

Alfredo Jaar

“Untitled (Water),” 1990

lightbox and framed mirrors, dimensions variable
On loan from the Steve and Nancy Oliver Collection, Geyserville

This dramatic installation recounts the perilous journey of Vietnamese exiles. A double-sided light box parallels small mirrors. The image facing viewers depicts the waters outside of Hong Kong. Soothing and sedating, the mirrors on the wall disrupt this quietude, reflecting the image of a Vietnamese exile from the opposing side of the light box. His reflection reminds us that the blue swells of the sea are always a challenge, if not an impassable obstacle: an appropriate metaphor for his uncertain and unsettling conditions.

Alfredo Jaar is an internationally known Chilean artist based in New York who creates social commentary or focuses on an injustice in the world through his art. In 1989, Jaar visited Hong Kong, which became a significant destination for Vietnamese exiles. The “boat People” board small, flimsy vessels and endure intolerable conditions as they sail toward prospects of a better life. Many of these men, women, and children are plucked out of the waters by patrol boats as they drift outside Hong Kong harbor. As refugees they face two equally appalling choices: they may return to Vietnam to face continued poverty and persecution, or land in Hong Kong to be held in an overcrowded detention camp until their status—their future—is determined by authorities. Some Vietnamese exiles spend years awaiting or appealing their fate. Only a small number are granted refugee status: the odds are unfavorable.



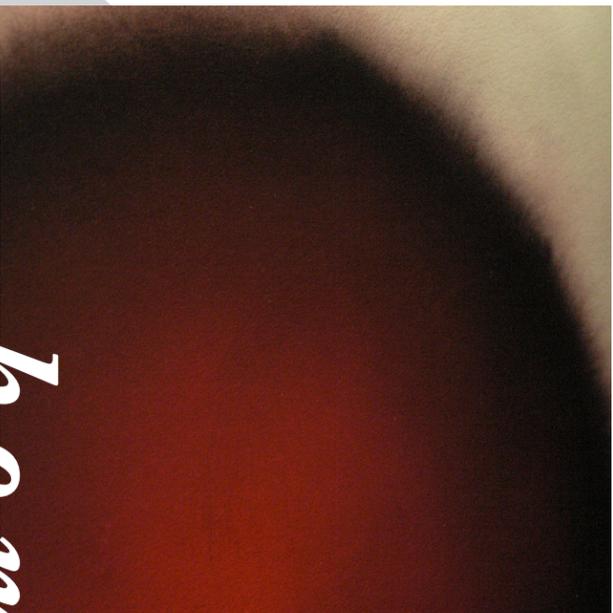
Ann Hamilton

“Face to Face,” (#2 in the series of 65 images), 2001

pigment print in wood frame
dimensions: variable x 10 inches (image) 22 x 18 inches (framed)
On loan from the Steve and Nancy Oliver Collection, Geyserville

In her series entitled Face to Face, Ann Hamilton experiments with exchanging one sense organ for another—the mouth and fingers, for example, become like an eye with the addition of miniature pinhole cameras. In this photograph, #2 in a series of 65 images, the artist captures her son standing still, face to face, or “soul to soul,” says the artist. The shape of the mouth is very much the same shape as the eye. The image becomes almost like the pupil inverting the location of one sense to another part of the body. This dislocation or “slippage,” as Hamilton refers to it, is one way that we come to see something or someone differently.

Ann Hamilton was born in 1956 in Lima, Ohio. She trained in textile design at the University of Kansas, and later received an MFA from Yale University. While her degree is in sculpture, textiles and fabric have continued to be an important part of her work, which includes installations, photographs, videos, performances, and objects. In 1993, she won a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship and later represented the United States at the Venice Biennale in 1999. After teaching at the University of California at Santa Barbara from 1985 to 1991, she returned to Ohio, where she currently lives and works.



Anish Kapoor

“Untitled,” 2003

gouache on paper, 52 x 67.4 cm
On loan from the Frank and Kay Woods Collection, Healdsburg

Red is a color that artist Anish Kapoor feels very strongly about. Being half Indian, he grew up with this color as a sign of spirituality. It is also the color of the interior of our bodies. In his series of what he refers to as “wounds,” including this print, Kapoor brings the inside, out, using raw powered pigments of vivid hues on paper, representing a feeling of inner radiance. His intention is to engage the viewer, evoking mystery through the works’ simple beauty and dark cavity. This practice was inspired by the mounds of brightly coloured pigments found in the markets and temples of India.

Anish Kapoor was born in India (1954) to a Hindu father and a Jewish-Iraqi mother. He moved to London in 1973 and began working in wood and mixed media. In the 1980's, his work switched directions and he began working in stone and metal. His art education includes the Hornsey College of Art, 1973-1977, and Chelsea School of Art, 1977-1978, both in London. Kapoor represented Great Britain at the Venice Biennale in 1990 and was awarded the Turner Prize in 1991. He has held solo exhibitions at the Tate in London, Reina Sofia in Madrid, and Kunsthall Basel in Switzerland. His work is collected worldwide, notably by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Guggenheim in Bilbao, and Tate Modern in London. Anish Kapoor currently lives in London, although frequently visits India.



Duane Michals

Title Unknown, circa 1980s

On loan from the Barbara Graves and Craig Rosser Collection, Sebastopol

Duane Michals photos are set-up and surreal, anonymous portraits. He never went to photography school and considered himself FREE in not learning the rules. In 1958, during a three week trip to Russia, he realized his passion for photography and used a camera borrowed from a friend to take portraits of people he encountered during his travels. The work has been described as “plain, yet elegant,” and led to Michals’ first public exhibition. He never owned a studio and preferred to photograph people in their environment.

Born in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, in 1932, Michals grew up in a typical working class family. His father was a steel worker and his mother raised the family. He became interested in photography at age 14 when he began taking Saturday afternoon water-color classes at Carnegie institute in Pittsburgh. In 1953, he received a B.A. from the University of Denver, and went on to enroll in the Parsons School of Design in 1956 with thoughts of becoming a graphic designer. Michals currently has more than 20 books in print, has had exhibitions in France, Great Britain, and the United States, and has won numerous awards.