

# Smack Mellon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## *Spiral Time*

Curated by Alex Santana

June 22--August 4, 2024

Press Preview: Sat. June 22, 5-6 PM

Opening Reception: Sat. June 22, 6-8 PM

Artists: Zainab Aliyu, Cali M. Banks, Rhea Barve, Cinthya Santos Briones, Anastasia Corrine, Christian Amaya Garcia, dre jácome, Ruth Jeyaveeran, Natalia Mejía Murillo, G. Rosa-Rey



Cali M. Banks, *West Brighton Ave, Southside*, 2023. Polaroid emulsion lift & transfer onto leaf skeleton & watercolor paper with hand-sewn beadwork details, 12 x 12 inches (framed)

Smack Mellon is pleased to announce the 2024 Emerging Artist Summer Group Exhibition, guest curated by Alex Santana. *Spiral Time* explores radical ecologies of resistance that challenge the temporal pressures imposed by capitalism. Decentering speed and efficiency, the artists included in the exhibition borrow from slow, careful, and intentional practices like seedkeeping, intergenerational storytelling, and synchronic experimentation. Working across sculpture, installation, video, and other media, the artists engage broadly with the dire concerns of the climate catastrophe while invoking cyclical ancestral systems and future possibilities for horizontal relationships to the Earth. Ultimately, the resonance of their distinct voices provides a framework for reciprocity, undermining the dominant systems of capitalist logic that impose notions of progress as singular, linear, and unidirectional. *Spiral Time* is, after all, about diffraction and dispersion in the face of methodical, exhausting, and often violent order.

Referencing the groundbreaking theory of Brazilian poet and scholar Leda Maria Martins, *Spiral Time* expands upon her assertion that time is recurrent, communicated across generations through embodied practices like performance, dance, and music.<sup>1</sup> In contrast with the ways time is often used as an instrument of control in Western society, embodied knowledge that travels intergenerationally can be transmitted in spite of colonial violence and dispossession. The body is a site for inscribed knowledge and memory that can be disseminated endlessly, bridging past and future through the present. The artists in *Spiral Time* consider these relations between earth and body as the pivotal site of connection to the present.

In New York City, recent protests and social movements have underscored the excesses of US military spending, fossil fuel reliance, and the complicity of institutions in these processes of extraction and overconsumption. This need for speed also produces alienation and anxiety within our communities. Instead, the artists of *Spiral Time* employ slowness, observation, intervention, recordkeeping, and speculative imagination as decolonial strategies. Much like a seed germinating in soil, which at first glance appears lifeless, over time, these strategies catalyze the growth of something much larger than what immediately meets the eye.

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**Alex Santana** is a writer, editor, and curator with an interest in conceptual art, political intervention, and public participation. Currently based in New York but originally from Newark, NJ, she has held positions at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Joan Mitchell Center, Mana Contemporary, and Alexander Gray Associates. Her interviews and essays have been published by Hyperallergic, CUE Art Foundation, Terremoto Magazine, The Brooklyn Rail, Precog Magazine, NXTHVN, and Artsy. She is currently Associate Editor of *Intervenxions*, a publication of The Latinx Project at NYU and Curatorial Associate at Print Center New York. Her long-term goal is to develop a collaborative artist residency and farm site founded and led by artists, writers, and other cultural practitioners.

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**Zainab “Zai” Aliyu** is a Nigerian-American artist and cultural worker living in Lenapehoking (Brooklyn, NY). Her work contextualizes the cybernetic and temporal entanglement embedded within societal dynamics to understand how all socio-technological systems of control are interconnected, and how we are all materially implicated through time. She draws upon her body as a corporeal archive and site of ancestral memory to craft counter-narratives through sculpture, video, installation, built virtual environments, printed matter, archives, and community-participatory (un)learning. Zai is currently a co-director of the School for Poetic Computation, design director for the African Film Festival at the Film at Lincoln Center in NYC and a 2023-24 NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellow. Her work has been shown internationally at Gardiner Museum (Toronto, Canada), Film at Lincoln Center (New York, NY), Museum of Modern Art Library (New York, NY), Miller ICA (Pittsburgh, PA), Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile (Hong Kong, China), among others. She has been awarded residencies at MASS MoCA (North Adams, MA), Haystack Mountain School of Crafts (Deer Isle, ME), Casa do Povo (São Paulo, Brazil), Aktuelle Architektur der Kulturimages (Murcia, Spain), Pocoapoco (Oaxaca, Mexico) among others.

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1 Martins, Leda Maria. 2021. *Performances do tempo espiralar, poéticas do corpo-tela*. Editora Cobogó.

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**Cali M. Banks** (Munsee Lenape/Scottish) is a lens-based artist currently based in Syracuse, NY. She holds an MFA in Interdisciplinary Media Arts Practices from the University of Colorado Boulder, and a BA in Art and Technology and Global Health Studies from Allegheny College. Cali is the Communications Coordinator for Light Work, and is also an Adjunct Professor of Photography, Video Art and Filmmaking for Syracuse University and Indiana University campuses. Cali also serves on the Board of Directors for The Halide Project, and is a 2024 En Foco Photography Fellow.

Her artistic practice reclaims identity through auto-ethnographic, experimental photography and film-making. Her work explores personal and collective histories, relational intimacies, and the expansion of narrow, flattened definitions of indigenous art. She is interested in the idea of image-making as a time or record-keeper, and being able to manipulate that to recreate memories, history, and methods of healing. In recent times, she has exhibited work at Art Basel Miami, Every Woman Biennial London, RedLine Contemporary Art Center, Tiger Strikes Asteroid Philadelphia, Atlanta Film Festival, and Anthology Film Archives. She is also a featured artist in Issue # 24, #26, and #38 of The Hand Magazine, and has been published on Lomography and Lenscratch.

**Rhea Barve** grew up in Bangalore, India and is currently based in Brooklyn, NY. Working primarily with clay, she explores the ways in which organic bodies store and transmit energy. When she is not in the studio, she is usually drawing or baking. She received her BFA from New York University in 2022 with a concentration in ceramics and animation.

**Cinthya Santos Briones** is a visual artist, educator, anthropologist and cultural organizer with indigenous Nahua roots based in New York. As an artist, her work focuses on a multidisciplinary social practice that combines participatory art and the construction of collective narratives. Cinthya holds an MFA in Creative Writing and Photography from Ithaca-Cornell, and a certificate in Documentary Practice and Visual Journalism from the International Center of Photography (ICP). Currently she is an Adjunct Faculty at the Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY. Since 2022, she is part of Columbia University's Visiting Critic program. She is the recipient of fellowships and grants from the Magnum Foundation (2016/2018/2020), En Foco (2017/2022), National Geographic Research and Exploration (2018), We Woman (2019), City Artist Corps (2020), National Fund for Culture and the Arts of México (2009/2011), Wave Hill House Winter Residency (2023), Mellon Artist Fellow at Hemispheric Institute in NYU University (2023-24), and BricLab Contemporary Art (2023).

Her work has been published in The New York Times, Pdn, California Sunday Magazine, Vogue, Open Society Foundations, BuzzFeed, The Intercept, New Yorker, The Nation Magazine, NACLA, The Nation, and La Jornada, among others. Cinthya has exhibited her work at Sky Blue Gallery in Portland Oregon, Latinx Project, NYU, International Center Of Photography, Museo del Barrio, Museum of the City of New York, Trout Museum in Wisconsin, Paul W. Zuccaire gallery, Stony Brook, among others. She is co-author of the book "The Indigenous Worldview and its Representations in Textiles of the Nahua community of Santa Ana Tzacuala, Hidalgo," and the documentary The Huichapan Codex. Cinthya has worked at pro-immigrant organizations in New York as a community organizer on issues such as detection, education, and sanctuary. She has volunteered in programs accompanying migrants to the courts and asylum applications. And she is a guardian of unaccompanied migrant children.

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Originally from The Bronx, **Anastasia Corrine** is an interdisciplinary artist based in New York. Corrine is influenced by the roots of the African Diaspora and its dislocation. Their research based practice is informed by Black Radical Tradition, nature, and movement. Corrine is a reflex, root, and VOIDTHOT. They are a mirror and at least 60% water. As a VOIDTHOT, they sometimes find comfort and sensuality in a cavernous beyond. Using ceramics, electronic media, performance, and writing, Corrine is developing methods for digging a hole to the other side. Like a root and its reflex, they are seeking and dirt loving. Along with a studio practice, Corrine has organized and participated in panels such as Erasure by Exclusion: How Art Schools and Institutions Uphold White Supremacy (School of Visual Arts) and To Possess Freedom Once Again (Boston Ujima Project). Corrine's work has been included in exhibitions such as 'Persona, Persona, Persona' at Laden Für Nichts (Leipzig, DE), '\_assembly, alchemy, ascension [a^3]' at The New School (NY,NY), and 'Dirty Work' at Greenwich House Pottery (NY,NY). They have been an artist in residence at Wave Hill (NY,NY), Institute for Experimental Art (Alfred, NY), and Leipzig International Art Programme (DE).

**Christian Amaya Garcia** is a Guatemalan-Dominican visual artist based in New York City. He explores the multiplicities of his identity through sculpture, installation, and drawing, using performance as a form of research. He considers how his body performs—its movement, flexibility, and balance—in relation to uncertainty and transition, leading him to test the context of objects and the subjectification of his identity. The precariousness of his sculptures mirrors his experience of displacement; being in an unknown state and recalling his familial experiences, then suspending it in space with an open understanding of meaning. This tension echoes the moment of a mixed martial artist tensing their muscles in the last second before impact, just before executing a strike—a connection, a knockout. He pursues the same anticipation in his work, where the circumstances of living his life are not separated from the themes of performativity, displacement, and profiling. Amaya Garcia received his BFA at Lehman College and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture in 2023. He was awarded fellowships at the Vermont Studio Center (2023); the Young Artist of Color Fellowship at FABnyc (2023); and a Design Fellowship at the Sara Little Turnbull Foundation (2022).

**dre jácome** is a transdisciplinary storyteller weaving across land-based and digital technologies. as a child of the andes mountains, magdalena river, and georgia red clay, she has been a lifelong student studying subversive healing technologies found on the land and body. inspired by magical realism and the survival arts of everyday living, her work aims to oppose and propose experimental counter archives that honor and defend BIPOC intimate knowledge systems held in story, nature, and recovering cosmologies. with her background as a trained herbalist, historian, and cultural organizer, she grounds her creative storytelling projects with relational methods including archival research, oral history, critical ethnobotany, and partnerships with community organizations and chosen family. she works across mediums including poetry, design, assemblage, computation, video, audio, and installation. she is the child of colombian and kichwa-ecuadorian immigrants.

**Ruth Jeyaveeran**, born in Lusaka, Zambia, and raised in the Midwest, lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Drawing from her experience as part of the South Asian diaspora, she uses textiles to examine a shared history of alienation and dissociation. In her sculptures and installations, the boundary between human, animal, and flora dissolves to tell a story of isolation, migration, and evolution. Her

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first solo show, *Soft Remains*, was exhibited at Field Projects in 2023. Other recent exhibitions include, *Felt Experience* at the Brattleboro Museum, *Communion*, a solo installation at Main Window Dumbo, and *Amplify*, a public outdoor sculpture at the Queens Botanical Garden. Jeyaveeran has been awarded residencies at the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council on Governors Island, Residency Unlimited, Lighthouse Works, Marble House Project, Jentel Foundation, Willapa Bay, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and PADA Studios. She has taught courses in textiles and fibers at Parsons School of Design, and she frequently leads workshops on felting and the therapeutic benefits of craft. Currently, Jeyaveeran is an Associate Professor of Textile Design at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

**Natalia Mejía Murillo** (b. Bogota, Colombia) is a visual artist whose work explores the notions of territory, repetition, trace and time through correspondences between astronomy, cartography and archaeology. She holds an MFA in Painting and Printmaking from Virginia Commonwealth University, an MA in History and Theory of Art and a BFA from the National University of Colombia. Mejía has been the recipient of awards including the Artistic Research Fellow at Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC (2024-2025), 98th ANNUAL International Competition of The Print Center, Philadelphia (2023-2024), Kunstmuseum Reutlingen, Germany (2020) and Ministry of Culture of Colombia – Mexico (FONCA) (2017). She has also been awarded residencies at Radio 28, (Mexico City, 2024), MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (2023), Curatorial Program for Research (New York, 2023), Tajo Taller and Saenger Galería (Mexico City, 2023), Ellis-Beauregard Foundation, Maine (2022), Fundació Miró Mallorca and Casa de Velázquez (Spain, 2021), Fundación CIEC – Centro Internacional de la Estampa Contemporánea (Betanzos, Spain, 2014), The Strzemioski Academy of Fine Arts and Design (Łódź, Poland, 2014) among others. Mejía's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. Recent exhibitions include The Print Center, Philadelphia; A+D Architecture and Design Museum, Los Angeles; Saenger Galeria, Mexico City; Museo Moralense de Arte Contemporáneo, Cuernavaca, México, Casa de Velazquez, Madrid, Spain; Kunstmuseum Reutlingen, Germany, among others. She has taught at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogota, and is currently Assistant Professor of Printmaking at Virginia Commonwealth University Doha, Qatar.

**G. Rosa-Rey** is a Brooklyn, N.Y. based visual artist. She invokes texture, gestural markings, and grids to reference place. Conceptually, Rosa-Rey's use of materials is informed by Puerto Rican diasporic consciousness in the wake of Operation Bootstrap, and is guided by her experiences growing up and living in the United States. Born in Isabela, Puerto Rico, Rosa-Rey and her family moved to Hartford, Connecticut in the late 1950s. In the early 1970s she relocated to New York City to study fine art at Pratt Institute. She continued her graduate studies in the same field at Columbia University where her studies also included ceramics. Her first solo show, a region in the mind: terrenos y cuentos was presented at Hidrante in San Juan, Puerto Rico in February 2023.

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