

Smack Mellon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

You'd Think By Now
Curated by Rachel Vera Steinberg

**Artists: Jesse Chun, Nicholas Grafia & Mikołaj Sobczak, Bang Geul Han, Kosuke Kawahara,
Dawn Kim, Aristilde Kirby, Tariku Shiferaw, Vanessa Thill**

June 25 - August 7, 2022
Opening Reception: Sat. June 25, 5-7PM
Press Preview: Sat. June 25, 3PM

Public Programming
Thurs. June 30, 7PM - **Artist Talk: Tariku Shiferaw conversation with Dr. Stephon Alexander**

Thurs. July 14, 7PM - **Dawn Kim: *My Gift***
Performance and testimony of a two-year quest to right a wrong.

Fri. July 29, 7PM - **Aristilde Kirby: *[daisy & catherine, also!]***
Poetry reading

Smack Mellon presents *You'd Think By Now*, a group exhibition exploring cultural coping mechanisms that extend beyond those considered rational or scientific. The exhibition features the work of nine artists: Jesse Chun, Nicholas Grafia & Mikołaj Sobczak, Bang Geul Han, Kosuke Kawahara, Dawn Kim, Aristilde Kirby, Tariku Shiferaw, and Vanessa Thill, working in a diverse set of media including video, immersive installation, performance, poetry, sculpture, photography, and drawing, and spans Smack Mellon's two gallery spaces.

The exhibition captures the palpable disappointment broadly felt in relation to the logic systems that undergird and shape governance, media representation, language, and politics—our collective reality. It calls into question the false equivalence between the movement of time and the notion of progress. Having exhausted many prudent and analytical methods of critique, the artists included in the exhibition look to systems of illogics—spirituality, spells, mythologies, and folklore, in order to address a variety of current events, issues, and ideas.

Some artists seek this turn through creating new worlds, mythologies, spiritual practices, and historical re-explorations. Others actively reimagine and disintegrate the systems and bureaucracies that govern lives in the form of legal opinion and documents as well as the formation of language. Crucially this exhibition resists a stance of moralizing or judgment between the search for truth and the use of fantasy as a modality. Gathering artworks that display massive shifts in approaches, material, and scale, *You'd Think By Now* offers the fractured splinters of the current moment as fodder for constructing new realities. It asks after the conditions that have produced the mistrust of knowledge that is held in common—where does it come from and, more importantly, where else can it lead?

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Artist Bios:

Jesse Chun (b.1984) is an artist working and living in New York. Chun's practice addresses language and its politics to uncover new translations toward poetry, opacity, and the untranslatable. Chun's work has been presented internationally at SculptureCenter, New York; The Drawing Center, New York; BAM, New York; Queens Museum, New York; the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, New York (United States); the Nam June Paik Art Center (South Korea); Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto (Canada); among others. Recent awards and fellowships include Art by Translation (Paris, 2022); Ballroom Marfa (Texas, 2021), and the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant (US, 2020); Smack Mellon (2020); Triple Canopy (2019).and the NEA fellowship at ISCP (2019). Select public collections include the Museum of Modern Art Library; the School of the Art Institute of Chicago; the Smithsonian Institution; Whitney Museum Library, and Asia Art Archive in America.

Nicholas Grafia (b. 1990) is an artist living in Düsseldorf. He holds an MFA from the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (DE). He has previously studied at the Kunstakademie Münster (DE), the School of Arts and Cultures in Newcastle (UK) as well as British, American and Postcolonial Studies at the University of Münster (DE). His paintings, videos and performances, frequently made in collaboration with Polish artist Mikołaj Sobczak, negotiate processes of memory formation, as well as the in- and exclusion of subjects from history writing.

His works were recently exhibited at Peres Projects (Berlin, DE), VII Moscow International Biennale for Young Art (Moscow, RU), Capitain Petzel (Berlin, DE), Shoot the Lobster (New York, US), signs and symbols (New York, US), Kunsthall Aarhus (Aarhus, DK), Andersen's Contemporary (Copenhagen, DK), Museum Ludwig (Cologne, DE), K21 Museum Düsseldorf (Düsseldorf, DE), fffriedrich (Frankfurt am Main, DE), Tramway (Glasgow, UK), Kunstraum (London, UK), Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen Düsseldorf (Düsseldorf, DE), Dortmunder Kunstverein (Dortmund, DE), Exo Exo at David Giroire (Paris, FR), Museum of Modern Art (Warsaw, PL) and BOZAR (Brussels, BE).

Bang Geul Han (b. 1978) is an interdisciplinary artist working across video, performance, text, and code. Born and raised in Seoul, Korea, her work has been shown in venues including A.I.R. Gallery, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Cuchifritos Gallery, DOOSAN Gallery New York, NURTUREart, and Queens Museum in New York City, Galerie Les Territoires and Projét Pangée in Montreal, and Centro Internazionale per l'Arte Contemporanea in Rome. Han is the recipient of a number of artist residencies and fellowships including The Block Gallery Artist Residency and the Artist in the Marketplace (AIM) program at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Workspace program, A.I.R. Fellowship, MacDowell Fellowship, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and Center for Emerging Visual Artists in Philadelphia, PA. Han received her MFA in Electronic Integrated Arts from NYSCC at Alfred University, Alfred NY and BFA in Painting from Seoul National University in Korea. She lives and works in New York City.

Kosuke Kawahara (b. 1980) was born in Kyoto, Japan, and moved to New York in 2011. Kawahara currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. His intuitive/impromptu gesture generates site-relevant

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imagery through its multi-layered structure. Kawahara's works speak to notions of growth, decay, modes of communication and perception, spiritualism, interdependent relationships, and human behavior in ever-shifting environmental conditions. The whole process of creating a work from the start to its end is a process of the artist constantly exploring and (re)constructing the alternative space around darkness.

Kawahara earned his BFA in Design from Okayama Prefectural University, and graduated with an MFA in Painting and Drawing from Pratt Institute in 2020. He has previously exhibited at RAINRAIN, Brian Leo Projects, The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, Trestle Gallery, Paradise Palace, Susan Eley Fine Art, Super Dutchess Gallery. He has been awarded the 2021 City Artist Corps Grants, and First Prize in Works on Paper at The Long Beach Island Foundation of the Arts & Sciences in 2021. He completed an artist residency at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Governors Island Residency Initiative, and is currently a member artist at the EFA Studio Program.

Dawn Kim (b.1989) is an artist who examines everyday complexities through (mis)recorded histories. Taking on forms of video, artist's books and lectures, her work attempts to make visible systems of power that have been hidden, forgotten, or overlooked. She received her MFA from Yale University in 2020.

Aristilde Kirby (b. 1991) is a being constellation of given human category: a poet, artist, thinker & more born in the Bronx, NY. She has been featured in Artforum & as a part of *Illiberal Arts*, an exhibition & publication at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt. She has published chapbooks with Belladonna, Black Warrior Review, & Best American Experimental Writing 2020. She's done radio programming with Montez Press Radio, performed at Basilica Hudson Soundscape, done art writing for Recess @ ACE Open, & taken part in numerous collaborations. *Daisy & Catherine*² is her first book length project, to be reissued later this year via auric press. You can call her Aris, like Paris without the P.

Tariku Shiferaw (b. 1983) is a New York based artist who explores mark-making through painting, addressing issues around space-making within societal structures. Group exhibitions include *Men of Change*, a four-year nationally traveling exhibition with the Smithsonian Institution (2019-2023); *Unbound*, at the Zuckerman Museum of Art (2020-2021); The 2017 Whitney Biennial, as part of Occupy Museums (2017); *A Poet*hical Wager*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (2017); and *What's Love Got to Do With It?*, at The Drawing Center (2019). Solo exhibitions include *It's a love thang, it's a joy thang*, at Galerie Lelong, NY (2021), *This Ain't Safe*, at Cathouse Proper, Brooklyn (2018); and *Erase Me*, at Addis Fine Art, London (2017). Shiferaw participated in the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program (2018 -2019) and Open Sessions at The Drawing Center (2018 – 2020). He is currently an artist-in-residence at Silver Art Projects (2020 - 2022).

Mikołaj Sobczak (b. 1989) graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts Warsaw (PL) in the Studio of Spatial Activities, followed by a scholarship at Universität der Künste Berlin (DE), and studied as well at Kunstakademie Münster (DE). He is also a resident artist at Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam (NL). He works in video, paintings and ceramics, often including performative actions as well. He frequently collaborates with German artist Nicholas Grafia.

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In his work, Sobczak is focused on political issues and historical policy. Emphasizing the perspective and life of marginalized subjects, he builds narratives, and tracks down the reasons for current global and social issues.

Vanessa Thill (b. 1991) is an artist, writer, and organizer based in Brooklyn, New York. She has recently exhibited her work in solo and two-person presentations at Deli Gallery, Larrie NYC, Camayuhs (Atlanta, GA) Step Sister, and Bible Gallery. She has been included in group exhibitions in the US and Europe, including at the Hessel Museum of Art (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY), JTT, Helena Anrather, Nicelle Beauchene, No Place Gallery (Columbus, OH), Public Support (Vestfossen, Norway), Golestani (Düsseldorf, Germany), Altefabrik (Rapperswil-Jona, Switzerland), and Icebox Project Space (Philadelphia, PA), among others. She was commissioned in Fall 2021 by Art Papers to create an artist project for their Corruption issue. Her first book of poetry, *Balsam*, was published by Pacific Press in summer 2020.

As an organizer, she seeks solidarity with workers and tenants to transform the conditions of work and life. She is a white Jewish femme who intends to dismantle whiteness daily. Lately, she creates agitprop and direct action against private property in the form of non-sanctioned graphic interventions. She is interested in rooted transcendence and moments of communion, where joy animates us in the muck. She hopes to inspire you to fight another day. You can follow her @depreci8bb and find her work online at vanessathill.com.

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