

The Halsey presents a virtual group exhibition *Finding their place*

BY GABRIELA CAPESTANY

Ten different artists will share their ideas of "home" during an online exhibition this fall presented by College of Charleston's Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art.

In the midst of an international pandemic, *Dis/placements: Revisitations of Home*, opens Aug. 28.

Dis/placements is presented through the artists' submissions on what the concept of "home" means to them. All of the exhibiting artists are former Halsey Institute artists.

One is Jiha Moon, who presented a traveling solo show at the Halsey in 2015. Moon's artistic mediums — painting and ceramics — often overlap. "Painting for me is very organic [with] a lot of different techniques, lines and brushstrokes. They can go on any type of surface," Moon explained. "When it goes on ceramic surfaces and people call it surface decoration, it kind of devalues the work. My idea is when I use different surfaces it kind of changes the identity or the way it's viewed as a medium but has the same act whether you're painting on paper or canvas with oil.



*Jiha Moon's work reflects both Western and Eastern artistic traditions.
Image Courtesy of The Halsey.*

Much of Moon's work deals with the comparison of Western and Eastern artistic styles and mediums, which speaks to the "displacements" aspect of the exhibit. "What I'm trying to do is juxtapose these two different [styles], happening at the same time, or people using very similar techniques in two different places. One happens before and goes to a different place and becomes something else," said Moon. "I try to talk about that through my different techniques, color combinations, or iconographies. So, at first when they see it, my work appears as Asian traditional style but upon closer inspection you can see Angry Birds or Twitter birds or a Disney reference.

"People tend to recognize different elements [of my work] based on what they know. It's their experience," added Moon. "So for me, my multiple styles or different approaches sort of represent different cultures or a hybrid. At large, it talks about more complex issues."

Renée Stout, another artist included in the *Dis/placements* lineup, had a solo exhibition at the Halsey in 2014. Like Moon, Stout draws on her background and how her life experience fits into the idea of being displaced.



Renée Stout, Lay Your Hand on the Radio

Renée Stout is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work spans the medium gamut

Stout also works across mediums and will showcase a variety of her work in the exhibition. "I don't stick to any one medium which is what makes my work a little out of the ordinary for the art world because generally, you know, galleries or the art world likes to have a recognizable look to the artist's work, and someone might be a painter or they might identify as a sculptor, but my bodies of work include painting, drawing, sculpture, installations — there's not one medium that I deal with," said Stout.

"I'm processing life like anybody else, I just get a chance to do it through my artwork, and I think primarily what my most recent bodies of work have been over the last three years is looking at the political climate and projecting a different alternative to what we're existing in

now." Drawing inspiration from her own life, Stout expresses her idea of what "displacement" means to her through the pieces she curated and submitted to the show.

"I'm not separate from what I'm living through in life and what I choose to express in my work," said Stout. "And, I would hope that the viewer understands that we have to have the dialogues that we're having right now."

Dis/placements may be a virtual show, but supplemental materials will create an immersive experience for viewers looking to dig deeper into their understanding of the artists' work in the exhibition.

Each artist was paired with a respondent who created a short essay to supplement the artist's work. Stout worked with CofC professor and director of the Gullah Society, Dr. Ade Ofunniyin. Moon worked with Lilly Wei, a New York-based art critic, who responded to the pieces she submitted. "Me and Lilly talked about how [it's] important to recognize Asian Americans, because when we define American what comes in people's minds first? For me it's a big melting pot. People often see the discrimination... we should be recognized as part of America in the bigger picture."

Overall, the exhibition hopes to highlight the diverse backgrounds of the participating artists and spotlight how the idea of "displacement" can be interpreted across racial and national boundaries.

"These are issues that a segment of the population has always had to deal with. That feeling of somebody making you feel that you don't belong, even though you were born in this country. This is your country," Stout said.

Dis/placements: Revisitations of Home will run online from Aug. 28-Dec. 12, 2020. Several virtual events with the featured artists and scholars associated with the event will also be hosted by the Halsey online. For more information, visit halsey.cofc.edu. Access to the show will be free and open to the public.