



:: For Immediate Release::

Syracuse University Art Museum Presents 'Steady/Retcon,' MFA Thesis Exhibition



Syracuse, NY-- The Syracuse University Art Museum is pleased to announce *Steady/Retcon* featuring the work of Studio Arts, Film and Media Arts, and Design Master of Fine Arts thesis candidates enrolled in the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Curated by Laura Dvorkin '06, *Steady/Retcon* features the work of ten contemporary artists, Sam Azghandi, Aaron Burleson, Manya Gadhok, Jana Herman, Xuan Liu, Lebogang Matseke, Valeria Oha, Shuoran Zhou, Zhu Zhu, and

Michael Christopher Zuhorski, who are evaluating and reframing their personal histories, traditional standards of art-making, and history as a whole.

Steady/Retcon is a part of a multi-venue exhibition divided among three Syracuse University exhibition spaces and features twenty-seven artists. The venues include the Syracuse University Art Museum, Point of Contact Gallery, and the Sue and Leon Genet Gallery.

The museum's presentation of the exhibition is free and open to the public beginning Thursday, March 31, and closing Sunday, May 15, 2022, in the Shaffer Art Building. The museum will host a reception on Thursday, April 7 from 5 - 7pm, followed by a talk with the exhibition curator Laura Dvorkin at 7pm in Shemin Auditorium. Museum hours are Tuesday-Sunday, 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., and on Thursdays until 8pm. Closed university holidays and Mondays.

Exhibition Overview

Traditionally a literary and cinematic technique, retcon is the abbreviation of retroactive continuity and means a new piece of information introduced to a story that alters the interpretation of a previously established narrative. Although it is a word infrequently used, it is omnipresent. Retcon is not just employed in a fictional context, read in a book, or viewed on a screen, but experienced in the world around us. In the current climate, we are absorbing new

information constantly (like it or not!), and it is challenging the way we see everything—day to day, hour to hour. Our internal database is developing at record speed. What was recognized as commonplace merely a year ago is being reexamined, and at times, by the entire world in unison.

The artists in this exhibition are evaluating and reframing their personal histories, traditional standards of art-making, and history as a whole. While in everyday life, the constant introduction of so-called facts and opinions appear erratic, the investigations held within the artworks in the exhibition are much more intentional, slower-paced, steady. They are careful and curious assessments removed from the web of media and into meticulously-presented ideas.

Here we have two applications of retcon—one that refers to the daily and ever-changing knowledge that we receive, and one that reflects the new details put forth by these artists through their work that will alter our perceptions. However small, each bit of information sets into motion a new interpretation of our environment, past, present, and future.

About the Artists

Sam Azghandi is an Iranian filmmaker, actor, editor, and sound designer. He is currently pursuing an M.F.A. program in film at the school of Visual Performing Arts in Syracuse. Most of his work explores themes of gender, race, and class in queer and immigrant lives. His projects have thus far been screened in Indianapolis, Palm Spring CA, Australia, Los Angeles, New York State, and Texas.

Aaron Burleson is a photographer born in Hartford, CT and raised in Glastonbury, CT, a suburb outside the state's capitol. His work deals with preservation, archiving, and evidence. His interest in photography stems from its ability to contain the trace of a person and to act as a form of communication. He has received a bachelor's in fine arts in photography from Hartford Art School.

Manyu Gadhok is an award-winning filmmaker and storyteller emphasizing on the real-life issues of real people. Currently pursuing graduate degree from Syracuse University, her first short film, *Soulmates*, has won 8 Awards, 15 Screenings, 2 Certificate 2 Grants and 240+ publications. She is professionally affiliated to Screenwriter's Association of India, and the Indian Film & Television Directors Association.

Jana Herman is an artist working with image and text, originally from Massachusetts. Her practice considers memory, forgetting and the evolution of understanding through time. She has assisted artists and educators across media and graduated from Oberlin College in 2015.

Xuan Liu is an interdisciplinary artist. She works conceptually through social engagement actions and performances, which offer places for her to examine strategies of dealing with real-life struggles. Her works have been exhibited internationally in New York, Paris, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

Lebogang Neo Matseke is a South African native filmmaker and screenwriter. She has studied three degrees around the world all of which are connected one way or another to her main love—the sharing of stories through various types of media. She has published a novella titled ‘Queen B.E.E.’ and received accolades for her documentary ‘Dear Whoever, Love Lebo’ and short script ‘The Rain Queen’s Wife’.

Valeria Chikaodile Oha was born to Nigerian parents who made sure she was exposed to their culture throughout her childhood. Currently, Valeria is working with mixed media to showcase the struggles of being a black woman in America. Her current body of work focuses on exploring the idea that society both demonizes and fetishes the black body.

Shuoran Zhou was born in Beijing, China. She makes wearable objects using mainly glass beads to address common stereotypes toward women’s social roles and aims at advocating women’s autonomy. Shuoran’s work has been exhibited internationally in Spain, China, United States as well as various online exhibitions.

Zhu Zhu grew up in a family with artistic tradition where art looked appealing to her when she was a child. She decided to choose art as her undergraduate study major as well as her life career. In 2018, Zhu Zhu came to the U.S and began to learn computer art. During this time, she started to try new ways to show her concept in her work. She makes experimental animation and some sculptures in her MFA degree.

Michael Christopher Zuhorski was born in Detroit, Michigan. In 2015 Michael received a BFA in Photography from the College for Creative Studies, in Detroit. Michael’s practice is concerned with gradual change, sustained attention, and the fragile relation between seeing and knowing.

About the Curator

Laura Dvorkin is the Co-curator of The Bunker Artspace: Collection of Beth Rudin DeWoody in West Palm Beach. She has worked with the Collection since 2008, managing large presentations of the Collection at institutions and the exhibitions that DeWoody curates. Dvorkin’s recent exhibitions include In The Absence of Light: Gesture, Humor and Resistance in The Black Aesthetic at the Rebuild Foundation, Chicago and A Very Anxious Feeling: Voices of Unrest in the American Experience at the Taubman Museum of Art in Roanoke, Virginia.

Dvorkin is the Associate Art Consultant for the Eventi Hotel, New York, Co-curator of 53 West 53, the Residential MoMA Expansion Tower, New York, and consults on acquisitions for private clients. Laura Dvorkin lives and works between New York City and West Palm Beach.

Exhibition Venues:

Syracuse University Art Museum

Shaffer Art Building

Exhibition dates: March 31- May 15, 2022

Opening reception: April 7, 5 - 7pm

Curatorial Talk: 7pm

Point of Contact Gallery

The Warehouse

350 West Fayette Street

Exhibition Dates: March 31- May 15, 2022

Opening reception: April 14, 5 - 7pm

Sue and Leon Genet Gallery

The Warehouse

350 West Fayette Street

Exhibition Dates: March 31- May 15, 2022

Opening reception: April 21, 5 - 7pm

About the Syracuse University Art Museum

The Syracuse University Art Museum is a teaching museum located on campus that acquires and preserves important works of art and uses its extensive collection to serve as a museum-laboratory for exploration, experimentation, and discussion. The Museum strives to foster diverse and inclusive perspectives by uniting students across campus with each other and the local and global community, engaging with artwork to bring us together and examining the forces that keep us apart. It welcomes all visitors to experience its exhibitions and public programs that promote original research, creative thinking, and increased mindfulness. The SU Art Museum is always free to all. For more information and to plan your visit, go to museum.syr.edu.

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