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ARTISTS ON SITE SERIES 2 LAUNCHES TODAY!

Asia Society Texas Invests in Houston-Based
BIPOC Artists with Second Round of Support



HOUSTON, July 29, 2021 – [Asia Society Texas Center's](http://AsiaSociety.org/Texas) (ASTC) second installment of *Artists on Site*, an initiative that provides working studio space and funding to Houston-based BIPOC artists, opens today. [Artists on Site Series 2](#), highlights the work of four featured artists: **Bennie Flores Ansell**, **Guadalupe Hernandez**, **Preetika Rajgariah**, and **Stevie Spurgin**. By using the galleries as public-facing studio spaces, each artist shares their unique process with visitors, who will be able to see the artists' ideas and research take shape as the residency unfolds. Admission to view *Artists on Site* is FREE and open to the public today through Sunday, September 12, 2021.

Nancy C. Allen Curator and Director of Exhibitions, Bridget Bray notes, “We first developed *Artists on Site* in spring 2020 to support Houston-based artists during a period of increasing challenges for them. The idea was born out of conversations with many artists, both in Houston and beyond, and their feedback and input helped shaped the initiative from the very beginning. The first iteration, featuring the artists **Ahra Cho**, **Laura Drey**, **Brandon Tho Harris**, and **Royal Sumikat**, gave us a chance to launch the concept and together test what the space can do. Through the project and its related programs, we hope that visitors will have the opportunity to continue to connect with the artists in this current series and their critically important insights.”



Artists on Site transforms the ASTC galleries into studio and project spaces and provides artists with the support necessary to experiment and take new risks, while also engaging with their artist cohort. Artists are provided a \$1,750 artist stipend, \$500 for materials, dedicated space for seven weeks, and professional documentation of their work, as well as a platform for public programming and connectivity with patrons, curators, and other arts professionals.

In this iteration of the initiative, Flores Ansell, Hernandez, Rajgariah, and Spurgin are working in a variety of media including painting, sculpture, design, performance, and installation. Flores Ansell says, “The residency came at a perfect time, as I shift my work to include sculptural pieces and installations that occupy space. The gallery provides an exhibition space in which to expand my work physically and take risks that are not possible in my current studio.”

In addition to onsite opportunities to witness the artistic process, the project includes virtual webcast conversations with the artists. All the activities and programs in the initiative are **FREE** and open to the public.

Artists on Site Series 2 Fast Facts

- Dates: Thursday, July 29, 2021 through Sunday, September 12, 2021
- Admission: FREE
- Hours: Thursday–Friday, 11am – 4pm; Saturday–Sunday, 10am – 4pm;
- Location: Asia Society Texas Center, 1370 Southmore Blvd, Houston, TX, 77004 (in the Museum District)
- More info: <https://asiasociety.org/texas/exhibitions/artists-site-series-2>

Artists’ Reception Fast Facts:

- Date: Thursday, September 9, 2021
- Admission: FREE
- Hours: Asia Society members: 5:30–6:30 p.m.; public hours: 6:30–8 p.m.
- Location: Asia Society Texas Center, 1370 Southmore Blvd, Houston, TX, 77004 (in the Museum District). *May move to a virtual format pending local health and safety conditions.*

About the Artists

Bennie Flores Ansell is a Houston-based visual artist. Flores Ansell was born in Manila, Philippines and her formative years were lived in the United States. She is a Professor in the Art Department of the Houston Community College. Her degrees include an MFA from the University of Houston, a BA from the University of South Florida, and she was an American Photography Institute Fellow at New York University.

Flores Ansell’s work has evolved over a career spanning more than 20 years. Her work initially dealt with concepts of race, ethnicity, beauty, and the objectified female, which further led to explorations of the loss and retention of the photographic object due to the rapid change within the medium, as well as the inherent racism built into the chemical make-up of color film. Flores Ansell’s pursuit of different conceptual ideas situates her work consistently through the use of light, shadow, migration patterns, observations of the tactile qualities of film, and manipulation of the photographic image.



Flores Ansell's work has been exhibited widely, including in exhibitions at the International Center for Photography, NYC; Seattle Art Museum; and the San Diego Museum of Art as part of the *Only Skin Deep* Exhibition curated by Coco Fusco in 2004. Through the Fotofest Meeting Place her work has been exhibited internationally at Festival De La Luz in Argentina, in a site-specific installation at the Daegu Photography Biennale in South Korea in 2016 and included in two group shows at Patricia Conde Galeria in Mexico City.

Website: www.benniefloresansell.com; Instagram: [@benniefloresansell](https://www.instagram.com/benniefloresansell)

Guadalupe Hernandez, based in Houston, Texas, creates works inspired by his Mexican heritage. As an artist, he explores aspects of his Mexican identity through the lens of people, places, and memories from his childhood in Mexico. His works have been exhibited in museums and juried exhibitions, including at the Holocaust Museum Houston. He recently participated as the Changarrito Artist-in-Residence with the Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin, Texas.

"I capture the anatomical structure of the figure through expressive marks, vibrant colors, and various use of materials in order to evoke the soul from the image. As I work, I often think about my own cultural identity. What is my place in the culture? What do I not understand? How am I influenced by my culture? These questions have guided me to focus on the rich culture of Mexico which is often overlooked. My work celebrates the beauty found in scenes from everyday life and explores subcultures found throughout Mexico."

Website: www.guadalupehernandezart.com; Instagram: [@lupehernandez_art](https://www.instagram.com/lupehernandez_art)

Preetika Rajgariah (b. 1985) is an interdisciplinary artist whose works examine the complicated intersections of cultural identity, race, capitalism, and sexuality while referencing her traditional upbringing as an Indian-born American. Rajgariah has attended residencies at Oxbow School of Art, ACRE, Vermont Studio Center, and the School of Visual Arts, and she has exhibited and performed in spaces such as Western Exhibitions and Roots & Culture in Chicago as well as Art League Houston, Lawndale Art Center, and Women & Their Work in Texas. She received her MFA from the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign and currently lives and works in Houston, Texas.

Website: www.prajgariah.com; Instagram: [@prajgariah](https://www.instagram.com/prajgariah)

Stevie Spurgin is an interdisciplinary artist from Marfa, Texas, who recently graduated with her MFA from the University of Houston. Spurgin earned a BA in Film, Television, and Digital Media with an emphasis in special effects makeup from Texas Christian University. She currently lives and works in Houston, Texas.

Spurgin's studio practice challenges the societal standard of the "normal," "beautiful," and "gross," focusing on what we typically cast away. Her transformed objects undergo makeovers through the labor of repetitive actions, documentation, and mark-making that leave the work "glammed-up," "magnified," and sprinkled with the abject to isolate the language we use around beauty. Her work has been featured in: *Evidence Tampered* at Alabama Song in Houston, Texas, the 2019 University of Houston's School of Art Annual Student Exhibition at the Blaffer Art Museum, a 2019 performance of *40 (something)* *Lipsticks* at the Blaffer Art Museum's Convergence Research, and most recently in *Annex Energy* at Sawyer Yards' Site Gallery.

Website: www.steviespurgin.com; Instagram: [@stevie.spurgin](https://www.instagram.com/stevie.spurgin)

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About Asia Society Texas Center

With 13 locations throughout the world, Asia Society is the leading educational organization promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among the peoples, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the rest of the world. Asia Society Texas Center executes the global mission with a local focus, enriching and engaging the vast diversity of Houston through innovative, relevant programs in arts and culture, business and policy, education, and community outreach.

This project is organized by Asia Society Texas. Exhibitions and their related programs at Asia Society Texas are presented by Nancy C. Allen and Leslie and Brad Bucher. Major support comes from Chinhui Juhn and Eddie Allen and Mary Lawrence Porter, as well as The Brown Foundation, Inc., The Hearst Foundation, Houston Endowment, and the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance. Generous funding also provided by The Anchorage Foundation of Texas, The Clayton Fund, Texas Commission on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, Wortham Foundation, Inc., Olive Jenney, and Ann Wales. United Airlines is our official airline partner. Funding is also provided through contributions from the Exhibitions Patron Circle, a dedicated group of individuals and organizations committed to bringing exceptional visual art to Asia Society Texas Center.