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## Fall Exhibitions at the Blaffer

### ***2024 Texas Biennial: The Last Sky***

September 27, 2024—March 9, 2025  
Opening Reception September 27, 2024, 6pm-8pm | Blaffer Art Museum

*Where should we go after the last frontiers?  
Where should the birds fly  
after the last sky?*

Texas is constructed territory, therefore unstable borders and occupations shape communities and their participants. Systems and structures rise and fall. The collapse produces dust and dirt, yielding material histories written in detritus and debris. In its eighth iteration, the 2024 Texas Biennial, *The Last Sky*, looks to the still-lingering dust to ask: What happens after the last line in the sand is drawn?

Through a collaborative and non-hierarchical approach, Erika Mei Chua Holum, Ashley DeHoyos Sauder, and Coka Treviño co-organized the eighth iteration of the Texas Biennial through friendship, reciprocity, and mutual support. With trifold dreams and visions, the co-curators selected works and artist projects through the 2024 Texas Biennial Open Call. Presented across venues along the Texas Gulf Coast, *The Last Sky* activates amorphous and overlapping forms of cultural production—performance, cultural preservation, and visual art—shaped and cross-pollinated by collectives and community participation. Through this survey of contemporary art, we looked to artistic acts of continuance and survival.

*The Last Sky*—with its title borrowed from Mahmoud Darwish's poem “The Earth Is Closing In On Us,” and the 1986 book *After the Last Sky* by Edward Said—situates the clouds as a gathering spaces in response to the rising and falling structures that seed myth, signal warnings, or transpose matter across borderless terrain. We look to the levitating clouds of dust, yet to settle, anticipating its potential for new routes back to the land. The process unveils artist-led practices for a different type of future in Texas, which reminds us that we already have what we need to shape the world and make change.

The 2024 Texas Biennial is presented by Big Medium in partnership with Blaffer Art Museum and DiverseWorks. The Texas Biennial is a geographically-led, independent survey of contemporary art in Texas. The program was founded in 2005 by Austin nonprofit Big Medium to provide an exhibition

opportunity open to all artists living and working in the state. The eighth edition of this program takes place in 2024, making the Texas Biennial the longest-running state biennial in the country. Since its inception, the program has brought the work of over 300 artists to new audiences, springboarding many artists' careers and underscoring the diversity of contemporary practice in Texas. The 2024 Texas Biennial *The Last Sky* is co-curated by Erika Mei Chua Holum, Ashley DeHoyos (Curator, DiverseWorks), and Coka Treviño (Curator and Artistic Director at Big Medium and Founder and Curator of The Projecto).

Over eighty artists with significant connections to Texas are participating in the 2024 Texas Biennial: *The Last Sky*. To learn more, please visit: <https://www.texasbiennial.org/>

## ***Makeshift Memorials, Small Revolutions***

October 11, 2024 – March 9, 2025

Opening reception: October 11, 6-8 pm | Blaffer Art Museum

KADIST San Francisco and the Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston are pleased to announce the exhibition *Makeshift Memorials, Small Revolutions*, a two-venue exhibition with programming examining the shifts in time, ritual, memory-keeping, and community-building in artistic practices in the years 2020-2024 tied to the COVID-19 pandemic. The exhibition traces the magnified impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic upon artist communities across the world, highlighting the cyclical nature of improvised, responsive, yet sustained systems of mutual aid, information sharing, and embodied knowledge throughout a prolonged moment of global crisis.

The exhibition considers artists as prognosticators and traces their evolving practices and approaches, informed by activism and the creation of mutual aid networks spurred from lived experiences such as the still ongoing HIV/AIDS epidemic and Black and Brown grief. The artists assume the role of narrators for mimetic memory, muffled silences, and informal archiving against power structures sanctioning conditions of personal isolation, cultural amnesia, and planetary extinction.

Amplifying the concurrent exhibitions presented in Houston and San Francisco, public programs are activations and timely engagements of the current moment, during the final months of the 2024 U.S. presidential election cycle. *Makeshift Memorials, Small Revolutions* is a diary of experiences, encompassing not only what happened but also the possibility of what never happened in the ongoing process of remembering and recollection, as a form of 'protest against forgetting. The years 2020 to 2024 began with the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, which continues to expose systemic inequities disproportionately affecting historically marginalized communities. In the 2022 book *What World Is This?: A Pandemic Phenomenology*, Judith Butler advocates for intertwinement as a "collective effort to find or forge the best form of 'interdependency' as one that most clearly embodies the ideals of radical equality." The concurrent exhibitions in Houston and San Francisco and their related public programs are guided by entangled ethics in order to untangle forms of sustained solidarities inching toward liberation.

**Blaffer Art Museum exhibition** includes Indira Allegra, Richard Bell, Tony Cokes, Kiri Dalena, rafa esparza, Jes Fan, Alicia Henry, Every Ocean Hughes, Jarod Lew, Helina Metaferia, Eduardo Navarro, Rajni Perera, Michael Rakowitz, Marwan Rechmaoui, Varunika Saraf, Pangrok Sulap, Kenneth Tam,

James Webb. Artworks and performances co-presented with KADIST San Francisco and the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts at the University of Houston are selected through the 2024 Texas Biennial Open Call and embedded and intertwined into *Makeshift Memorials*, *Small Revolutions*. The 2024 Texas Biennial *The Last Sky* activates overlapping and amorphous forms of cultural production and cross-pollination shaped by artist collectives and community involvement.

*Makeshift Memorials*, *Small Revolutions* at the Blaffer Art Museum is co-organized by Erika Mei Chua Holum (Cynthia Woods Mitchell Associate Curator at the Blaffer Art Museum and co-curator of the 2024 Texas Biennial), Lindsay Albert (Program Manager, KADIST San Francisco), and Jo-ey Tang (Director, KADIST San Francisco). The co-institutional partnership and curatorial research for *Makeshift Memorials*, *Small Revolutions* was initiated by Joseph del Pesco (International Director, KADIST) and Steven Maticijo (Former Jane Dale Owen Director & Chief Curator at the Blaffer Art Museum).

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Founded in 1973, the **Blaffer Art Museum** endeavors to further the understanding of contemporary art through exhibitions, publications, and public programs. As the gateway between the University of Houston's Central campus and the City of Houston, Blaffer Art Museum is a catalyst for creative innovation, experimentation, and scholarship. Its exhibitions and programs are free and open to the public, create community through dialogue and participation, and inspire an appreciation for the visual arts as a vital force in shaping contemporary culture.

**KADIST**

**TX★24**  
**TEXAS BIENNIAL**

**Cynthia Woods  
Mitchell Center  
for the Arts**  
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON