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Art exhibit explores Asian diaspora experience, with work from LA, Chinese, Korean artists



An upcoming art exhibition titled “(Be)Longing: Asian Diasporic Crossings” will be held inside the Glendale Central Library from July 20 to Sept. 22. Pictured is video still from “Chorus of The Displaced,” 2024, by artist Kyong Boon Oh. (Courtesy, Kyong Boon Oh)



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GLENDALE – Anahid Oshagan and Ara Oshagan know a thing or two about diasporas.

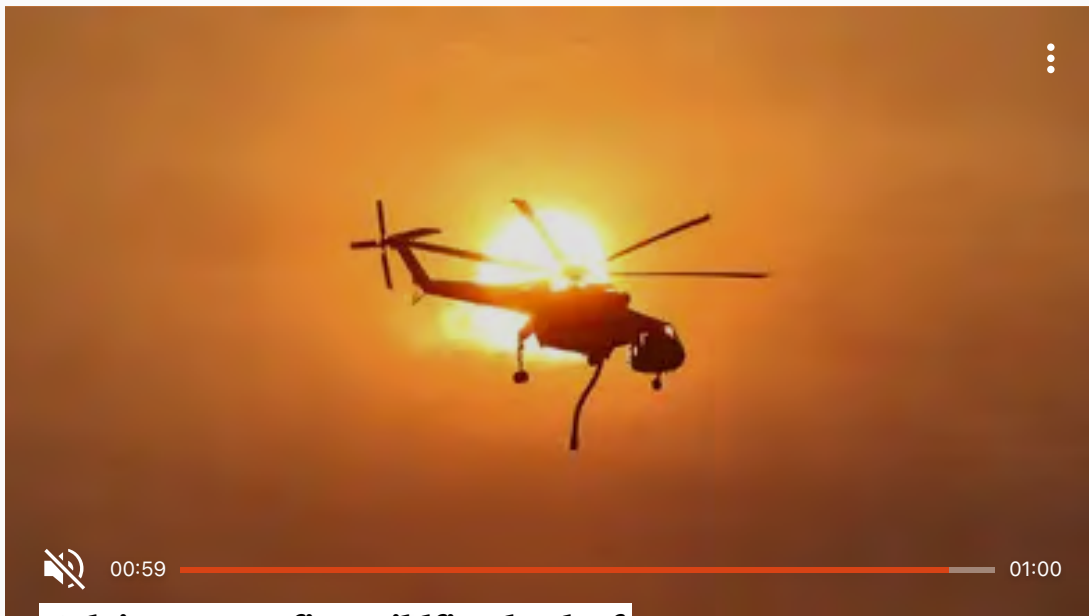
The Armenian husband-and-wife duo, and curators at the [Glendale Library, Arts & Culture Department's](#) ReflectSpace Gallery, come from families that lived the immigrant experience of displacement from their homelands.

Both of their families hail from Western Armenia, surviving different continents, ultimately with the pair ending up in Southern California.

Given that background, their latest project is not unfamiliar territory. [ReflectSpace Gallery](#) will host an art exhibition titled “(Be)Longing: Asian Diasporic Crossings” inside the Glendale Central Library, from July 20 to Sept. 22.

The exhibition will feature seven Asian artists from Los Angeles, Korea and China.

It “delves into the multi-generational afterlives of war and displacement and East-West Asian diasporic placemaking through maps, sculptures, photography, archives, video, and layered materiality”, according to ReflectSpace Gallery's [website](#).



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Through the artwork presented, the exhibition asks viewers to consider diasporic histories, spaces, and narratives. The art will explore the concept of belonging through historical events, borders, war and displacement.

The artists will present their individual journeys and concepts of belonging.

“We like to include the witness narrative, so people that have been impacted by whatever issue we’re working on,” said Anahid Oshagan. “So the immersive, experiential and witness narrative is really a powerful component of the exhibits that we curate.”



An upcoming art exhibition titled “(Be)Longing: Asian Diasporic Crossings” will be held inside the Glendale Central Library from July 20 to Sept. 22. Pictured is an archival pigment print on canvas, pin, thread stainless steel/copper/aluminum wire, 2024, by artist Kyong Boon Oh. (Courtesy, Kyong Boon Oh)

The artists featured are: Annette Miae Kim, Kyong Boon Oh, Sun Siran, Xia Yan, Gil Woong Kim, Donah Lee, and Jennifer Cheh.

Ara Oshagan said ReflectSpace Gallery is one of the few art spaces exclusively dedicated to social justice issues.

He explained that “how the community learns different histories, different ways that artists reflect on these histories, different ways that artists look at the community and heal over time” is what is relevant.

“We understand and try to incorporate different communities that also come from ruptured backgrounds and experiences,” said Anahid Oshagan. “That common ground really makes us work well with the different communities and artists that are represented in the ongoing exhibitions at ReflectSpace.”

Annette Miae Kim is an artist and an associate professor at USC’s Sol Price School of Public Policy. This will be her first exhibition with ReflectSpace Gallery.

“I’m Korean American, both of my parents immigrated from North and South Korea,” said Kim. “A lot of my work is about trying to have a sense of belonging in this world. My family have been refugees, immigrants, citizens and foreigners living abroad.”

Kim, who is currently working on scroll maps, said that her work is about movement, language and showing how people communicate. According to Kim, connection, while explored through various cultural artworks, is a “core human issue.”

“I’m hoping for connection to each other, to ourselves, and to a place,” said Kim, when asked what she hoped the exhibition would bring.

“It’s really important for people to have a place and for us to be able to know each other,” said Kim. “And for us to not be enclaves with borders.”

The Oshagans are striving for that.

“We [ourselves] are products of displacement,” said Anahid Oshagan. “We are descendants of genocide survivors.”

Anahid Oshagan is an attorney, social activist and curator. Ara Oshagan is a photographer, multi-disciplinary artist and curator.

ReflectSpace Gallery opened at the Glendale Central Library in 2017, at the behest of the Glendale City Council “for a city space to address the Armenian Genocide and other human atrocities,” reads the gallery’s website. “ReflectSpace is an exhibition space designed to explore and reflect on genocides, human and civil rights violations.”

“The topics and the themes are very much ingrained, and part of our DNA, so we embrace and and reflect that through our activism and in our daily lives,” Anahid Oshagan said.

The Oshagans have expanded ReflectSpace Gallery to be a hub not only for artistic endeavors, but for the discussion of social issues.

“We’ve expanded and made it much broader,” said Anahid Oshagan. “We’ve touched upon lots of social justice issues dealing with the mass industrial prison complex, the Holocaust, slavery, the Native American genocide and Korean comfort women, which touches upon a large segment of the Korean American community here in Glendale and neighboring parts.”

Kim, the artist, encouraged visitors to be curious to learn about different people and communities.

“There is so much division growing,” said Kim. “The more we can build relationships, conversations, and hopefully empathy in a sense of solidarity and connection, that’s what is important.”

Anahid Oshagan hopes visitors take time to explore and reflect on these issues.

“One of the biggest goals is to bring about awareness, understanding and compassion,” she said. “And of course, action with all of the above.”

The exhibition will have an opening reception on July 27, but will run from July 20 to Sept. 22. It will be held inside the Glendale Central Library, 222 East Harvard Street, Glendale.

For more information, visit <https://www.reflectspace.org/post/be-longing>.

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