Curatorial Conversations

Art Department and College of Creative Studies Colloquium Series Explores Topics of Contemporary Art, Theory, and Cultural Production

by Andrea Elliott / The UCSB Arts Quarterly

Presenting a range of voices in dialogue and action, the Department of Art and the College of Creative Studies at UC Santa Barbara are collaborating on the Visiting Artist Colloquium and Curatorial Conversations. Organized by Jenica Sorkin, an associate professor of the history of art and architecture, the weekly conversations explore topics of contemporary art, theory and cultural production with emerging and established visiting artists as well as with UC Santa Barbara faculty members and graduate students.

The presentations take place each Thursday evening through June 6 in Embarcadero Hall, 935 Embarcadero del Norte, Isla Vista. They are free and open to the public.

"The visiting artist’s colloquium showcases the depth and breadth of contemporary art practice across the greater Los Angeles area, which is currently the hottest art scene in the country, with more than 300 contemporary art galleries and multiple contemporary art only venues and museums," said Sorkin. "This series includes significant young and mid-career artists, as well as more established critics and curators, such as Amelia Jones and Kathy Rae Huffman."

The series began on April 4 with Carole Frances Lung — aka Friza Fieber — an associate professor of fashion fiber and materials at California State University, Los Angeles. Through her Friza Fiber alter ego, Lung activates a vocabulary of fashion and textile production and consumption, crafting one-of-a-kind garments, installations, performances and social sculpture that pay homage to labor, textile and apparel manufacturing and contemporary production systems.

Following a one-week hiatus, Kathy Rae Huffman will be the April 18 guest speaker. A curator, writer, researcher and lecturer, Huffman also is an expert on video and media art. She has curated, written about and coordinated events for numerous international art institutes. From the 1990s until 2014, Huffman was based in Europe and embraces early net art and interactive online environments, a curatorial practice that continues. In 1997, she co-founded Faces mailing list, an online community for women working with art, gender and technology.

Among other presenters:

Young Joce Kwak (April 25), a Los Angeles-based interdisciplinary artist whose work aims to transform perceptions of marginalized bodies by reimagining their forms, function and materiality. Kwak is the founder of Mutant Salon, a moving beauty salon/platform for experimental performances and collaborations with their community of queer, trans, genderqueer, POC artists and performers. She also is the lead performer in the electronic-dance- noise band Xina Xunxer. Daniel Small (May 2), whose project-based work engages with disparate sites, government agencies, political regimes and institutions in an attempt to contemplate their speculative futures through cinematic, technological and archaeological articulations.

Sorkin has invited a range of diverse perspectives to present, and curatorial conversations will be held May 30 and June 3. The series will be moderated by Naima Salgado of the California African American Museum.

The J. Paul Leonard Library and UCSB Fine Arts Library will host a book discussion and panel discussion on the following themes:

- May 30: "Critical Race Theory and Art History"
- June 3: "Theorizing Queer Art History"

For more information, visit the Arts Quarterly website at www.ucsbartsquarterly.com.

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