

The Center Is Not Holding

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Marcelo Gomes
Arshia Fatima Haq
Jenn Kang
Malena Szlam
Rebecca Topakian
Kersti Jan Werdal

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In yesterday's garden I wanted to preserve the way night allowed darkness to form a secret entryway out of the trees. My eyes struggled to see their outlines against the dirt path leading into dimness, but I didn't try too hard anyway. I'm limited to what I know, and what I know is that I ache at the sight of things fading. Look at you next to me, fading against the muted lushness of 9pm. I remembered while writing this that there was a single star that night, just above the darkest head of one tree, which may not have even been there, instead a dusty blue. All the contemporary writing these days is about loss, robert hass said once. There's not enough time to be unafraid. But efforts to think beyond that which I know are only compliance with that which I am afraid of. What comforts me is that I could barely make out the hue of your skin against the sand. How it stretched underneath us, a path between two slopes of green. It seemed it would always be there.

by Joan Lee

Anna Fox

Anna Fox has been working in photography and video for over twenty years. Born in 1961, she completed her degree in Audio Visual studies at The Surrey Institute, Farnham in 1986. Influenced by the British documentary tradition and US "New Colourists," her project *Workstations* (published by and exhibited first at Camerawork, London 1988) observed, with a critical eye, London office culture in the mid-Thatcher years. Later work documenting weekend wargames, *Friendly Fire*, was included in the exhibition *Warworks* at the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Netherlands Foto Institute and the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography. She is currently Professor of Photography at University for the Creative Arts at Farnham.

Fox has presented solo shows at The Photographer's Gallery, London, The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago and her work has been included in numerous international group shows—*Through the Looking Glass*, *Centre of the Creative Universe: Liverpool and the Avant-garde* and *How We Are: Photographing Britain*, amongst others. Fox

has published several monographs, including, in 2007, *Anna Fox: Photographs 1983-2007*, edited by Val Williams.

Marcelo Gomes

Brazilian born photographer and director Marcelo Gomes lives and works in New York. He attended the University of Iowa on a full athletic scholarship and graduated with a B. A. in Political Science.

Gomes' work has been published in *The New Yorker*, *T Magazine* (*The New York Times*), *New York Magazine*, *Index*, *The Journal*, *The Wire* and others. He has published two photography books via Hassla Books.

Arshia Fatima Haq

Arshia Fatima Haq was born in Hyderabad, India, and is currently based in Los Angeles, CA, where she received her MFA in Film and Video from CalArts in 2005. She works across film, visual art, performance and sound, and is currently exploring themes of embodiment and mysticism, particularly within the Islamic Sufi context. Her work addresses the complexities of inhabiting multiple personas – woman, Muslim, immigrant, citizen – and employs modes outside the Western feminist model. Narrative threads include migration, celebration, warfare, nostalgia, homeland, and borders, often within realms of Islamic influence, through both traditional forms and kaleidoscopic reinventions via pop culture. She is the founder of Discostan, a collaborative decolonial project working with cultural production from the SWANA (South and West Asia and North Africa) region.

Haq's work has been featured at Museum of Contemporary Art Tucson, the Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Broad Museum, Toronto International Film Festival, MoMA New York, Hammer Museum, LAXArt, Centre Georges Pompidou, and the Pacific Film Archive. Currently, she hosts and produces monthly radio shows on Dublab and NTS, and recently released an album of field recordings from Pakistan on the Sublime Frequencies label. Haq is a recipient of the California Community Foundation Visual Artist Fellowship and the Rema Hort Mann Emerging Artist Grant.

Jenn Kang

Jenn Kang is a photographer and filmmaker based in Los Angeles and Paris. Her work explores the self in relation to collective consciousness. Kang intimately and naturally documents the emotional connection between herself and her subject, seeking to bring truth to the notion of beauty. She considers all her work to be self-portraiture—though she excludes her physical self from the image, she includes the most essential facets of herself for viewers to connect with.

Kang received her BA in Media Studies with a minor in Cultural Anthropology at the University of San Francisco. She also studied at the Freie Universität Berlin in pursuit of her undergraduate degree. Her work has been exhibited at the Incline Gallery, San Francisco; current and former collaborators include A Part Publications, Under Pressure Magazine, Alei Journal, and Junk Magazine, amongst others. A book project is forthcoming.

Malena Szlam

Malena Szlam is a Chilean artist and filmmaker working at the intersection of cinema, installation, and performance. Her practice explores the relationship between the natural world, perception, and intuitive process. The poetics developed through her time-based works and in-camera edited films engage the material and affective dimensions of analogue film practice. Szlam currently resides in Montreal and is a member of Double Negative, an artist collective dedicated to the production and exhibition of experimental cinema.

Szlam has presented solo screenings at Los Angeles Filmforum, San Francisco Cinematheque and FICValdivia. Her work has been shown in numerous festivals, museums, and cinematheques including the Rotterdam, Toronto, New York, Edinburgh, Media City, 25 FPS, Mar del Plata and Hong Kong Film Festivals, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Buenos Aires Museum of Modern Art, la Cinémathèque québécoise, the Henie Onstad Kunstsenter and the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art.

Rebecca Topakian

Rebecca Topakian, born in 1989, lives and works in Paris, where she is currently in residency at La Cité Internationale des Arts. Trained in photography at ENSP Arles, she has developed a work deeply rooted in the field of images, but enriched by other mediums. Through books and installations, she produces an anti-narrative photographic work which de-qualifies the subject, playing with the aesthetics of documentary as well as poetic and intimate forms. Her work explores themes of individual identity in relation to the crowd, the group, the community or collective history, with a sensual approach of bodies and landscapes.

Topakian has presented solo shows at Biennale de la Photographie de Mulhouse and Quinzaine de la Photographie Nantaise. Her work has been included in group shows at Vienna Contemporary, Villa Arson, Biennale de l'Image Tangible, Rencontres d'Arles, festival Circulation(s), Biennale de l'Image Possible, amongst others. She published *Infra* in 2018 with Classe Moyenne Éditions, which was shortlisted for the Author Book Prize of the Rencontres d'Arles 2018. She is co-founder of the artists residency el-Atlal in Jericho.

Kersti Jan Werdal

Kersti Jan Werdal was born in 1987 in Seattle, Washington. Her photographic work reflects on the problematic and illusory role of “objective-observer” in contrast to visceral moments of familiarity. She uses 35mm film to negotiate her own presence within worlds that aren't her own. Using the frame to demarcate off-screen space, she provokes a fresh, nuanced perspective of otherwise typical scenes. For Werdal, the image becomes a space where language is suspended, permitting emotion and inferred experience to step in as the primary form of communication.

Werdal earned a degree in Sociocultural Anthropology from Columbia University and is presently an MFA Candidate in Film/Video at California Institute of the Arts. In addition to photography and filmmaking, she is invested in printed matter, often incorporating hand-made publications and ephemera into her practice. Upcoming projects include a publication of stills drawn from the last two years of filmmaking, and a film program in Los Angeles.