Imagining an Archipelago

Art from Cuba, Guam, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Their Diasporas

What does it mean to imagine an archipelago—a sea of islands—made of places from different oceans, separated by thousands of miles? Cuba, Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico are connected not by geography, but by history. *Imagining an Archipelago* presents contemporary artworks by more than forty artists and collaborative groups, including six new commissions. This exhibition invites you to learn about these islands and their communities, and to embrace island thinking. Water flows between and around islands, connecting rather than dividing them, all while carrying art and language, food and spirituality, history and identity.

Spain began colonizing the Atlantic and the Pacific in the 1500s. In 1898, the outcome of the Spanish-American War determined the islands' political futures, even as they fought against Spanish rule. The United States occupied Cuba and colonized Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. This overseas territorial expansion began to solidify the nation's status as a world power. Cuba and the Philippines have since gained their independence, while Guam and Puerto Rico remain unincorporated territories—neither sovereign nations nor integrated US states. Given these histories, many artworks here probe the relationship between political and cultural self-determination. This exhibition calls into question the nature of democracy, globally and domestically, then and now.

In an archipelago, islands are separate but connected. Here too the artists adopt different yet related strategies of responding to conditions brought on by continental empires. In media and message, the varied artworks present affinities and contrasts, visualizing a solidarity strengthened by difference. At its heart, *Imagining an Archipelago* invites artists and their communities to come together, heal, and celebrate.

Imagining an Archipelago is generously supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Teiger Foundation, Terra Foundation for American Art, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Additional funds are provided by the museum's Everett and Florence Turner Fund and Mirken Family Publications Fund and an anonymous donor. The Colby Museum's exhibition season is funded in part by Alice Kang and OhSang Kwon. Support for the museum's programs is provided by Friends of Art.

Puerto Rico



The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is a Caribbean territory of the United States composed of a main island and several smaller islands. Like Guam, Puerto Rico does not have a voting representative in the US Congress, despite Puerto Ricans being US citizens. In the mid-twentieth century, industrialization initiatives raised the standard of living, reduced poverty, and catalyzed mass migration within and out of Puerto Rico. The archipelago's geographical proximity to the United States facilitates *vaivén*, a Spanish term that describes a back-and-forth migration characterized by both leaving and returning. Since Hurricane María devastated the region in 2017, Puerto Ricans have organized to confront and protest political corruption, fragile infrastructure, and economic austerity. Likewise, the artists featured here address themes of political activism, resistance, and environmental resilience.

Guam



Home to the Indigenous CHamoru, Guåhan, or Guam, is one of the Mariana Islands in Oceania in the western Pacific Ocean, and is the westernmost territory of the United States. As an unincorporated territory, Guam has limited representation in the US Congress and its inhabitants cannot vote in presidential elections. CHamoru contemporary art demonstrates the persistence of cultural forms suppressed by hundreds of years of colonization, evident in the intentional use of CHamoru—an endangered language—for many artwork titles. Across different media, artists foreground recognizable CHamoru cultural forms, such as precolonial architectural *latte* stones and clamshell *sinahi* necklaces, both of which function as identity markers. Some of the works address histories related to the seizing of lands by the US Navy and its effect on families, as well as ongoing grassroots activism to fight further encroachments, especially in places that hold sacred significance.

The Philippines



The Philippines is a Southeast Asian archipelago made up of more than 7,600 islands, whose inhabitants speak over 130 languages. The country declared its independence from Spain in 1898—a sovereignty unacknowledged by the United States, who then colonized the islands for nearly fifty years. During that time, an influx of Filipino men came to the United States, primarily to the West Coast, to work in farms and canneries. In 1946, the United States recognized the Philippines as an independent nation. Sociopolitical turmoil followed, especially after the declaration of martial law in 1972 by dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who was ousted in 1986. US immigration laws relaxed in the 1960s, ushering in a wave of professional Filipinos who came with their families. Global mass migration continues to this day, with Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) sending money home to support the economy. The artworks in this section deal with the intersections of colonization, representation, global economics, labor, and care.

Cuba



Cuba fought three revolutionary wars with Spain during the nineteenth century. After the 1898 Spanish-American War, the United States enforced the Platt Amendment in Cuba's constitution, allowing US intervention into the country's policies and hampering full claims to sovereignty until 1934. In 1959, Fidel Castro came to power and communist Cuba became a geopolitical flash point during the Cold War. A generation of Cubans fled their country as political exiles, landing predominantly in the nearby United States or in other parts of Latin America, including Puerto Rico. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 drove a migration wave of Cubans seeking economic opportunities abroad, and those who remained at home faced a life of austerity during the so-called Special Period. More recently, US trade sanctions and policies have triggered economic and energy crises in Cuba. Several of the artists featured in this section were born in Cuba and now reside in the United States, a testament to the role of regime change and global politics in shaping lives.

Land, Sea, and Sky

Our relationships to the natural environment shape the way we live. Islanders are especially attuned to these types of connections, as islands are vulnerable to typhoons in the Pacific and hurricanes in the Atlantic. Such natural disasters are the hallmark of ocean life, but are exacerbated by the effects of climate change. Through monumental artworks, the artists here ask us to look far and wide, high and low, to become more aware of ourselves in our surroundings. What happens when we pay more attention to the land, sea, and sky?

Military Occupations

In the context of this exhibition, the term "military occupation" considers both the installation and de-installation of US military bases on the islands, as well as the consequent and disproportionate numbers of islanders serving in the US military. The people of Guam enlist at a rate three times higher than the rest of the United States, and nearly one in four Puerto Ricans have served in the US military. Historically and geopolitically, the islands have long found themselves in the crosshairs of multiple empires, as the colonial powers of the day drag them into wider conflicts. Now, as countries around the world continue to dispute territorial boundaries, sovereignties remain on the line. The eyes of the world's major players are trained on the strategic locations of the islands featured in this exhibition, raising the stakes all the higher.

Foodways

Personal nourishment is a necessity, and eating together forms community. This section addresses issues of culinary culture and food sovereignty, defined in this case as an island's ability to feed itself. The artists here make work about the connected intimacy of eating with others, the use of specific foods as cultural identity markers, and the sacredness of edible materials harvested from the land. Along political and economic avenues, the artworks also attend to agricultural labor practices.

Island Beliefs

Spirituality and religion converge as a fundamental clash at the core of colonization. In the fifteenth century, the Vatican promoted the Doctrine of Discovery, encouraging European empires to colonize lands and convert Native inhabitants to Christianity. Spain brought Catholicism to the islands in this exhibition, where that religion remains predominant today. Yet the islanders were already practicing their own spiritualities, often involving the veneration of spirits found in nature. In the Atlantic, West African and Yoruba beliefs also arrived through the historical practice of slavery. For all the islands, religious syncretism—meaning the merging of worldviews—survives as a testament to the resilience of many kinds of belief systems.

The Process Is the Project

Since the beginning of the project, *Imagining an Archipelago* has centered artists to build community and foster solidarity. The Colby Museum organized two Islands Project Convenings, in 2022 and 2024, and these gatherings included both discussions in the museum galleries and recreation on Allen Island, off the coast of Maine. This island is part of the ancestral lands of the Wabanaki, the former home of the artistic Wyeth family, and now stewarded by Colby College. During these convenings, the artists informed the development of the exhibition, inspired Colby courses, and recorded conversations that have been transcribed, translated, and published in the exhibition's accompanying book.

At the 2024 convening, Enzo Camacho and Ami Lien facilitated a papermaking workshop. They prompted the participants to consider islands not as victims of empires, but as spaces that generate resistant modes of thinking. Some of the collaboratively created works are on display here.

Zilia Sánchez

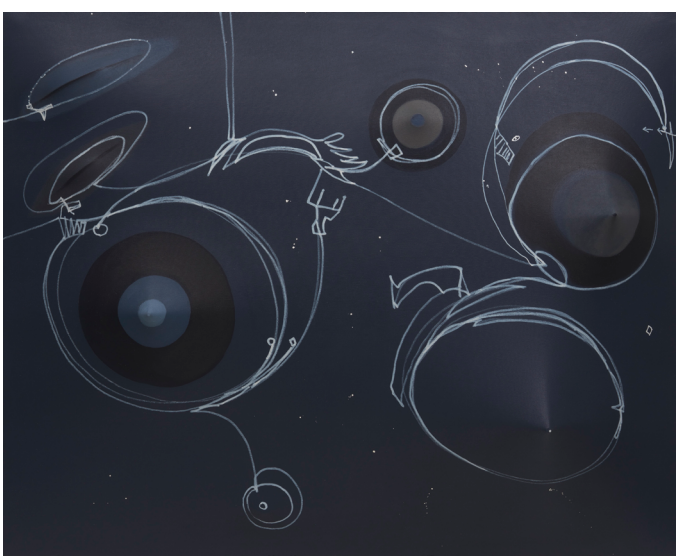
b. 1926; Havana, Cuba

d. 2024; San Juan, Puerto Rico

Lunar negro con tatuaje, 1975

Acrylic on stretched canvas

Colby College Museum of Art, museum purchase from the Jere Abbott Acquisitions Fund, 2016.228



Felix Gonzalez-Torres

b. 1957; Guáimaro, Cuba
d. 1996; Miami, Florida

"Untitled" (USA Today), 1990

Candies in red, silver, and blue wrappers, endless supply

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of the Dannheisser Foundation

The artist invites you to eat a piece of caramel toffee. Each visitor activates the installation by taking a candy, which continually changes the shape of the mound. The Colby Museum will periodically refresh the candy pile. As the title and the colors of the wrappers suggest, this work references the United States. *USA Today* is also the name of a general-interest publication known for delivering brief content with a lot of images. How does eating this candy serve as a metaphor for media consumption?

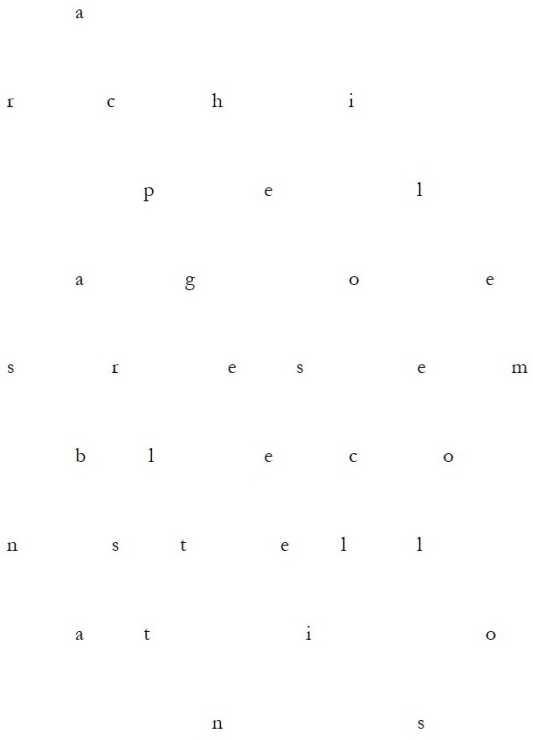


Craig Santos Perez

CHamoru
b. 1980; Mongmong-To'to-Maite', Guåhan (Guam)

"*ginen* sounding lines," from *From Unincorporated Territory [åmot]*, published 2023

Visual poem reproduced on vinyl
Courtesy the artist



Juana Valdés

b. 1963; Pinar del Río, Cuba

On the Malecón, 2000

Photograph of the performance *On the Malecón*, presented during the 8th Havana Biennial, and digital prints

Courtesy the artist

Words and cultures travel the seas along with people who migrate. Juana Valdés folded these paper boats from pages of *Cecilia Valdés* (1839), a novel about the intersections of race and class during the Spanish colonial period in Cuba. From Havana's seawall, known as the Malecón, Valdés released these boats into the Caribbean. This performance happened six years after the *balsero* crisis, when more than thirty-five thousand Cubans headed toward the United States on makeshift rafts and vessels. The austere economic conditions of the so-called Special Period drove this migratory surge—just one wave of many during the twentieth century.



Alfonso Ossorio

b. 1916; Manila, Philippines
d. 1990; New York, New York

Untitled (aka Chateau d'Yquem), 1981

Wood, metal, plastic, brass, mirrors, and paper

Colby College Museum of Art, gift of the Ossorio Foundation, 2017.653

"Even a little waste piece of plastic or a bone is just as much alive as the abstract concept of God."

—Alfonso Ossorio

Antlers, bottle labels, a hand offering a blessing—disparate found objects make up this sculptural assemblage. Alfonso Ossorio referred to his work as "congregations," a term that evokes coming together. He titled this sculpture after a French winery known for its expensive sweet wines enjoyed on celebratory occasions. The word "congregation" also carries religious connotations, a nod to the artist's Catholic upbringing. Look into the mirrors to see yourself amidst remnants of both modest and luxurious consumption. How do these materials connect to the divine?



Amber Robles-Gordon

b. 1977; San Juan, Puerto Rico

Guam Political (front) and *Guam Spiritual* (back), 2021

Mixed-media quilt

Courtesy the artist and Morton Fine Art, Washington, DC





Amber Robles-Gordon

b. 1977; San Juan, Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico Political II (front) and *Puerto Rico Spiritual II* (back), 2021

Mixed-media quilt

Courtesy the artist and Morton Fine Art, Washington, DC





Rogelio Báez Vega
b. 1974; Santurce, Puerto Rico

***ID. Parke-Davis & Co. Pharmaceutical, Henry Klumb, Carolina, Puerto Rico,* from the series *Henry's Myth*, 2021**
Oil, beeswax, and gold pigment on canvas
Collection of Warren James, New York

In this lustrous painting, Rogelio Báez Vega contrasts the clean lines of modern architecture against a lush tropical landscape. During the mid-twentieth century, the government policy of Operation Bootstrap transformed Puerto Rico from an agricultural economy to an industrialized economy, a change also reflected in the architectural landscape. German architect Henry Klumb designed the building you see here, along with several other built environments in Puerto Rico. The tax incentives that brought US companies to the island ended in 2006, leading to the abandonment of corporate campuses like this one. The painting conveys a sense of place and its history, recalling a bygone era of economic development, now poised for nature to reclaim.



Mariana Ramos Ortiz
b. 1997; Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

***Cartografías alternas (Los Pozos) / Alternate Cartographies (Los Pozos)*, 2025**
UV-cured pigment on compressed sand
Courtesy the artist

This sculptural print on sand draws attention to its own ruptures. The pictured beach is in Cabo Rojo on the southwestern side of Puerto Rico, a contested site given the competing demands of tourism and the area's archaeological and ecological value to local communities. Notice the cracks forming on the surface and within the layers of sand. This work will crumble as it travels to this exhibition's other venues, transforming into its next state of being. The remnants of the original sculpture will serve as a lingering record while it changes over time.

—Anela Gallegos, Colby College '25



Juan Sánchez

b. 1954; Brooklyn, New York

Aquí no hay luz, 1995–96

Oil, acrylic, sand, oil stick, and laser prints on canvas

Colby College Museum of Art, museum purchase from the Jere Abbott Acquisitions Fund, 2025.029

Juan Sánchez layers West African symbols over nude figures whose faces are hidden by Puerto Rican flags, alongside handwritten text in Spanish and English. “¿Que te mando hermando [hermano]? What should I send you brother?” This question opens a poem dedicated to Elizam Escobar, the artist’s friend who fought for Puerto Rican independence and consequently served a lengthy prison sentence. The work’s title translates to “here there is no light,” speaking to the feeling of despair in captivity. Thirty years later, the title takes on an additional meaning, as frequent electrical blackouts continue to affect Puerto Rican households. In this painting, Sánchez—long revered as an artist and educator—pays homage to Puerto Rico’s rich cultural heritage and struggle for independence. What does the open hand on the right side add to these layered stories?



Roldy Aguero Ablao
CHamoru
b. 1982; Guåhan (Guam)

***Talaya' 3000*, 2023**
Digital print
Courtesy the artist

This self-portrait presents the artist enmeshed in a *talaya'* (fishing net), surrounded by colorful bursts of light. Roldy Aguero Ablao recalls fishing with their father along the shores of Guam, sharing their catch with family and friends. The US Navy has seized 29 percent of Guam for military installations, rendering ancestral lands inaccessible to CHamoru families who have historically relied on fishing for sustenance. Military activities have also led to coral bleaching, alluded to by Ablao's grayed body. Despite these challenges, the artist casts a defiant gaze.



Gisela McDaniel
CHamoru
b. 1995; Bellevue, Nebraska

***Put it down for her*, 2023**
Oil and found objects on canvas, audio
Courtesy the artist and Pilar Corrias, London

Gisela McDaniel's portraits are brought to life by the painted bodies of her subject-collaborators and the objects of personal significance that surround them—mementos that draw the past into the present. The woman here is Cara Flores, a CHamoru filmmaker and land rights activist, shown with her grandmother's machete across her bare legs. In the interview that accompanies this painting, Flores speaks of the generational trauma caused by the militarization of Guam. She enacts a form of activism rooted in the belief that the depression and anxiety of the CHamoru women who preceded her are not hers to carry, and so she puts them down, hopeful that "happiness always comes back."

—Avery Liou, Colby College '25

Click this link to listen to the interview.



Roquin-Jon Quichocho Siongco

CHamoru
b. 1997; Yigu, Guåhan (Yigo, Guam)

Tai Ulu, 2021

Photograph on canvas, pandanus leaves, and hair
Courtesy the artist

This installation highlights the material richness of the Mariana Islands. Tattoos and accessories embody and emphasize cultural identity. Roquin-Jon Quichocho Siongco appears in this self-portrait without a head, referring to the ancient CHamoru custom of preserving and venerating the skulls of ancestors. Though the Spanish condemned and forbade this tradition in the late seventeenth century, the value of respect for elders and ancestors remains. By using his own body, Siongco acknowledges his role as a culture bearer and future ancestor.



Isa Gagarin
CHamoru
b. 1986; Hagåtña, Guåhan (Guam)

***I Nina'na'lon-ñiha i Mapagåhes (What the Clouds Returned)*, 2026**
Watercolor, ink, and wax crayon on fabric and heat-fused plastic
Courtesy the artist

The center of this composition features a fragment of a *latte* stone—an ancient architectural structure found throughout the Mariana Islands. These monumental pillars of limestone or basalt were topped with cup-shaped capstones that supported canoe houses and other communal gathering spaces. Isa Gagarin takes inspiration from the *latte* stones rediscovered and formerly displayed at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, now successfully returned to the Marianas.

Click this link to read and listen to an associated Kåntan CHamorita, or CHamoru song, written and recorded by the artist.



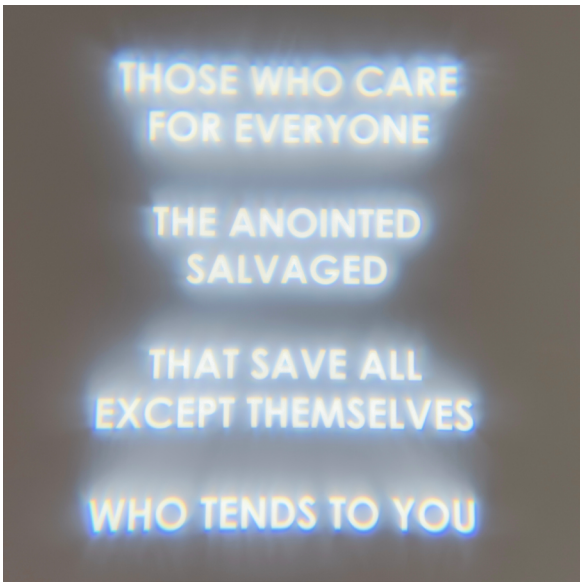
Jerome Reyes

b. 1983; San Francisco, California

Pharos (Covenants), 2026

Ellipsoidal stage light, light stand, projected text, and extension cord

Courtesy the artist



Imelda Cajipe Endaya
b. 1949; Manila, Philippines

***Sugapa ang Pinoy sa Dayuhang Putahe (Colonial Mentality Tablecloth)*, 1989**
Textile, paint, and graphite on found tablecloth
Courtesy the artist and Silverlens, Manila and New York

On a found tablecloth, Imelda Cajipe Endaya has painted fruits and handwritten Tagalog text originally penned by Filipino scholar Domingo Landicho. The text pleads for a cure to the psychological plague that is colonial mentality, for instance the belief that "anything foreign is lovely, and our own is inferior." Cajipe Endaya made this work in the context of the World Bank pressuring the Philippines to adopt import liberalization policies that stimulated global economic growth at the expense of local agriculture industries. Landicho ends on a positive note: "There is light in the darkness, morning will come."



Celia-Yunior

Celia Irina González Álvarez
b. 1985; Havana, Cuba

Yunior Aguiar
b. 1984; Havana, Cuba

Habana, 15 segundos (Havana, 15 Seconds), 2008
Video (color, sound, 2:07 min.)
Courtesy the artists

Habana, 15 segundos (Havana, 15 Seconds) shows the brief removal and replacement of an air conditioner in the wall of a Havana apartment. As an aging Soviet-manufactured machine is de-installed, a temporary opening exposes the street below, collapsing the boundary between interior and city. For a few seconds, cooled air gives way to heat, noise, and movement before a new Chinese-made unit seals the space once again. This moment condenses decades of shifting geopolitical conditions into a brief rupture. It suggests that experiences of domestic comfort and control are not entirely personal, but shaped by larger, often unseen political systems.

—Henry Merges, Anne Lunder Leland Curatorial Fellow



Reynier Leyva Novo
b. 1983; Havana, Cuba

***The desire to die for others (El deseo de morir por otros)*, 2012**

Machete Antonio Maceo
Machete Máximo Gómez
Machete Manuel Sanguily
Machete Quintín Bandera
Revolver Carlos Manuel de Céspedes
Revolver Calixto García Iñiguez
Revolver José Martí
Bullet Francisco (Panchito) Gómez Toro

Polyester resin casts of three revolvers, four machetes, and one bullet

Courtesy the artist and Lisa Sette Gallery, Phoenix

Look closely and notice the tiny scratches and marks on these replicas of weapons owned by the leaders of Cuba's three nineteenth-century wars for independence against Spain. Reynier Leyva Novo gained permission to make molds of the original objects, casting them in the glasslike material of polyester resin. During Cuba's wars, the utilitarian machete became an iconic symbol of a people's uprising. Nearly all the men who owned these blades and firearms died on the battlefield, including José Martí, the poet and philosopher widely recognized as the father of Cuban independence.



María Magdalena Campos-Pons

b. 1959; Matanzas, Cuba

She Always Knew of the Space In-Between, 2019

Gouache, watercolor, watercolor pencil, acrylic ink, and peacock feather on paper

Courtesy the artist and Gallery Wendi Norris, San Francisco



Lilian Garcia-Roig

b. 1966; Havana, Cuba

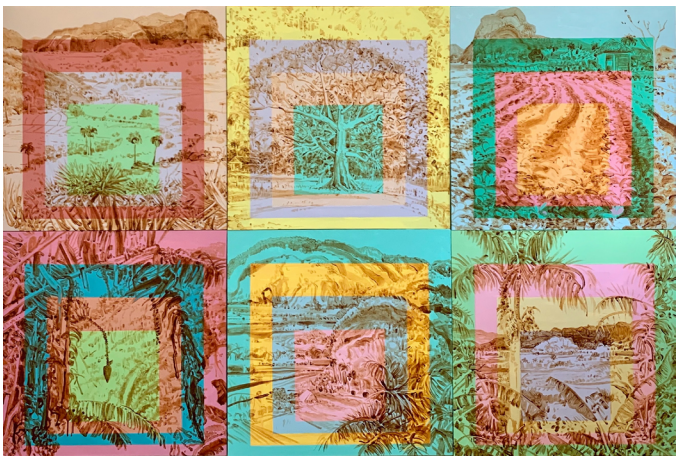
Hecho con Cuba: Homage to Viñales, 2022

Handmade Cuban soil pigment and acrylic on canvas

Courtesy the artist

In this series, Lilian Garcia-Roig incorporated soil into pigments to depict the landscapes from which she harvested the materials. Cuba's Viñales Valley is home to *mogotes*, the distinct steep-sided hills seen in several of these paintings. The ceiba (kapok) tree anchoring the top row is an important spiritual symbol for multiple Cuban cultures. For practitioners of the Afro-Caribbean tradition of Santería, the sacred tree houses divine spirits. For Catholics, the ceiba is associated with the Virgin Mary. The work's title translates to "made with Cuba," suggesting that the land is not just a subject of the work, but also the artist's partner.

—Stella Gonzalez, Colby College '22



Ana Mendieta

b. 1948; Havana, Cuba

d. 1985; New York, New York

Silueta Sangrienta, 1975

Super-8 film transferred to HD digital media (color, silent, 2:16 min.)

Colby College Museum of Art, museum purchase by the Jere Abbott Acquisition Fund in partnership with the New Media Arts Consortium, a collaboration of the art museums at Bowdoin College, Brandeis University, Colby College, Mount Holyoke College, and Skidmore College, 2017.387



Carlos Villa

b. 1936; San Francisco, California
d. 2013; San Francisco, California

Where My Uncles Went, 1996

Gesso, wood, hat, Plexiglas with vinyl lettering, and engraved bronze plate

Courtesy the Carlos Villa Estate and Silverlens, Manila and New York

A fedora hovers in front of text describing movement from one place to another. In this door-like sculpture, Carlos Villa pays tribute to the *manong* generation, a wave of mostly Filipino men who came to the United States in the 1920s and 1930s. The *manongs* (an honorific for an older man) worked as itinerant laborers on farms along the West Coast, and eventually formed coalitions with Chicano agricultural workers—an act of solidarity that led to the formation of important labor unions. After retirement, many *manongs* lived in San Francisco's iconic International Hotel, a low-income single-room-occupancy residential building. The "I-Hotel" later became a site of protest against displacement and gentrification in the San Francisco Bay Area. What do the fedora and the doorway convey about the lives of these *manongs*?



Stephanie Syjuco

b. 1974; Manila, Philippines

Afterimages (Obstruction of Vision), 2021

Photogravure printed on *gampi* mounted on paper

Colby College Museum of Art, museum purchase from the Jere Abbott Acquisitions Fund, 2024.047.1

Stephanie Syjuco crumples photographs of photographs, obscuring the features and details of the subjects and their settings. This imagery comes from an archival record of Filipinos exhibited at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. Staged on the heels of the Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War that brought the Philippine archipelago under US colonial control, the ethnological display perpetuated harmful perspectives that persist to this day. What does this artistic process of concealment tell us about how we understand our own histories?



Stephanie Syjuco
b. 1974; Manila, Philippines

***Afterimages (Field of Vision)*, 2021**
Photogravure printed on *gampi* mounted on paper
Colby College Museum of Art, museum purchase from the Jere Abbott Acquisitions Fund, 2024.047.5

Stephanie Syjuco crumples photographs of photographs, obscuring the features and details of the subjects and their settings. This imagery comes from an archival record of Filipinos exhibited at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. Staged on the heels of the Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War that brought the Philippine archipelago under US colonial control, the ethnological display perpetuated harmful perspectives that persist to this day. What does this artistic process of concealment tell us about how we understand our own histories?



Thea Canlas

b. 1983; Quezon City, Philippines

Export Quality (Value Studies: Uniforms), 2023

Machine-embroidered piña cloth, white sand, salt, pearls, and teeth

Courtesy the artist

Piña (pineapple) cloth is usually reserved for *barongs*, or outfits worn on formal occasions in the Philippines. Here, Thea Canlas uses the fabric to elevate a workman's jumpsuit and a maid's uniform. Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) make up a largely invisible labor force around the world, building cities, caring for other families, and sending money home. These remittances shore up the Philippine economy, and the laborers are considered *bagong bayani*, or the nation's new heroes.



Teresita Fernández

b. 1968; Miami, Florida

Archipelago(Garland), 2020

Charcoal

Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Seoul, and London

Teresita Fernández took the coastal contours of Caribbean islands and fused them together to create the new form that is this wall sculpture. In her artistic practice, Fernández does not present a specific view, as in a traditional landscape, but questions perspective itself. She notes, "As a term, 'landscape' conjures up a passive, bucolic sensibility that makes people pay attention, as though they understand what it means and are not threatened by it.… I always wonder: Whose landscape?" Following the artist's line of questioning, what do the sculpture's title and material suggest to you?



Mariquita "Micki" Davis
CHamoru
b. 1982; Gainesville, Georgia

***Ma'lak na puti'on tåsi, chalåni i sahyan-måmi (The Naval Gazers) / Radiant star of the ocean, guide our vessel (The Naval Gazers)*, 2026**
Cyanotype on canvas
Courtesy the artist

A massive, spectacularly blue picture, commissioned specifically for this exhibition, hangs above you on the frieze of this gallery. Mariquita "Micki" Davis made this cyanotype through a photographic process that uses sunlight, water, and photosensitive chemicals. The woman looking down on the gallery is Davis's mother, reimagined in the guise of Fu'una, the goddess who made the world in Guam's creation story. The subtitle of the work is a play on "navel gazing," a term for self-absorption. Through a purposeful misspelling, Davis redirects attention toward the strong presence of the US Navy on Guam's lands and seas.



Sara Jimenez
b. 1984; London, Canada

***the sea breathing us in and out*, 2026**
Ceramic
Courtesy the artist

To make this immersive ceramic wall sculpture, Sara Jimenez took inspiration from the Main Gate of Fort Santiago in Intramuros, a walled district of Manila that is home to well-preserved Spanish colonial-era architecture. This arched gate was a terminus of the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade (1565–1815), a maritime route connecting the Philippines to Mexico. Fort Santiago is sited alongside the Pasig River, whose aerial-view outline you can see as negative space in Jimenez's ceramic archway. The mouth of the river connects land and sea, and the archway beckons us to imagine ourselves at a threshold that once linked different sides of the world.



Daniel Lind-Ramos

b. 1953; Loíza, Puerto Rico

Vencedor: 1797, 2018–19

Mixed media

Rollins Museum of Art, the Alfond Collection of Contemporary Art at Rollins College, gift of Barbara '68 and Theodore '68 Alfond

Displayed atop a high base, this sculptural assemblage of natural and human-made found objects commands space, much like a traditional equestrian statue. Community members often gift objects to the artist, who also salvages items from the streets and beaches of his hometown. Daniel Lind-Ramos created this sculpture to commemorate the Black Puerto Ricans who defended their land in a battle against the British in 1797. The *vencedor*, or victor, carries a machete, an agricultural tool that later became a symbol of anti-colonial resistance and independence. How do these materials and the way they were sourced contribute to your understanding of the work?



Beatriz Santiago Muñoz

b. 1972; San Juan, Puerto Rico

Ojos para mis enemigos, 2014

Video (color, sound, 14:14 min.)

Courtesy the artist

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz's camera follows a man as he walks through a US Navy base in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, ten years after its decommissioning. Inside empty rooms we see an iguana scurrying, bats fluttering, and ants congregating. Birds chirp, twigs crunch underfoot, and water drips, flows, and pools to reflect the sky above. The film, whose title translates as "eyes for my enemies," documents a temporary possibility, as the decaying military infrastructure plays host to many wild creatures. Against the backdrop of increasing tensions in the Caribbean, the US Navy reopened this base in late 2025.



Sarah Sudhoff

b. 1977; Honolulu, Hawai‘i

Ribbon Wars, from the series *Outlier*, 2022

Archival pigment print

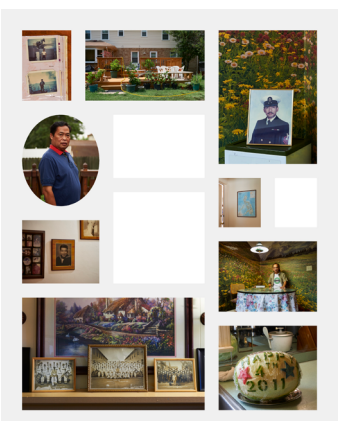
Courtesy the artist

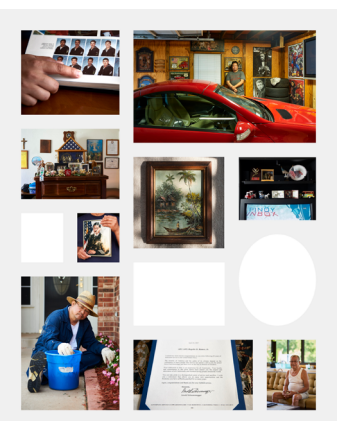
The Cuban American artist Sarah Sudhoff comes from a military family; her US Navy pilot father would routinely be away serving on an aircraft carrier for months or years at a time. Here, Sudhoff digitally mirrors an image of her own daughter posing for the camera. The girl plays dress-up with accessories that evoke military awards for valor or indicators of rank. The resulting image attends to the larger context of international warfare through a child's eyes. A military life affects the entire family.



Sherwin Rivera Tibayan
b. 1982; Subic Bay, Philippines

***Untitled Collage Frame #1* and *#2*, from the series *Filipino American Navy*, 2025**
Archival pigment prints
Courtesy the artist





Miguel Luciano

b. 1972; San Juan, Puerto Rico

Cracker Juan, 1998

Archival pigment print

Courtesy the artist



Miguel Luciano
b. 1972; San Juan, Puerto Rico

***Plátano Pride*, 2006**
Archival pigment print
Courtesy the artist



Maia Cruz Palileo
b. 1979; Chicago, Illinois

***The Old Table*, 2014**
Oil on canvas
Collection of Marissa Alperin



Maia Cruz Palileo

b. 1979; Chicago, Illinois

Still Life with Banana Catsup, 2014

Oil on canvas mounted on panel

Courtesy the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago



Guma' Gela'

Roldy Aguero Ablao
CHamoru
b. 1982; Guåhan (Guam)

Såhi Velasco
CHamoru
b. 1988; Tachikawa, Japan

Tinayuyot (Prayer), 2020
Altar, video (color, sound, 5:16 min.),
and participatory activity
Courtesy the artists

Tinayuyot (Prayer) explores the spiritual and sensual dimensions of CHamoru foodways. Here, sugarcane, coconut oil, achiote, chili pepper, and coconut milk are substances of ritual, care, and healing. In the video, the artists pour and press these ingredients onto their bodies. Erotic gestures unfold slowly, awakening attentiveness to touch, taste, and scent. Through this sensory experience, Guma' Gela' ("house of the queer" in CHamoru) directs prayer toward queer CHamoru bodies, reclaiming ancestral knowledge as an embodied practice shaped by survival, intimacy, and continuity across land and sea.

—Henry Merges, Anne Lunder Leland Curatorial Fellow

What foods bring you home? Draw or write about them here.



Edra Soto

b. 1971; San Juan, Puerto Rico

Happy Hour, La Hora Feliz, 2020

Video (color, sound, 31:49 min.)

In collaboration with Jose Luis Benavides, John H. Guevara, and Sadie Woods

Courtesy the artist

In this dreamlike video, Edra Soto prepares hors d'oeuvres and cocktails at varying speeds to a soundtrack of upbeat salsa music and reggaeton. Clips and stills from Caribbean pop culture appear on-screen as Soto upends cans of SPAM and Cheez Whiz into a blender. These party appetizers speak to the ultra-processed foods common in the everyday Puerto Rican diet. Beneath this activity, a scrolling text provides an explanation for Puerto Rico's agricultural decline and reliance on imported food from the United States, served up alongside music history trivia.



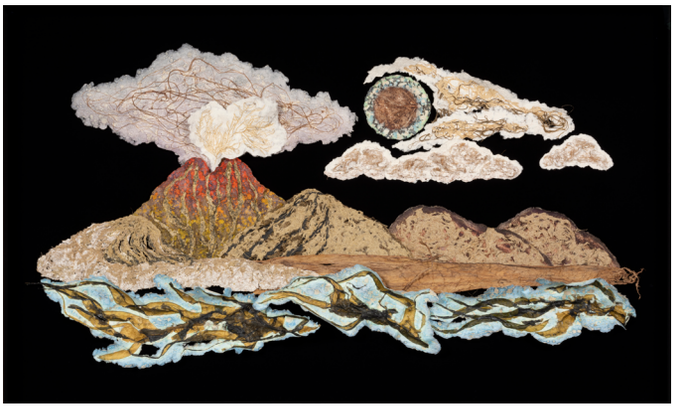
Enzo Camacho
b. 1985; Manila, Philippines

Ami Lien
b. 1987; Dallas, Texas

Social Volcano (restless waves), 2024
Watercolor, beeswax, abaca pulp, bagasse (sugarcane fiber), banana stalk, coconut husk, cogon grass, lemongrass, mica, pineapple tops, sugarcane leaves, water spinach, seashell, seaweed, and taro shoots

Colby College Museum of Art, museum purchase from the Jere Abbott Acquisitions Fund and the Mellon Art Purchase Fund, 2025.025

To compose this work, Enzo Camacho and Ami Lien foraged discarded foodstuffs, incorporating these materials into paper pulp. The volcano seen here is the Philippines' Mount Kanlaon, named after a precolonial goddess of creation, agriculture, and justice. Sociologists coined the term "social volcano" to refer to Ferdinand Marcos's dictatorship (1965–86), a tumultuous period characterized by martial law, human rights abuses, and rampant corruption. This volatile situation provoked the peaceful People Power Revolution, restoring democracy. Camacho and Lien look back to this history of protest as they continue to work with farmers on issues of land justice and food security.



Pacita Abad

b. 1946; Basco, Philippines

d. 2004; Singapore

Barracuda, 1996

Oil, padded canvas, and buttons on stitched and padded canvas

Courtesy the Pacita Abad Art Estate and Tina Kim Gallery



Camille Hoffman

b. 1987; Chicago, Illinois

Tabi tabi po (with respect) a pardon for our ways, 2026

Watercolor, acrylic, tropical landscape stock vinyl, reproduction of Charles Codman's *The Forest Near Portland, Maine,* and photos of salt from the Philippines and the Americas

Photographs created in collaboration with Andre Taylor

Courtesy the artist

"In my understanding of my Americanness, I feel as though I'm a citizen of a working experiment on Turtle Island. Everywhere I go, I understand that I am a guest, and negotiate and navigate what that identity means in each respective space."

—Camille Hoffman

This immersive walkway connects *Some American Stories,* the Colby Museum's long-term installation of its American art collection, to *Imagining an Archipelago.* The artist titles the work with a Tagalog phrase that has been in use since precolonial times, when animism was a dominant belief system. Filipinos say "tabi tabi po," roughly translating to "excuse me," to convey respect to unseen spirits when passing through nature, or to ask permission when entering new lands. How does Hoffman's site-specific installation connect, practically or metaphorically, to this land where the Colby Museum is located?



Gamaliel Rodríguez

b. 1977; Bayamón, Puerto Rico

Correctional Faith, 2022

Acrylic, ink, and gold leaf on paper

Colby College Museum of Art, museum purchase from the Museum Art Purchases Fund, 2023.043

In this large mixed-media artwork, Gamaliel Rodríguez contrasts vibrant colors with dark hues, making the negative spaces even more noticeable. The Puerto Rican jungle threatens to swallow this church, once a functioning place of worship in a youth correctional facility. The detention center operated from 1908 to 2003, after which its buildings stood abandoned for years until the town of Cabo Rojo turned the former campus into a recreational area for hiking and biking. These contexts and the title of the work raise the questions: Who or what is being corrected, and in whom or what might we have faith?



Bhen Alan

b. 1993; Tuguegarao City, Philippines

Madapaka, 2022

Woven rice sack and canvas, fans, coconut leaves, feathers, found yarn, found thread, fabrics, *palaspas* (palm fronds), rattan, plastic rosaries, and industrial plastic fence on stretcher bar

Courtesy the artist

Bhen Alan uses Indigenous creative traditions to transform the *banig*—a woven mat used for sitting, resting, and eating—into a sculptural assemblage with found objects. Woven rice sacks allude to the staple food of all Filipino meals, while plastic rosaries reference the Catholicism brought by the Spanish. The Filipino phrase *madapa ka* translates to "may you fall." Native speakers often transpose *p* and *f* in English, the official language of the Philippine government and the adopted tongue in diaspora. Say the title out loud to glean the wordplay.



Martha Atienza

b. 1981; Manila, Philippines

Anito 1, 2011–15

Video (color, sound, 8:08 min.)

Courtesy the artist and Silverlens, Manila and New York

This video captures the Ati-atihan Festival, an annual procession of community members on Bantayan Island in the central Philippines. *Ati-atihan* means "to be like the Atis," referring to the Indigenous peoples living in the region who adhere to animism, or the belief that all things are spiritually connected. The festival now also commemorates the arrival of Spanish Catholicism, seen in the sculptures of baby Jesus held aloft by attendees. Martha Atienza lowers the pitch of the festival's audio recording and plays the sound backward over the scenes.



María Magdalena Campos-Pons

b. 1959; Matanzas, Cuba

Freedom Trap, 2013

Polaroid Polacolor Pro photograph

Colby College Museum of Art, museum purchase from the Jere Abbott Acquisitions Fund, 2024.044



Judith Escalona

b. 1953; New York, New York

Imagining an Archipelago: Islands Project Convening, August 7–9, 2024, 2025

Video (color, sound, 20:07 min.)

Courtesy the artist



Works created during the papermaking workshop led by Enzo Camacho and Ami Lien, Islands Project Convening, 2024

Abaca, birch, cattail, gray birch, hay-scented fern, kelp, paper birch, Queen Anne's lace, sweetfern, seaweed, staghorn sumac, woolgrass, wild carrot, and other materials foraged from Allen Island, Maine

Participants included Jessamine Batario, Erendina Delgadillo, Judith Escalona, Isa Gagarin, Sofía Gallisá Muriente, Lilian Garcia-Roig, Elisa Germán, Camille Hoffman, Jillian Impastato, Amber Robles-Gordon, Roquin-Jon Quichocho Siongco, Juana Valdés, and Adriana Zavala

