadfruits in varying states of ripeness and decay lie clustered on the ground in Rachelle Dang's installation titled *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique*, and are also present in the Dang's panoramic wallpaper behind them, the imagery sourced from an early nineteenth century (1804–5) French panoramic wallpaper of the same title. The breadfruit was a key botanical product from many tropical places, including South Pacific Islands, Caribbean Islands, and Hawai'i, and was often a symbol used in European depictions of the tropics, like the source material for Dang's wallpaper. During an expedition to Tahiti in 1769, Captain James Cook—whose accounts of Pa-

cific Islands informed the wallpaper's design—recognized breadfruit as a source for cheap and nutritious food for slaves laboring on sugar plantations in the British West Indies. A residue of colonialism, the breadfruit's presence in contemporary local cuisines evidences trans-tropical colonization, enslavement, and exploitation.

The ceramic breadfruits' textured surfaces—what Dang calls their “skin”—and their simultaneously intriguing and repulsing affect convey corporeal relationships between land and body. Cast from thirteen unique breadfruits and molded by hand from clay, these sculptures are biological entities and their arrangement suggests a sensual topology. These objects are beautiful and disturbing, as the natural process of decay translates into the clay forms; the rotting breadfruits cave inward, piercing their “skin.” The body becomes botanical, and exploitable all the same. The pairing of breadfruits with the wallpaper suggests a curiously immersive and indexical experience; we are supposed to see reference between our world and the world of the wallpaper—not to make the wallpaper less artificial in its colonial construction, but to give the artifice consequence. The nineteenth century wallpaper was designed by artist Jean-Gabriel Charvet, who drew inspiration from accounts of Pacific islands travels by Captain James Cook and other late eighteenth century French and British explorers. The mythical scene, what Dang calls a “Pacific Eden,” depicts island peoples dancing, resting, and socializing in distinctive dress, indicating a number of populations who never cohabitated in reality. Dang's reconstruction of this image evidences the collaging of peoples and places in the original. The complete wallpaper was first exhibited in Paris at the Exposition des Produits de l'Industrie in 1806, and stretched 35 feet long by nine feet tall. Its spatial organization and immersive intent, reproduced in Dang's installation, is like a theatrical stage, in which one watches fantastical performance play out, requiring a suspension of disbelief.







Some panels of the original panoramic wallpaper hang in the European Painting gallery at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. On a visit in 2011, Dang photographed this work with her iPhone and digitally pieced together the image fragments to make her work of the same title. In her reconstruction, she leans into the limitations of the iPhone—its resolution, pixelation, and incongruous angled perspectives—as metaphoric of the original wallpaper’s artificial, collaged construction. In the visual language of deconstruction and collage, Dang further distorts these tropical imaginaries using varying levels of discoloration, saturation, overlap, and absence. Hallucinatory and dizzying, this new panoramic scene contains ghostly actors, dancing legs without bodies, severed muscles caught tense in anticipation, and smoke rising out of thin air, lost without its volcanic source. This smoke, separated from its volcano, rises like a ghost without origin, context, history—a curious metaphor for the disconnect between reality and imperial construction. This lost citation illustrates what Dang already knew about the original wallpaper: collage is an imperial tool, and in this case the ‘tropical island’ is the stage and object of its impulse. She has remade this particular wallpaper several times, and in her site-specific iteration for this exhibition, she has even further distorted and fragmented the image, subverting the dominating gaze with which the original wallpaper was created.

In this installation of *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique*, Dang places a botanical shipping carrier in front of the wallpaper. Drawn from the design of eighteenth century breadfruit shipping containers, the carrier introduces a somber heaviness to the already distorted scene. Shipping containers like these were used to transport breadfruit saplings from Tahiti back to England to be studied and grown in other colonized settlements as an economically viable food source for slave labor, as well as for displaying these exotic goods in world fairs. This object is an example of the technology that enabled both the mass transportation of stolen goods and the international expositions that first commodified tropical goods for public display. The cage-like object protrudes into the gallery space, demanding engagement from the viewer. The scale of the object and its orientation evoke a relationship between object and viewer that immediately makes the viewer imagine themselves inside the carrier. The literal reading of human encagement implicates not only the transport of breadfruits across empire, but also the intra-imperial trade of enslaved human beings between continents. The botanical carrier sits heavy as a reminder of the weighted histories of undeniable imperial violence on tropical sites

and the people who inhabit them. Though all of Dang’s work is rich with layered meaning and biting criticism, there remains a beauty in these objects, despite their intention to critique the fantasies that consume tropical beauty. The carrier brings a “sharp edge”⁵ to Dang’s work that gives consequence to beauty.

There is a long history of Western, imperial powers authoring the narratives about colonial and post-colonial places. In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt discusses how travel writing centered the British Empire, and figured imperial destinations as ‘the rest of the world.’ Travel writing was an ideological tool used to construct the notion of empire for European audiences.⁶ Colonies also functioned as botanical research centers, where exotic plants were experimented on and knowledge of their practical and economic value was stolen from local peoples to build Western conceptions about ‘foreign,’ colonized places. Though Western colonial powers claimed intellectual ownership over colonial sites with a seemingly objective lens—categorizing and taxonomizing those sites, peoples, and resources—it is clear that this perspective was not empirical, but imperial. In that sense, the construction of a ‘New World’ narrative—in literature and academia—is deeply entrenched with economic profit and the exploitation of land and people. A residue of these imperial histories is the emergence of ‘the tropics’ as an overarching category that flattens ethnicities, languages, cultures, histories, and politics into a singular vision of an ‘Other.’ The imperial desire to make tropical places legible and knowable continues in the reduction of island life to decoration, entertainment, and vacation destination.

Travel, whether with imperial intention or not, engenders moments of encounter with people and places that are different from one’s own. That encounter involves a multiplicity of gazes which make meaning through comparison and contrast. That act of looking is political and inherently involves recognition and misrecognition. Tourism industries, while promising a ‘getaway’ from the ‘real’ world, reveal the systemic conditions of their possibility in the tourist’s gaze; these industries are symptomatic of global imperial hierarchies in which Western, primarily white powers have used tropical nations for their economic and political gain. In *Securing Paradise: Tourism and Militarism in Hawai’i and the Philippines*, Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez elaborates that the utopian vision of the tropics isn’t an innocent or tangential perspective, but an imperially constructed idea used to exploit: “Paradise is not a generic or static term—it specifically refers to an idea of passivity and penetrability engendered by imperialism as an alibi for

domination.”⁷ Contemporary tourist industries continue to commodify place and landscape in order to sell tropical sites as sights—spectacular visions absented of history, violence, context, and the conditions of economic dependability. The vision of the tropics as paradise overwrites violent histories of imperial conquest, asserting in its place a vision of utopia for Western political gain. It is this separation of people and their history from the landscape that delineates and politicizes claims of ‘authenticity.’

Many tropical sites that are now major tourist destinations, like Hawai‘i, became that way because of military occupation—different than settler colonialism but a related form of imperial occupation. Teresia K. Teaiwa defines her own term ‘militourism’ as a “phenomenon by which military or paramilitary force ensures the smooth running of a tourist industry, and that same tourist industry masks the military force behind it.”⁸ Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez, too, argues that, “The roots and routes of the U.S. military in these sites [Hawai‘i and the Philippines, specifically] are foundational to tourist itineraries and imaginations”⁹; and not only that, but that the intertwined militourism system is driven by “structuring ideas and practices of mobility and consumption” that mirror and are products of imperialist pursuits. The paths that were forged by settler colonialism are the same traced by military occupation, and these same routes make certain sites accessible for touristic consumption today.

These tropical military sites often were rest stops and refueling stations, where contact between local and foreign peoples primarily occurred in entertainment industries. R&R (Rest and Recuperation, or Rest and Recreation) businesses were established to serve military personnel. The legacy of these Western-catered industries is present today in the tourist industries in these sites. Hospitality and service industries figure the local in service to the foreign, a relationship historically linked to slavery, as Andrea Chung observes: “...When slavery was abolished and this free labor was no longer available to these plantation owners, they had to find a viable way to survive. It automatically went from one service economy to another. They turned to tourism.”¹⁰ Many of these R&R businesses catered to the sexual desires of off-duty servicemen, in which the terms ‘hospitality’ and ‘entertainment’ become euphemistic. The expectation for local women to be simple, docile, hospitable, and sexually available has become part of the image of ‘the tropics.’ Tropical landscape itself is often sexualized, as a site to dominate, control, and conquest. Adria L. Imada, in *Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the U.S. Empire*, discusses the gendered perception of Hawai‘i specifically, and the operation of a noncorporeal notion of ‘hospitality’ to excuse imperial violence: “While aloha is a commodified product and service—the hospitality and love of Hawai‘ian people packaged and sold by a multinational, state-sponsored tourist industry—it is a nevertheless insistently referred to as something elusive and noncorporeal: a ‘spirit,’ a ‘warmth,’ an ‘unseen force’.”¹¹ Hospitality industries, both sexual and not, produce the expectation that people in service positions remain quietly present when needed, and disappear when in the way. Labor is made invisible and refigured as apparitions of the land itself; they are an “unseen force.”

World War II R&R is the setting of *South Pacific* by Rodgers and Hammerstein, from which Ming Wong sources the signature score “Bali Ha‘i” as the subject of his work, titled *Bloody Marys* — *Song of the South Seas*. Wong layers the 1958 film (based on the 1949 musical), his own performance, and sixteen amateur and high school musical renditions of “Bali Ha‘i,” found on the internet. Cross-dressing as the character of Bloody Mary, the Tonkinese (northern Vietnamese) character who sings this song and the titular character of his work, Wong includes himself in a history of ethnically ‘Other’ actors who have filled that role. Bloody Mary herself is an amalgamation of ethnicities imagined as ‘tropical,’ irrespective of geography or culture—what Wong calls a “mesh of Marys.”¹² The accompanying artist’s archive of ephemeral materials, including cinema posters, annotated music scores, photographs, and magazine excerpts, provides more information about the African American actresses Juanita Hall and Muriel Smith who were the first to embody Bloody Mary on stage—in the 1958 film and at Theatre Royal, Drury Lane in 1951, respectively. In splicing and collaging these iterations of Bloody Mary, Wong deconstructs the paradisiac, imperial visions of tropical landscapes and people as presented in film media.

In *South Pacific*, Bloody Mary sells tropical kitsch trinkets to the R&R soldiers, and after meeting Lieutenant Joseph Cable, hatches a plan to marry him to her daughter, who lives on Bali Ha‘i. Cue “Bali Ha‘i,” Bloody Mary’s “siren song.”¹³ In the song, Bloody Mary anthropomorphizes the mystical island that sits on the horizon, just out of the soldiers’ reach. Seemingly both stereotypical and performative, Bloody Mary delivers these lyrics, from which we draw our exhibition title:

Bali ha‘i may call you,
Any night, any day,
In your heart you’ll hear it call you,
“Come away, come away”

Bali ha‘i will whisper,
On the wind of the sea,
“Here am I your special island”
“Come to me, come to me.”¹⁴

In Wong’s video, he inserts himself into the utopian island paradise setting of the film. The video begins with just Juanita Hall and Wong, but quickly evolves into a dizzying cacophony of Bloody Marys acting and singing the same song. The sourced materials show the Bloody Marys from different viewing positions—head on, at an angle to a stage, close up, at a distance, in high resolution, in low resolution, and with different coloration. Different versions of the same song performed in different locations, with different viewing positions, and with different actors demand that the viewer adjust their sense of direction and their



Ming Wong, *Bloody Marys - Song of the South Seas*, installation view at A god, a beast & a line, Para Site, Hong Kong, 2018. Courtesy of the artist, carlier/gebauer (Berlin) and Vitamin Creative Space (Guangzhou).

own subjectivity. The constant refiguring of subject—who is Bloody Mary, where is she on the screen, in which direction is she looking, who is singing—disorients the viewer's experience of harmony presented in the original movie. Instead, the viewer becomes nauseated by trying to keep up with the moving image, moving from rapt attention and curiosity to desensitized entrancement. The speed at which these video clips change blurs their sources and performs a similar action as casting Bloody Mary as a non-descript, ethnic "Other". Just when you feel most lost, Wong's face

reappears, a hallucinatory figure—narrator, interpreter, ventriloquist—to anchor the collaged video and to seduce the viewer back into the world of Bali Ha'i. Disrupted and disjointed, but remaining a repetitive presence, Wong's expressive face and hands build and break affect through intense expression and its withdrawal. Wong offers the viewer occasional moments of visual respite, even as he complicates the paradisiac vision through his performance.



Ming Wong, Bloody Marys - Song of the South Seas, detail, 2018. Courtesy of the artist, carlier/gebauer (Berlin) and Vitamin Creative Space (Guangzhou).





"Here Sandals has created our newest resort
an ultra-luxurious testament to Jamaica's storied past,
as well as a stunning tribute to the glories of Europe."

Wong's video plays "Bali Ha'i" twice. At the end of the first iteration of the song, Wong's backdrop, which is a green screen playing the same background of the 1958 movie, provides a moment of picturesque calm before the second iteration, the waves gently moving up and down the shoreline. In the second iteration, cropped clips have a more vertical orientation, overlapping Bloody Marys' faces and bodies more clearly than the first. Wong uses collage as a strategy to cross temporal and geographical versions of this song to enter into the site of encounter between local woman and foreign military, and in doing so makes visible the racial and gendered amalgamations that construct the mystery and paradise of the tropical fantasy. Bloody Mary is, according to Wong, "a salty, spicy pick-me-up, but no cure for a colonial hangover." Collage becomes a site to explore post-colonial subjectivity and performativity in and of itself. Imperialism demands of the 'tropics' a specific vision, and to fulfill that vision is an act of performance; thus the 'tropical imaginary' is performative. Collage is not simply a mode of deconstruction for Wong, but of reconstruction—of building a stage in order to join an ongoing performance, perhaps not in search of a cure, but in search of "a new 'special island' for the 21st century, an island of inclusion and alterity and new subjectivity on the horizon, and a tribute to those individuals who have broken the ground ahead of us." The last character left in the scene is the Lieutenant from the 1958 film, who gazes at Bali Ha'i with curiosity and wonder. He then is spliced out, leaving only the viewer to gaze at the same vision of Bali Ha'i, far off in the distance.

Bloody Mary was known among the soldiers first and foremost as the local woman who sold kitsch souvenirs—"fo' dolla" grass skirts. Sometimes seen simply as kitsch, souvenirs are part of the material culture of tourism; purchased or taken from their original site by a traveler, their circulation as mementos and as gifts reaches far beyond that initial encounter. The commercialization of post-colonial sites in the form of souvenirs marks culture as commodity and evidences histories of empire. In *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, Lisa Lowe describes the material evidences of British Imperialism in William Makepeace Thackeray's novel *Vanity Fair* (1847–48). "The novel...portrays the 'intimacy' of the bourgeois home in relation to the occluded 'intimacies' of slavery, colonialism, and the imperial trade in goods and people that constituted an unacknowledged social formation of the era."¹⁵ She affirms the necessary embeddedness of imperial, colonial labor with the eclectic composition of British domestic lifestyle. Souvenirs act as vessels of memory, material evidence of travel, and intimate keepsakes; however, they can often mask their origin sites' histories as well as the means of their production, for the benefit of appealing to tourists, for whom complex and violent histories are not marketable. In more

recent imperial pursuits, Imada notes that the circulation of Hawai'ian cultural objects and practices in the continental United States in the late nineteenth century was used to establish a positive perception of U.S. imperial occupation. Imada describes this phenomenon as an "imagined intimacy"—"a powerful fantasy that enabled Americans to possess their colony physically and symbolically."¹⁶ Lowe and Imada both critique material 'intimacy' as a tool of empire, by masking violent histories with an imagined personal connection. The souvenir and its circulation play a role in commodifying a place for economic profit—particularly scenes of tropical, natural beauty—rendering invisible the conditions of imperialism that make that scene and the tourist's access to that scene possible.

Today, photographs are common souvenirs from travel, and their digital circulation takes the place formerly occupied by postcards or travel writing in dictating the vision of tropical sites. Though social media platforms, simultaneously public and 'intimate' sites, democratize who can access and share images, these platforms replicate the erasure of site specificity and violent history that enable the tourist gaze. As 'residual' evidence of empire,¹⁷ tourist photographs frame certain views of tropical landscape and its populations, and the limitations of framing, cropping, and circulation of these images often decontextualize images from their sites. In her six-piece series *Thongs: Experience the Luxury Included*, Andrea Chung recontextualizes the tourist gaze on Caribbean sites by layering three elements on white paper: the text and typography from *Caribbean Travel + Life* magazine; embossed silhouettes of slaves from archival photographs taken from various collections including the National Archives in Jamaica and the Schomburg Center for Research and Black Culture; and the original black and white cut-out images of the products and props of their labor. This series draws direct connection between slave labor under colonial rule and hospitality service industries that support tourism in the Caribbean today. Like in some of her other work, Chung cuts out, collages, or otherwise marks black and brown bodies postured in positions of servitude. However, in this series she chooses not to appropriate the brightly colored Caribbean resort advertisement images; instead, she takes the text and pairs it with historical slave figures. Without providing the specific imagery to which the advertisement text refers, Chung makes the viewer recognize their own assumed visions of the tropics, and makes the imperial history of those assumptions the textual reference. The intentional lack of colorful resort imagery centers the bodies and labor that are so often made subservient or invisible in those advertisements. Chung's conviction not to use the colorful advertisement images stands out among the other works in this exhibition, as well: using similar collage practice, she achieves a different aesthetic.

Andrea Chung, "Here Sandals has created our newest resort and ultra-luxurious testament to Jamaica's storied past, as well as a stunning tribute to the glories of Europe," from *Thongs: Experience the Luxury Included* series, 2010. Courtesy of the artist.



The embossed, silhouetted bodies, absent of corporeal specificities, draw attention to the body language, the shapes, and the postures of subservience. These ghostly forms make tactile the space that bodies take up in their simultaneous presence and absence. Andrea Chung comments on the similarities between figurative postures of slave and tourism service labor: "The people who are working at hotels aren't laying in fields, but they're still sort of standing in subservient positions of bending down. I feel like that hasn't changed. It's pretty much the same type of imagery from the past going into the present." The products and props of these figures' labor are not embossed, but are cut-out from the original black and white photographs. These objects—bananas, baskets, and breadfruits—weightlessly float on the stark white background. Black and white photography connotes historical imagery, and has a legacy in ethnography and anthropology of 'othering' subjects of inquiry temporally as well as geographically. The embossed figures carrying these historical objects bring these images into the 'here and now,' contemporizing the urgency of the images.

Chung captions these images with contemporary resort advertisement text. The text on each of the six works, in its original context, was marketed to tourists, but in its recontextualization implicates the viewer in the systemic exploitation that makes possible contemporary tourism industries. The decoupling of the advertisement text from its images, and its re-application to histories of slavery, makes apparent the emptiness of words like "ultra-luxurious" and "UNSPOILED, UNCOMMON, UNPRETENTIOUS,"

and the weightedness of phrases like "storied past." The last piece in the series contains only the following phrase, centered on the white page: "STAY a week...or STAY a Lifetime." This piece condenses the three layers operating in the series into a concise and haunting statement: tourism industries replicate imperial impulses to occupy and consume 'foreign' sites.

Taken together, Andrea Chung, Rachelle Dang, and Ming Wong reckon with the contemporary manifestations of complex imperial histories in tropical island sites. Imperial impulses to control, categorize, and commodify take on new forms in our contemporary moment that continue to trope the tropics, particularly as tourism industries package these sites for commercial value, and in doing so, reify and reaffirm the 'tropical imaginary.' Sourcing visual materials from the Western fantasy of the 'tropical,' each artist complicates this vision to expose the violence and exploitation latent in colonial and post-colonial tropical landscapes. The 'tropical imaginary' shapes the way we perceive and understand our shared world, and evidences the imperial history that constructed it. The artists in this exhibition challenge us to think critically about the histories we inherit and question the ways those histories manifest today: What is gained by troping the 'tropics' and for whom? How are imperial histories revealed or made invisible, and for what purpose? How are post-colonial sites 'othered' across climates, geographies, and temporalities? How can art take up the visual language of imperialism to critique its legacies?

Previous spread: Andrea Chung, Thongs: Experience the Luxury Included series, installation view at You broke the ocean in half to be here, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, California, 2018. Courtesy of the artist.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Cook, James. Log Book of James Cook. 1770.
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- 3 "Britain to Bali-exotic adventures in Jamaica." Sandals Resorts. Accessed January 16, 2019. <https://www.sandals.com/resorts/>.
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- 10 Chung, Andrea. "Jason with Andrea Chung." Interview by Jason. Painting is Dead, February 28, 2015. <http://www.paintingisdead.com/andrea-chung.html>.
- 11 Imada, Adria L. Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the U.S. Empire. (Duke University Press, 2012), 10.
- 12 Wong, Ming. "Bloody Marys — Song of the South Seas."
- 13 Wong, Ming. "Bloody Marys — Song of the South Seas."
- 14 Rodgers, Richard; and Hammerstein, Oscar. "Bali Ha'i," South Pacific. 1949.
- 15 Lowe, Lisa. The Intimacies of Four Continents. (Duke University Press, 2015), 82.
- 16 Imada, Adria L. Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the U.S. Empire. 11.
- 17 Echoing literary critic Raymond Williams, Lisa Lowe speaks of the term 'residual' as: "Elements of the past that continue, but are less legible within a contemporary social formation." From Lowe, Lisa. The Intimacies of Four Continents. 19.

ANDREA CHUNG

Andrea Chung lives and works in San Diego, California. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Parsons School of Design, New York, and a Master of Fine Arts from Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore. Her recent biennale and museum exhibitions include Prospect 4, New Orleans and the Jamaican Biennale, Kingston, Jamaica, as well as the Chinese American Museum and California African American Museum in Los Angeles, and the San Diego Art Institute. In 2017, her first solo museum exhibition took place at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, *You broke the ocean in half to be here*. She has participated in national and international residencies including the Vermont Studio Center, McColl Center for Visual Arts, Headlands Center for the Arts, and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Her work has been written about in the *Artfile Magazine*, *New Orleans Times*, *Picayune*, *Artnet*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *International Review of African-American Art*, as well as a number of academic essays looking at the subject of colonialism and slavery in the Caribbean.

RACHELLE DANG

Rachelle Dang is an installation artist and sculptor whose work engages with the complexities of colonial legacies. Born in Honolulu and currently residing in Brooklyn, she has exhibited her work in New York at Motel Gallery, Nathalie Karg Gallery, SPRING/BREAK Art Show, Hunter College and Cooper Union, and in Hawaii at the Honolulu Museum of Art and Hawaii Pacific University. Upcoming exhibitions in New York include Underdonk Gallery and mh PROJECT. She was a recent artist-in-residence at the Studios at MASS MoCA, Shandaken:

Storm King Art Center, Cooper Union, Vermont Studio Center, and Sculpture Space where she was the recipient of an Emerging Sculptor Fellowship. Dang received an MFA from Hunter College and a BA from Wellesley College.

MING WONG

Ming Wong's video installations explore the intersections of language, identity and performance. In his signature methodology, he "mis-casts" himself as every character in a story — of different genders, ages, races or nationalities. His artistic practice is highly influenced by cinema and is in constant dialogue with measures of performativity, gender, and difference.

His work has been shown recently at Busan Biennale, South Korea; Dakar Biennale, Senegal; Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh; Para Site, Hong Kong; SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin; Centre National de la Danse, Paris; (all 2018). He has had solo exhibitions at leading institutions worldwide, including UCCA, Beijing; Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo; and REDCAT, Los Angeles.

He has participated in Sydney Biennale (2016 & 2010); Asia Pacific Triennial (2015); Shanghai Biennale (2014); Lyon Biennale (2013); Liverpool Biennial (2012); Gwangju Biennale (2010); Performa 11, New York (2010). He represented Singapore at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009 with the solo presentation *Life of Imitation*, which was awarded a special mention.

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Front and Back Cover: Rachelle Dang, *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique*, details for *Your Special Island*, Haverford College, 2019. Courtesy of the artist.

