

INTERNATIONAL

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Wish You Were Here

Alisa Yang

Fall 2020 International Artist-in-Residence

In residence September 28–November 23, 2020

Exhibitions on view November 19, 2020–January 10, 2021

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Alisa Yang (lives in Los Angeles/New York/Helsinki) is an interdisciplinary artist and filmmaker with a research-based practice that explores language, cultural identity, and the intergenerational trauma of Asian diasporas. Centering the body as a site of geopolitical and social conditioning, her feminist-driven works spanning multiple media are intimate negotiations in orienting the self towards healing and social change. She earned a BFA with honors from ArtCenter College of Design in California and an MFA as a Phi Kappa Phi scholar from the University of Michigan. Yang has exhibited internationally in museums, galleries, and biennials, such as the *Aesthetica* Art Prize, MoMA/PS1, Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, New Mexico Museum of Art, and Art Nova 100 in Beijing. Her recent work has been supported by residencies, including Yaddo and Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, with a fellowship from UnionDocs Summer Documentary Lab. Yang's experimental documentaries have screened in film festivals worldwide and received the 2018 Arte Laguna Special Prize, Best Regional Filmmaker at the 2017 Ann Arbor Film Festival, and the Grand Jury Prize for Short Documentary at the 2017 Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Rest is our foundation for a liberated world. Care is how we will shift culture. Rest today, make space for others to rest today. And we will rest.—Tricia Hersey (aka “Nap Bishop”), 1-833-LUV-NAPS, automated voice message, November 11, 2020

The year 2020 will long be remembered as one of myriad trials and tribulations suffered worldwide, whether those challenges resulted from the global pandemic, economic recession, social justice reckoning, or, more likely, some combination of all three. Alisa Yang’s Artpace project *Wish You Were Here* is conceived and created as a direct response to these ongoing crises.

Yang suffers from chronic illness, which has required the artist to forge a complex relationship with her body and be more attuned to the issues of self-care. Her illness presents no visible symptoms or manifestations and therefore is often difficult for others to empathize with. The physical and mental demands of chronic illness are not only alienating and isolating but also severely impact Yang’s ability to make art. The challenges of coping with an invisible illness while existing in the world as a woman of color have only been compounded in the age of COVID-19 in which prejudice, social-distancing protocols, and a new pandemic of loneliness abounds. All of these factors have compelled Yang to slow down—to *rest*—while attempting to do so within a culture that regards *busyness* as tantamount to productivity and success, concepts that further commodify our notions of work and the laboring body. Yang’s efforts to slow down and assess universal human needs permeate her Artpace project and take the form of radical care and gifting. Her care package, offered to visitors to the exhibition, invites the audience to rest and honor their own bodies, and it contains specific objects that have helped the artist do just that.

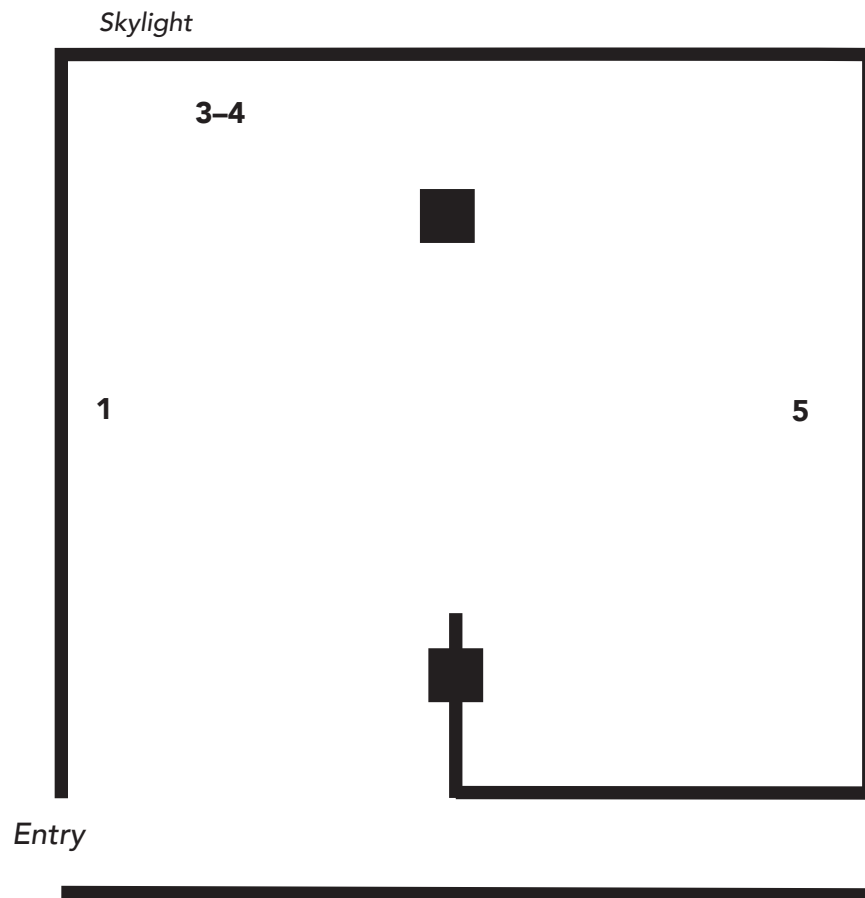
The accompanying multichannel video documents the assembly of the care package—a repetitive but meditative action. Yang’s video documents the process while also demonstrating the generous gifts of time, intention, and care the artist has invested into the 300 boxes created for the exhibition. Each one is a deeply personal gift from the artist to the recipient.

Additionally, Yang designed a full-sized billboard as part of her Artpace project, a mock-up of which is on view in the gallery. The actual billboard will be installed for the holiday season during the month of December in Dilley, TX, about 75 miles southwest of San Antonio and just minutes from the largest family detention center in the United States. The billboard reads, “Jesus was a brown child seeking asylum.” Here, Yang calls attention to the immigration and family separation crises, a government sanctioned *lack of care* experienced by those individuals detained by ICE merely for seeking refuge and a better life.

Wish You Were Here is a simple and deliberate invitation to visitors, and all of us, to rest and honor our bodies. The exhibition is rooted not only in Yang’s personal experience but, even more profoundly, the human experience.

The artist would like to thank Holly Tupper and Cultus Artem.

GALLERY MAP



Please refer to separate Works List for titles and materials.

WORKS LIST (clockwise from entrance)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 <i>Jesus was a brown child seeking asylum (mock-up)</i>
Digital print | 4 <i>Rest Altar</i>
Window film and plants |
| 2 <i>Jesus was a brown child seeking asylum</i>
Vinyl billboard in Dilley, TX
On view December 1–31, 2020 | 5 <i>ASMR gift packing</i>
Site-specific multichannel video installation,
dimensions variable (13:30 mins.) |
| 3 <i>The Gift</i>
Cardboard box, note, eye masks, organic
herbal tea, organic essential oil spray, crinkle
paper, and guided yoga nidra (performed by
Amanda Brannin)
Limited edition of 300 | |

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

Since 1995, Artpace has welcomed more than 247 artists through its renowned International Artist-in-Residence program. Annually, Artpace hosts three residencies, which each feature one Texas-based artist, one national artist, and one international artist, who are selected by a notable guest curator. Each eight-week residency culminates in a two-month exhibition on site. The mission of this program is to provide artists with unparalleled resources that allow them to experiment with new ideas and take provocative risks.

ABOUT ARTPACE

Artpace San Antonio is a nonprofit residency program which supports regional, national, and international artists in the creation of new art.

As a catalyst for artistic expression, we engage local communities with global art practices and experiences.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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