

For Immediate Release: December 16, 2023



Performing For You, For Me, For You

simone madison hunter

Emily Mogami

Mahira Naznin

Curated by the class of Curatorial Practice
New York University's Visual Arts Administration Program

January 6–27, 2024

Public programs:

Tuesday, Jan. 23, 5-7 PM

Exhibition walkthrough and Artists panel discussion

Friday, Jan. 26, 5-7 PM

Closing reception, exhibition walkthrough, and performance by Emily Mogami

80WSE Gallery

80 Washington Square E, New York, NY 10003

Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 12-6 PM

Emily Mogami, *What Channel Today?* 2022,
photograph documenting a performance
©2023 Emily Mogami. Courtesy of the artist

New York, NY, December 16, 2023 – The Visual Arts Administration Program presents the exhibition ***Performing For You, For Me, For You*** on view at New York University's 80WSE Gallery from January 6 to 27, 2024, Tuesday-Saturday, 12-6 PM. Curated by the Curatorial Practice class of the Visual Arts Administration Program, the exhibition at 80 Washington Square E, New York, NY 10003 will be accompanied by public programming that invites the audience to interact with and learn about the participating artists, as well as an exhibition essay.

Presenting artworks by three NYU Steinhardt Studio Art students – **simone madison hunter, Emily Mogami, and Mahira Naznin** – ***Performing For You, For Me, For You*** delves into the struggle between how today's youth perceive themselves and how they present themselves to the world, an outgrowth of complex interplay between self-perception and external gaze. Subverting race and gender expectations take center stage offering a profound analysis of societal norms and the artists' determined efforts to challenge and transcend them.

In the 21st century, new screen-based technologies and corporate-owned social media make us all observed, constantly look into mirrors, and create our avatars. At the same time, the pressures of living in global, increasingly multiethnic and xenophobic societies, compel us to brand ourselves by our gender, our sexuality, our heritage, and

countless other descriptors. The societal gaze puts us in a state of perpetual performance and self-reflection, putting our ever-changing selves at risk of being solidified and fixed into a passive state, defined and constrained by our gender and ethnic identities.

In her performance *What Channel Today?* echoing Laura Mulvey's 1975 essay on the male gaze in classical Hollywood cinema, **Emily Mogami** transforms into a character crafted for public consumption – a living, breathing 'channel'. The artist not only acknowledges her performance of a persona, but also whimsically fights back against the gaze and reclaims her agency by “creating the representation that (queer) Asian women need and bringing to life her hidden desires and emotions.”

Mahira Naznin critiques the societal need to control the image of a woman enacted in social media, and through it, a woman herself, in her digital animation *Adapt, React, Perform* (2022). Her escalating manipulation of her passport photo crescendos into a rejection of the ludicrous expectation to contort herself into a representation prescribed to please the male gaze. Finally, by erasing her edited face, Naznin reveals her younger self, unbound by the socially labeled womanhood. In this act, she deconstructs her own performance of femininity.

simone madison hunter's tactile piece *Black girl, take cover* (2022), with its intricate beaded kanekalon hair tassels, grapples with the intersectionality of being a Black woman. The embroidery on the quilt, referencing Nina Simone's “Four Women” and Tupac Shakur's “Keep Ya Head Up,” confronts stereotyping of Black women as unfeminine and highlights the ongoing mistreatment and erasure of Black women, both in the society-at-large and intracommunally. hunter expands the concept of “double consciousness” introduced by W. E. B. Du Bois to “triple consciousness,” where racial identity is intertwined and complicated by gender stereotypes. Made to comfort the artist, the quilt is both a symbolic and literal shield against racial and gendered gaze, and protects her authentic self.

Each artist featured in this exhibition – Mogami, Naznin, and hunter – provides a poignant lens through which we are asked to question our perceptions of identity and subvert the societal gaze that seeks to define us. Crucially, in the same vein as Sartre, they seem to suggest that the very act of being defined has a potential of propelling us beyond that definition. In this paradox, there is both captivity and freedom. Today's youth struggle to remain authentic and reconcile with our identities, in the very act of rebelling against those labels, we transcend them.

Public programs:

Tuesday, January 23, 5-7 PM

5:00-5:20 PM: **Exhibition walkthrough** led by an exhibition co-curator

5:30-5:50 PM: **Exhibition walkthrough** led by an exhibition co-curator

6:00-7:00 PM: **Artist Panel Discussion** with simone madison hunter, Emily Mogami, and Mahira Naznin, moderated by co-curators Cindy Hou and Eli King

Friday, January 26, 5-7 PM

5:00-7:00: **Closing reception with ongoing performative intervention** by Emily Mogami

5:30-5:50 PM: **Exhibition walkthrough** led by an exhibition co-curator

About the curators: The exhibition was conceptualized and curated jointly by the NYU Curatorial Practice Class under the guidance of the Course Instructor Monika Fabijanska. Essay: Elif Usuloğlu, Phoebe Wang; Public Programs: Cindy Hou, Eli King; Logistics: Davina Bisaria, Shuying Fang; PR & marketing: Tatiana Tamargo Arizmendi, Xinyuan Qiu.

The exhibition is supported by the NYU Steinhardt, Department of Art and Art Professions, 80WSE Gallery, and New York University.

Press Inquiries and Images: please contact Tatiana Tamargo Arizmendi at tt2511@nyu.edu and Xinyuan Qiu at xq648@nyu.edu. For questions regarding the gallery: 80wse@nyu.edu, +1 (212) 998-5747.

ARTISTS BIOS

simone madison hunter (b. 2002 in Dallas, TX) is a multidisciplinary artist who uses materials like acrylic, gouache, chalk, kanekalon, glitter, and rhinestones to convey the beauty, validity, and humanity of Blackness while emphasizing the negative connotative construct of both the color “black” and “Black” people. After finishing her NYU BFA program, she plans to take a gap year before entering the graduate Studio Art and Africana Studies. Instagram: vibeyblackartist

Emily Mogami (b. in Japan) is a multimedia artist employing painting and objects made of cardboard, and exploring the realm of performance. Working in oil paint, cardboard, and fabric, Mogami hopes to “instill confidence within herself by creating the representation that (queer) Asian women need.” Her works were exhibited in *New Visions*, a pop-up show at Pictor Gallery, NYC (2023). She was raised in Japan and Brazil, and is currently a BFA senior at New York University. <https://emilymogami.wixsite.com/portfolio> Instagram: emimo_art

Mahira Naznin (b. 2002 in Dhaka, Bangladesh) is a multidisciplinary artist who explores the female experience, technology's impact on identity, and the complexities of cultural difference. She moved to New York City when she was six years old and is currently enrolled in the NYU BFA program. Her works will be shown in the senior NYU BFA exhibition in the spring of 2024.