

MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA presents *Close to You*, opening April 3

Exhibition features the work of six artists engaging with the feeling of kinship

North Adams, MA, March 3, 2021 – MASS MoCA presents *Close to You*, a group exhibition that gathers the work of artists who probe the capacity of the visual arts to conjure feelings of closeness — both to others and to ourselves. On view from Saturday, April 3, through January 2022, in the Michael & Agnese Meehan Gallery, the exhibition features the work of **Laura Aguilar, Chloë Bass, Maren Hassinger, Eamon Ore-Giron, Clifford Prince King, and Kang Seung Lee.**

In its most ubiquitous form, “kinship” describes the bonds of a family, privileging relationships born of biology and of blood. *Close to You* adopts a more fluid framing of the term, expanding its boundaries to account for queer, amorphous, and solitary forms of intimacy. The exhibition frames kinship as a practice of care, foregrounding the ways in which a feeling of belonging can be a nurturing and restorative force.

“Organized during the earliest months of the COVID-19 pandemic, *Close to You* is an invitation to audiences to reflect upon kinship in the wake of loss — of life, or normalcy, of togetherness — with the hope of providing a space for respite and renewal,” says curator Nolan Jimbo, a second-year student in the Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art.

Close to You also considers the relationship between kinship and identity. In the United States, access to kinship has been historically obstructed — by law and public aversion — based on race and sexuality. In light of these inequities, the exhibition centers the practices of queer and BIPOC artists who envision ways of belonging that exceed the limits of heteronormativity, government recognition, and — in certain instances — even sociality. These artists recognize the deep connections formed between people, as well as affinities with places, materials, and histories.

Laura Aguilar’s self-portraits frame kinship as a relationship between self and place, rendering the artist’s nude body nearly indistinguishable from the surrounding desert terrain — an environment in which she felt a rare sense of belonging. Interconnectedness also materializes in **Maren Hassinger’s** *Love*, an installation made of pink plastic bags filled with human breath and love notes. **Eamon Ore-Giron’s** *Infinite Regress CXXVII* melds indigenous and craft traditions with twentieth-century modernisms, including Brazilian Neo-Concretism and Italian Futurism. Ore-Giron explores the psychological and emotional potentials of abstraction through the arrangement of elemental shapes and patterns, producing an introspective space for the viewer.

Within the intimate photographs of **Clifford Prince King**, kinship manifests between individuals, materializing in the everyday rituals and moments of tender embrace shared by Black queer men. *Close to You* includes newly commissioned photographs by King. **Kang Seung Lee's** sculpture, adopting the form of a hammock, provides a metaphorical resting place for ballet dancer and choreographer Goh Choo San, who died of an AIDS-related illness in 1987. Finding kinship within history, Lee excavates the memory of this queer Asian artist, preserving a lesser-known legacy susceptible to erasure. Finally, **Chloë Bass'** conceptual artwork foregrounds moments of intimacy experienced in the everyday, calling attention to typically unexamined acts or exchanges in order to destabilize assumptions about human social behavior.

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest centers for making and enjoying today's most evocative art. With vast galleries and a stunning collection of indoor and outdoor performing arts venues, MASS MoCA is able to embrace all forms of art: music, sculpture, dance, film, painting, photography, theater, and new, boundary-crossing works of art that defy easy classification. Much of the work we show in our light-filled spaces, on our technically sophisticated stages, and within our lovely network of late 19th-century courtyards is made here during extended fabrication and rehearsal residencies that bring hundreds of the world's most brilliant and innovative artists to North Adams all year round. For more information about MASS MoCA, visit www.massmoca.org.

About the Clark Art Institute–Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art

The Williams Graduate Program in the History of Art at the Clark Art Institute sponsors annual exhibitions by graduate students. Through this program, candidates for a Master's in Art History undertake all aspects of exhibition development, including scholarly research and writing, installation design, art handling and preparation, and exhibition promotion. MASS MoCA provides space, technical support, and curatorial oversight along the way. With a deep, hands-on understanding of all aspects of exhibition production, participants have gone on to become leading curators and arts administrators.

Press Contact

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