

Exophony

Exhibit Labels

Behnaz Fatemi

Palimpsest

Projector and slides

Dimensions variable

2026

Palimpsest responds to the silencing of Iranian non-instrumental sound-producing cultural objects within Western museum archives, where they are reclassified as static visual artifacts and removed from embodied use. Their sonic and performative capacities are suppressed within institutional frameworks that privilege visibility and preservation over lived transmission. Working from a diasporic position, I reactivate these objects through projection, performance, sonic, and sculptural methods. Archival images are translated onto transparent surfaces and stitched with sounding materials, producing layered projections activated through movement. The work positions objects as sites of overlapping temporalities, where sonic reactivation disrupts archival authority and reactivates embodied knowledge.

Jessica Irene Joyce

Meet me at the shoreline

Watercolour and gouache on paper, agar agar bioplastic, beach debris, sound recordings

9x12 in.

2026

“A shoreline is a relational space mediating between worlds and beings.” - Leanne Betasamosake Simpson

“A translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense.” - Walter Benjamin

This experimental artwork emerged from an artist residency on Mnisising (Toronto Island). There, we spent a significant portion of the day in conversation about each artist's research project. During unoccupied hours, I walked along the shore to enjoy 'quiet' time. That week in February, the wind and waves were so loud that they could be heard from inside the art centre, and on the shore their sounds were overwhelming. I

understood there to be an important relationship between the location and activities of the residency: the constant conversation between the wind and the waves conditioned our listening, and the sand, shells, and debris on the beach encouraged slow careful looking. Together, they created a space in which folks working across mediums and methodologies could nurture curious and patient discussions. The sounds and visuals I present here are an invitation for you to join me in a provisional translation of that space.

Maia Espejo Cochrane

Generational Stories in the Third Space

Graphite and ink on mylar, mixed media

Drawing 1 (1ft x 6ft)

Drawing 2 (1ft x 7ft)

Drawing 3 (1ft x 8ft)

2025

This work chronicles the lives of three women, each born in different countries with different upbringings and cultural norms, and yet all sharing the same blood, the same lineage.

These drawings contain the histories and lived experiences of my grandmother, my mother and myself. Through illustrations of various houses, cities and moments, overlapping narratives and fragmented memories are visualized. Going back three generations, the differences in places lived, relationships nurtured and challenges navigated are apparent. As timelines overlap, and the diasporic space expands to new countries and new communities, family remains solid. The third space of a multi-generational, multi-ethnic family endures, regardless of its physical location. It is warm, inviting, and safe. These are my generational stories.

Maria Awaraji

A Family in Mansourieh

TV tube Insignia; Sony Headphones MDR-ZX310AP; tall, long and small-width (rectangular prism) white plinth; USB key; a drawing on mylar using Neon sharpie and sakura micro pigment ink pens; Mini HD Media Player; HDMI to HDMI cord; and 3 outlet extension cord

Dimensions Variable

2026

Xi Jin

Peachinese - A Language Passing Through

Polyester mesh, artificial peaches, antique dictionary, small electro-motor sound components, and aluminum frame

9x3x7ft

Peachinese - A Language Passing Through, constructs a spatial system where language, objects, and movement intersect. It stages a condition in which meaning appears to form through structure, yet remains unstable and unresolved. Mesh curtains, found materials, and small motorized elements create a shifting environment that guides the viewer through fragments rather than a fixed narrative.

Peach elements function as part of an experimental practice in cultural translation, while also operating as a loose cultural index. In Chinese mythology, the peach is associated with longevity and immortality.² These references do not remain fixed; they circulate, overlap, and become partially displaced across contexts. What emerges is not a stable symbol, but a shifting field of meanings.¹

The work does not aim to communicate a singular idea, but to expose how meaning is produced through repetition, positioning, and interaction. If language can be processed operationally, as suggested by the logic of the Chinese Room, what does this imply for cultural translation? Can translation occur without understanding, and if so, what kind of meaning is actually being produced—or lost?²

1. In Daoist mythology, the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu) is said to cultivate peaches of immortality that ripen over thousands of years. These peaches grant longevity or eternal life and are often depicted in the “Peach Banquet,” a gathering of immortals.

2. The “Chinese Room” is a thought experiment proposed by John Searle, questioning whether the manipulation of symbols according to rules can be considered genuine understanding

Wen Li

Poems I Learned

“Water Calligraphy” series

Chinese Xuan paper, Water from melted snow, Chinese paintbrush

Variable Dimensions

2026

As part of the series “Water Calligraphy,” I write ancient Chinese poems on Xuan paper, using a traditional Chinese paintbrush and water collected from melted snow. The

characters are visible when the paper is wet but gradually disappear as it dries, leaving only faint remnants on the wrinkled paper.

In Chinese culture, rain and snow are called rootless water, a term reflecting immigrants' diasporic experience and the dislocation from their home country. Written in a conventional Chinese calligraphic style, the "Water Calligraphy" series transcends temporal and geographic boundaries, connecting past and present in the "in-betweenness." The series explores the sense of cultural loss and the growing feelings of nostalgia and melancholy among immigrants whose mother tongue is fading away.

Sasha Kamini Parmasad & son, Ajaya Vidia Parmasad

Mother's Tongue: A Specialized System of Significant Insignificance

Mixed Media on Watercolor Paper (pen, ink, marker, pencil)

15x11 in.; 4x6 in.

2026

Caribbean poet and theorist, Edouard Glissant, states that the Caribbean Creole language "forged as [the] medium of communication between slave and master" inevitably "[imposed] on the slave its particular syntax." The enslaved African and the indentured Indian laborer, in turn, appropriated and recontextualized this syntax/language of the "master" and made it his language, "a specialized system of significant insignificance," according to Glissant.

When I was a little girl of four or five, my mother, Roslyn Gajraj-Parmasad, a former educator and a community activist, began playing translation games with me. She would speak a sentence out loud to me in the thick-thick Indian Trinidadian Creole/Dialect of the sugarcane workers and farmers in our rural Caroni village, ask me to repeat the sentence, and then ask me to translate it into Standard or "Proper" English. My mother and father, intellectuals deeply involved in class struggle, having made the choice to live in a small "board house" in the heart of a depressed village in Central Trinidad, I was raised among village children and was a bit of an anachronism. To ensure that I was able to move comfortably between the language/world of our Indian village and the language/world of the wider society, my mother, who had been raised in an urban area, played these translation games with me. These images of Creole/Dialect sentences and words are what she asked me to translate. The sounds reverberate silent within me, "de dey" like a drumbeat, the beat of my mother's heart. In the new context of Canada, in a new millennium, I practice my mother's translation game with my 6-year-old son, Ajaya. Though there is no sugarcane village here with its

rural mother tongue. My son, when I was not looking, began to draw “de dey” his own way. The silent space between us is full of silent sound. Tides ebb in and out.

Masha Kouznetsova

moscow recordings 2024-2025

Laser jet prints on kozo paper, rubber cement, string

4.25 x 5.5 x 0.75 in

2026

Moscow recordings is an ongoing multidisciplinary research and documentation project emerging from the field recordings that I have been collecting during returns to my home city amid escalating repressions. *Moscow recordings* are presented as live performances, sound compositions, and writing; each of these forms are varying pathways through the city’s ambiance and a search for the sense of ground within its landscapes, personal and collective voices, resistance, and un/belonging within divided spaces. While my immediate aural and visual experiences, and their records, are the subjects of past/ongoing iterations of the growing project, the hand-bound book turns towards the background of these sensations.

In an act of queering phenomenology’s orientation towards what one faces directly, Sara Ahmed writes, “[w]e can consider perhaps how one’s background affects what comes into view, as well as how the background is what allows what comes into view to be viewed” (Sara Ahmed 2006, 547). In her article “Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology” (2006) Ahmed examines the process of turning toward the conditions of arrival of—and to—the subject of perception. She asks the reader to dwell within sensations of disorientation and estrangement as sites where slanted perspectives and pathways deviating from norms can place into view the historicity of an arrival as well as open alternate pathways of perception.

The book *moscow recordings 2024-2025* focuses on my personal sources of disorientation and dissonance—the legal documents that state that I am presently residing there, in my home city, although I am certainly elsewhere, or here: living between Detroit, MI, and London, ON. Collecting these legal documents during 2024-2025 shaped my strange trajectories of movement across Moscow. It is during the liminal spaces of traversing the city and waiting for the documents when I recorded the sounds of the city—the core materials of performances and installations. The book is a gesture toward concretizing these arbitrary documents as one object. The images within the 90 pages are scanned images of documents, my heavily annotated copy of Sara Ahmed’s “Orientations” article, and handwritten notes describing the sounds I recorded.

In 2025, I spent the first 90 days of my medical leave in Moscow. I was mostly bedridden and ill, or wandering out for short walks that felt like floating within a groundless void of propaganda, confusion, and fear. Physically, I could not do much more than strike matches every day to light the gas stove and prepare my food. I began drawing grids and cutting out the shape of the matchbox.