

UCSD UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAN DIEGO, California (February 24, 2014) — From March 13 through May 9, 2014, the University Art Gallery at the University of California San Diego presents ***My Strangest Stranger***, an exhibition by New York-based artist **Mary Walling Blackburn** that engages the psychic and performative aspects of extraterrestrial encounters in areas adjacent to both natural and national borders. Over the past two years, the artist conducted research in eastern Turkey, southern France, and most recently at the U.S.-Mexico border, seeking out the narratives produced to stabilize our encounters with what appears to be an Other – the extraterrestrial, the expatriate, the alien, the Strangest Stranger. How do we organize our relationships to the unknown? As a compromised artist-ethnographer, Walling Blackburn attempts to plumb ways in which our conception of these "visitations" overlaps with the paths and behaviors of expatriates – whether migrating from another territory or galaxy.

What might be discovered when our perceptual orientations are reversed, our identities inverted, and the production of meaning is dispersed across multiple places and times? The gallery exhibition invites visitors to look down in order to see what is up: a photomural mounted from the ceiling depicts a study for a painting in a desert mountain corridor, the setting of an extraterrestrial encounter and border crossing. A sound installation transmits seismic frequencies that can be felt but may not be heard, redirecting the external source of a low, uneasy rumbling to a place deep within. Videos shot, edited and composed during the artist's research process, play continuously in order to meditate on the remaining engines of orientalism. How might we continue the incomplete project of postcolonial theory without ideological resolution?

In the weeks leading up to the exhibition, video memes and trailers, comprised of outtakes, discarded photos, and salvaged sound omitted from the gallery's videos, will circulate in the online and offline televisual spaces of the UCSD campus and the University Art Gallery. A trace of what the work could have been persists in the minds of those who never visit the gallery. But what of those who do? The visitor must reconcile the gap between a different set of images and sounds glimpsed elsewhere and those encountered in the gallery. Though desirous of a complete whole, they may discover that meaning sought, like the selves and locations of this Strangest Stranger, infinitely expands and exists as multiplicity.

A publication co-edited by Mary Walling Blackburn invites visitors and uninitiated readers to further thicken our conceptions and narratives of the Strangest Stranger and its political dimensions. "The Extra Earth Analog" will be the fourth issue of *Pastelegram*, a biannual publication, each volume of which is based on an editorial collaboration with an artist. For this issue, the artist will publish an anti-authoritarian source book that pleasures and nauseates, radicalizes and fortifies aliens and their allies. "The Extra Earth Analog" echoes the structure and intentions of *The Whole Earth Catalog* — a countercultural almanac published by Stewart Brand in 1968–70 — by gathering an A to Z compendium of critical reflections on the extraterrestrial, the expatriate, the alien and the Strangest Stranger.

My Strangest Stranger opens on **March 13, 5:30 p.m.** with an artist reception and hosts several related public programs: an artist talk on **March 14, 11:00 a.m.**; a series of open dance sessions led by dancers/choreographers Anya Cloud and Eric Geiger, held every Tuesday at **12:00 p.m. (April 8, 15, 22, 29, and May 6)**; a series of office hours hosted by interlocutors in and outside of UCSD, held every Thursday at **12:00 p.m. (April 3, 10, 17, 24, and May 1 & 8)**; and a closing reception with a final share/performance by open dance session participants with Anya Cloud and Eric Geiger on **May 9, 5:30 p.m.**

All public programs are free admission and held at the University Art Gallery unless otherwise noted. Please visit the UAG website for more detailed information: <http://uag.ucsd.edu>.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY / UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO / MANDEVILLE CENTER
9500 GILMAN DRIVE / LA JOLLA, CA 92093-0327
TEL 858-534-2107 / FAX 858-822-3548 / UAG.UCSD.EDU

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OPENING

Thursday, March 13, 5:30 - 8:30pm

ARTIST TALK by Mary Walling Blackburn

Friday, March 14, 11:00am

OPEN DANCE SESSIONS

Participants will be led by dancers/choreographers, Anya Cloud and Eric Geiger, through a sequence of gentle movements drawn from extraterrestrial encounters, through which experiential transmission of embodied material will be explored. Participants are slowly and physically introduced to the topic of the strangest stranger, intimating through the body our relationship to the unknown, through contact improvisation. Classes are accessible to all levels of ability. Open to the public for participation and/or observation.

All classes will first meet at the gallery and then move outdoors to the hill across from the Main Gym in Muir College.

TUESDAYS, 12:00 – 1:00pm

April 8

April 15

April 22

April 29

May 6

Friday, May 9, 5:30pm Final share/Performance

OFFICE HOURS

An opportunity to engage one-on-one with interlocutors whose work relates to *My Strangest Stranger*, as curator, editor, or as scholars of radical histories, speculative literature, performance theory, and border studies. Open conversations encouraged. No preparation necessary.

Sign up for appointments by e-mailing uag@ucsd.edu with your name and preferred 15 – 30 min time slot (e.g., 12:00pm, 12:15pm, 12:30pm). Open time slots are available for walk-in appointments as well.

THURSDAYS, 12:00 – 1:30pm

April 3 with Michelle Hyun (curator, UAG)

April 10 with Shelley Streeby (Literature/Ethnic Studies, UCSD)

April 17 with Patrick Anderson (Critical Gender Studies/Communication, UCSD)

April 24 with Sarah Luna (Anthropology, UCSD)

May 1 with Ariel Evans (editor, *Pastelegram*)

May 8 with Michelle Hyun (curator, UAG)

CLOSING

Friday, May 9, 5:30 – 7:30pm

with a final share/performance by Open Dance Session participants with Anya Cloud and Eric Geiger

CONTRIBUTORS

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Mary Walling Blackburn

Self-Glossary: Revolutionary Year 222

Arunachalam Muruganantham for process and compulsion for Another/Other body
Aumisme's Mandarom Shambhasalem (UFO); **Korbinian Aigner** (site); **Kader Attia**

Bog body: Yde Girl, Haraldskaer Woman, Clonycavan Man; (hero) **Tony Buba**

Cook, Katsi (hero-midwife). **Circular breathing** (tune); **Lygia Clark** (contact); **Cannibal Manifesto** (proto post-colonial theory); **Che Chen** (collaborator)

Doukhobors: marching nude through Canadian prairie at the turn of the last century
Embarrassment as medium

Fistfucker's lapel pin on a Brooks Brothers Denim Jacket; **Pearl Fryar** (polite resistance);
Freud Museum (a fake bowl of strawberries); **Keinji Hano** (soundtrack)

Gibbons, June and Jennifer: **Postman and Postwoman** (radio play), **The Pugilist** (out of print)

History of Air-Conditioning (wash tubs full of ice with fans blowing over the ice); **H.D.**
Wrote "Thoughts are things- sometimes they are songs." In **Tribute to Freud**

Imperial rupture; **illicit gesture**

Jodorowsky's El Topo (land dreams)

Kapil, Bhanu: **Schizophrenic- migration and mental illness**; **Nance Klehm** (shit)

Luna, James ("Easy Rider")

Merch Table as symptom of economic/emotional humiliation; **Miscreants of Taliwood**
Taos Hum

Nonhuman Others (the choreography of contact); **Napaville mental asylum** hosts the band
tour (**The Cramps**); **Night Nurse/ Nun** (**Matisse's**) and the chapel they conceived
of together

Outlaw: The difference between an outlaw and an asshole?

Pieing: **Homphobe Anita Bryant**; **Linda Lovelace** in **Deep Throat**; **Marguerite Duras**
(swap chocolate cake)

Reyes Flores, Aurora: "Magnolia Iracunda" (mural)

Supergroupies as **Proto-Young Girls** that articulate semio capital w/out theorists' aid

Tommyknockers and **Bwca** (mine)

Urso (mine)

Vargas, Chavela (ancient hotness burning through the mouth)

Wittig, Monique: "I am not a woman; I am a lesbian" (**Marguerite Young**: "I am not a
woman; I am a writer." **Myself**: "I am not a woman; I am badly wired animal.")

Young, Dinah: her yard works.

Z

P.S. **The Amazing Bow-Wow** (**Lynda Benglis**)

Patrick Anderson is the Director of Critical Gender Studies and a professor at UCSD (Communication/Ethnic Studies). He holds a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley; an M.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and a B.S. from Northwestern University. Anderson works at the interstices of performance studies and cultural studies, focusing in particular on the constitutive role of violence, mortality, and pain in the production and experience of political subjectivity. His work-in-progress includes a mixed-genre book on illness and memory, and a critical study of the role of empathy in contemporary US performance practice and inter-cultural discourse. Anderson has worked as a director and actor in theater and film; as an anthropologist in Sri Lanka, Chicago, and New Mexico; and as an activist and organizer for anti-war groups in Sri Lanka, for the Berkeley Free Clinic, and for HIV/AIDS groups in various locations in the United States.

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Anya Cloud is an independent dance artist, performer and teacher based in San Diego. Her research works to access radical aliveness in the moving body. Anya is committed to finding range, cultivating realness, engaging artifice and inviting questioning through practice and performance. Collaboration and contextualization are central to her understanding of artistry. Anya holds an MFA in Dance Theatre and is currently a Lecturer in Dance Studies at California State University San Marcos. She teaches contact improvisation weekly in San Diego, as well as nationally and internationally. Her extensive study with Nancy Stark Smith influences many aspects of her teaching and artistry. In addition to her own work Anya has had the pleasure of performing/collaborating with Karen Nelson, Leslie Seiters, Eric Geiger, Mary Reich, Yolande Snaith and Karen Schaffman among other artists. Anya practices weekly as part of the improvisational ensemble LIVE (www.livepractice.org). www.anyacloud.com

Ariel Evans is the founder and editor of *Pastelegram* magazine and a PhD candidate in Art History at the University of Texas in Austin. Her dissertation concerns the interrelationships between 1970s photographic praxis and feminist politics. In the past she has worked as Assistant Editor of *Art Lies* and the 2012-2013 Curatorial Fellow of UT's Visual Arts Center, where she curated an exhibition on collage methods and the body, entitled *Step Right In*. She writes criticism for *Art in America* and has contributed to *Art Lies*, *The Gulf Coast Review*, ... *might be good* and *Mimeo Mimeo*.

Eric Geiger: I make dances and collaborate with other artists. Making connections within my whole self, and with others, helps me to navigate through, interact with, and attempt to make sense of the world around me. My values around performance and dance have been deeply influenced by my experiences in performing works by and collaborating with artists such as Bill T. Jones, William Forsythe, Stephen Petronio, Susan Marshall, Maguy Marin, Angelin Preljocaj, Nancy McCaleb, Sarah Shelton Mann, Deborah Hay, Jess Humphrey and collaborative dance theatre, LIVE. I'm the Co-Artistic Director of PADL West, a laboratory for performance, art, and dance, alongside Karen Schaffman. I also guide courses around what dance is, and can be, at UCSD as full-time faculty. My training as a Feldenkrais practitioner is helping me to better understand what the least amount of effort means as well as reversibility and re-direction in movement and other multiple contexts.

Sarah Luna is a sociocultural anthropologist whose research examines how the US/Mexico border is both productive of and made legible by socially meaningful forms of difference. Luna is currently a Lecturer at UCSD (Anthropology), and she received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from The University of Chicago in December 2013. Her dissertation project is entitled *Transforming Value(s) in a Mexican Border Prostitution Zone: The Intimate, Economic, and Moral Projects of Sex Workers and Missionaries in Reynosa, Tamaulipas*. She is also a co-founder of Kegels for Hegel, a collaborative conceptual art project that queers the work of philosophers through song. Kegels for Hegel has performed at the UAG in San Diego, SOMA in Mexico City, and Estación Cero in Pueblo Nuevo, Oaxaca.

Shelley Streeby is the director of graduate studies and a professor at UCSD (Literature/Ethnic Studies). She received her Ph.D. in English from the University of California, Berkeley and her B.A. in English from Harvard University. Her new book, *Radical Sensations: World Movements, Violence, and Visual Culture* (Duke University Press, 2013), follows transnational movements in U.S. literature and visual culture from 1886, the year of the Haymarket riot in Chicago, through 1927, the year that Marcus Garvey was deported. Streeby works in the interdisciplinary fields of American Studies and Ethnic Studies, with a specialization in U.S. literary, cultural, and historical studies through the early 20th century. Since 2010, she has directed the Clarion Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers' Workshop and is currently working on a new project on space and time in the Octavia Butler archive and alternative worlds and near futures in speculative genres.

CONTACT

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Tuesday & Thursday 11am - 5pm
Wednesday & Friday 11am - 7:30pm
Free Admission

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