

ASIAN ART MUSEUM  
Chong-Moon Lee Center  
for Asian Art & Culture  
[www.asianart.org](http://www.asianart.org)

200 Larkin Street  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
T 415.581.3711  
[pr@asianart.org](mailto:pr@asianart.org)

**Asian**

**News**



PRESS CONTACT:

Zac T. Rose  
415.581.3566

[zrose@asianart.org](mailto:zrose@asianart.org)

## **“Even immigrants get their hearts broken” *Testimony* at the Asian Art Museum**



February 21, San Francisco — American immigration policy can be read as a history of anti-Asian bias — from the Chinese Exclusion Act that closed borders more than a century ago to the current administration’s “Muslim Ban.” Opening with an evening event on April 5 and on view until June 10, *Testimony* provides an intimate, years-in-the-making account of the impact of these policies. An installation of photographs and text by San Francisco-based artist Eliza Gregory, *Testimony* foregrounds the lived experiences of ten documented and undocumented immigrants in the Bay Area.

The men and women chronicled in *Testimony* — DREAMers, refugees, entrepreneurs, from Asia, Latin America, and Europe — share their coming-to-San-Francisco stories through large-scale portraits, ephemera, and long-form interviews. Like the affidavits, family photos, and personal documents that support an official visa application, Gregory’s installation inverts the box-checking of government legal forms to create subtle, moving portraits of her subjects: a legible “testimony” that is also profoundly human.

*Testimony* offers counterpoints to the contemporary, deeply troubled dialogue around immigration. “When examined through the lens of individual experiences, so many of our policies seem not just bad, cruel, or inefficient but truly absurd,” says Gregory. “What seems clearest to me is that we need a new approach, a new angle, a new set of ideas to engage the issues raised by human movement between nations. We desperately need to start asking different questions. And listening to the answers.”

Nancy as a Baby, Arriving at SFO from Manila in 1972, from the series *Testimony* by Eliza Gregory (American).  
Digital photograph. © Eliza Gregory.

Curated by Senior Educator for Public Programs Marc Mayer along with Caren Gutierrez, Associate Director of Education and Interpretation, *Testimony* is an outgrowth of Mayer's popular Artist Drawing Club series. For five years, Mayer has worked closely with the local creative community to organize original time-based art exhibitions and performances on-site at the museum. Starting together in 2014, Mayer and Gregory collaborated on programs and the publication of a 2015 book based on Gregory's Artist Drawing Club project that would grow into *Testimony*.

"*Testimony* has always been about building relationships. I was curious about what a longer-term, socially engaged artist project in a museum could look like," explains Mayer. "The subjects come from Eliza's own life, connections she made with organizations that work within these communities, and the result is a sensitive and timely exploration into the San Francisco immigrant experience at multiple levels, from the mundane to the cutting. As one participant put it, 'even immigrants get their hearts broken.'"

On April 5, an opening reception for *Testimony* will take place from 6:30–8:30 PM with an opportunity to meet the artist and participants — from China, Germany, Guatemala, Iran, Korea, Mexico, Nepal, the Philippines, Russia and Vietnam — who shared their stories for the exhibition. Printed broadsheets with full interviews will be available free for visitors to take home with them throughout the run of the exhibition.

"By providing historical context within a specific cultural framework, the modern story of the immigrant in American society is one that we are uniquely poised to tell," says Asian Art Museum director and CEO Jay Xu. "*Testimony* underscores how art, in every age, transforms the political into the personal in the most unexpected and therefore the most powerful ways."

The Asian Art Museum will be the only venue for *Testimony*. *Testimony* is organized by the Asian Art Museum and funded in part by the California Arts Council, a state agency.

## 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 from throughout Asia 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](http://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. Hours are extended on Thursdays until 9 PM February through September. 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 youth (13–17). FREE for children under 12, SFUSD students with ID, and active members of the U.S. Armed Forces (+ up to five family members). General admission is FREE to all on Target First Free Sundays (the first Sunday of every month). On Thursday evenings, Feb. 23 – Sep. 28, 2018, 5–9 PM, \$10 general admission.

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

[www.asianart.org](http://www.asianart.org)

Never miss a moment: @asianartmuseum

####