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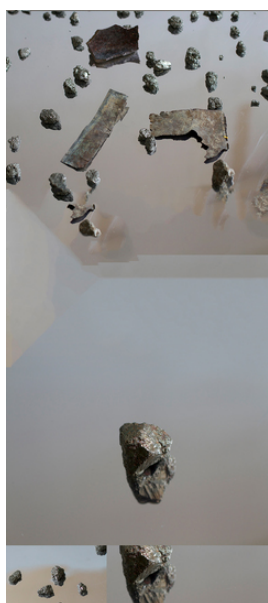
News



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EXTRACTED

Ranu Mukherjee blurs the lines between history, mythology and speculative fiction to confront the legacies of the California Gold Rush in a new exhibition.

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 2, 2015— Bay Area artist Ranu Mukherjee maps new terrain, layering Asian art, local history, mythology, and contemporary culture to question the legacies of the California Gold Rush in a new exhibition at the Asian Art Museum. Curated by Marc Mayer, senior educator of contemporary art, *Extracted* is on view Nov. 6, 2015–Aug. 14, 2016.

Extracted explores the story of gold and its impact on natural resources, labor, and shifting international economic power. “The exhibition speaks to the nature of speculation,” explains Mayer, “both in the economic sense—that of a risky financial investment with the expectation of a substantial gain—and also the contemplation of ideas around the unknown. In many ways,

it is emblematic of the cultural and economic landscape in the Bay Area.”

With a neo-futurist perspective, Mukherjee weaves together a cosmography—a geographical framework blending together empirical fact, hearsay, and broader imaginings to describe features of the heavens and earth. Inspired by an ancient Chinese mythological text, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, the artist attempts to map the near and the distant, and the visible and the hidden, to explore the unknown histories of the Gold Rush, from Chinese mining sites along the Yuba River to the implications of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the first significant law restricting immigration into the United States. *Extracted* resets the viewer’s compass, to eclipse notions of East and West and create a new orientation within a landscape where strange creatures dwell and historical events manifest in the eternal present of mythical time.

“The exhibition is, in some ways, an excavation of ghosts,” says Mukherjee. “It is an investigation of narratives of the future produced by the legacy of prospecting, and a contemplation of cultural resilience via the trajectories of attempted exclusionary politics.”

Placeholder 1, 2014, by Ranu Mukherjee (American, b. 1966). Chromogenic print. Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Wendi Norris. © Ranu Mukherjee..

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My intention is to create images that address their audience viscerally, imaginatively and speculatively.”

Developed to resonate with the museum’s 50th anniversary exhibition in spring 2016, *Extracted* features Mukherjee’s textiles, works on paper, and signature hybrid films alongside objects from the museum’s collection. *Extracted* will be presented in three parts, each featuring an additional installation of artwork and film, accumulating into an ongoing, ever-shifting exhibition.

Part One | Opens Nov. 6, 2015

Mukherjee explores the geography of Chinese mining sites along the Yuba River, Chinese graveyards in Auburn and Nevada City, California, and the extraction of natural resources from the earth.

Part Two | Opens Jan. 26, 2016

Drawing links between wealth and currency, legacy and longevity, Mukherjee focuses on a key object in the museum’s Chinese art collection: a 2nd century money tree, which was placed in tombs to symbolize wishes for good fortune in the hereafter.

Part Three | Opens May 3, 2016

Mukherjee focuses on the mythical figure of the Queen Mother of the West (Xi Wangmu), an important goddess in ancient Chinese mythology and later in Daoism who rules over a western paradise where the peaches of immortality grow and souls reside after death. Often referred to as the Golden or Metal Mother, she is the highest female goddess in the Daoist pantheon. Mukherjee investigates descriptions of the Queen Mother of the West and considers her role as a teacher, judge and guardian of female believers in ancient China.

The oeuvre of Ranu Mukherjee comprises video works, ink paintings on paper, printed and painted silk wall hangings, and collaborative sound projects. Her work traces the figure of the nomad throughout collages of non-Western cultures and mythologies, and it juxtaposes them with artifacts of the Western world, from old Hollywood to remnants of British colonialism. Her work presents encounters with creolization, ecology, science fiction and the unknown. Mukherjee explores narrative excess by drawing links between present-day global capitalism and traditions of cultural stereotypes still residual in our collective psyche. Mukherjee received an MFA in painting from the Royal College of Art in London and a BFA in painting and film from the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston.

This exhibition was organized by the Asian Art Museum.

ABOUT THE ASIAN ART MUSEUM

The Asian Art Museum—Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture is one of San Francisco’s premier arts institutions and home to a world-renowned collection of more than 18,000 Asian art treasures spanning 6,000 years of history. Through rich art experiences, centered on historic and contemporary artworks, the Asian Art Museum unlocks the past for visitors, bringing it to life while serving as a catalyst for new art, new creativity and new thinking.

Information: 415.581.3500 or www.asianart.org

Location: 200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

Hours: The museum is open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10 AM to 5 PM. From Feb. 26 through Oct. 8, 2015, hours are extended on Thursdays until 9 PM. Closed Mondays, as well as New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

General Admission: FREE for museum members, \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors (65+), college students with ID, and youths (13–17). FREE for children under 12 and SFUSD students with ID. General admission on Thursdays after 5 PM is \$5 for all visitors (except those under 12, SFUSD students, and museum members, who are always admitted FREE). General admission is FREE to all on Target First Free Sundays (the first Sunday of every month). A surcharge may apply for admission to special exhibitions.

Access: The Asian Art Museum is wheelchair accessible. For more information regarding access: 415.581.3598; TDD: 415.861.2035.

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