

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 16, 2019



University Galleries of Illinois State University is pleased to present *Aram Han Sifuentes: We Are Never Never Other* from August 15 through October 13, 2019.

- Friday, September 13, from 5 to 7pm: Artist reception
- Saturday, September 14 at noon: Artist talk
- Field trip program, curator-led tours, and workshops available by appointment throughout the exhibition

We Are Never Never Other brings together three of Aram Han Sifuentes' projects for the first time: *Protest Banner Lending Library*, *U.S. Citizenship Test Sampler*, and *A Mend*. Rooted in her experiences as an immigrant from South Korea, the artist developed her community-based textile projects to confront social justice issues including racial equity, economic disparities, and political disenfranchisement. She writes, "Much of my communal work revolves around sharing skills as a point of connection. We share sewing techniques to create multiethnic and intergenerational sewing circles, which become a place for empowerment, subversion, and protest."

We Are Never Never Other features selections from Sifuentes' ongoing *Protest Banner Lending Library* (2016-present), which she began by stitching a banner reading "Dump Trump" the day after the 2016 U.S. presidential election. She has since collaborated with numerous artists and participants in community-based workshops in Chicago, New York, and St. Louis to create an ongoing archive of fabric protest statements, which are available to be checked out (like a library book) and utilized for protest or educational purposes. Each banner has its own card indicating its history—who made it, who checked it out, where it has been deployed to share a vital message. Statements in a variety of languages range from "The Future is Female and Brown," to "Climate Change is Real," and "Families Belong Together," to "Support Your Sister, Not Just Your Cis-ters," and "We Are Never Never Other."

Also featured in the exhibition is *U.S. Citizenship Test Sampler* (2013-present), embroideries of individual questions from the U.S. Naturalization Test, which are sewn and embellished by the artist or participants in public workshops. Each sampler is available for sale for the same price of taking the exam, with the profits used to assist non-citizens with paying for the test. Our window gallery will be devoted to *A Mend* (2011-2013), a large-scale draping honeycomb sculpture comprised of the cut-off hems of jeans collected from 23 Chicago-based seamstresses and tailors who immigrated from South Korea, Iraq, Palestine, and Mexico. Self-described as drawing attention to "the politics of immigrant sweated labor," Sifuentes uses the services of these individuals, while also collecting their oral histories, paying particular attention to the jobs they held in their home country. The exhibition will premiere wall-based denim works including stitched excerpts from these narratives.

While in Bloomington-Normal, Sifuentes will offer a free public lecture at University Galleries and lead a workshop for community members at Western Avenue Community Center. Additionally, materials will be available throughout the duration of the exhibition for visitors to create their own banners.

All events are free and open to the public.

Events

- Friday, September 13, from 5 to 7pm: Artist reception at University Galleries
- Saturday, September 14 at noon: Artist talk at University Galleries
- Field trip program, curator-led tours, and workshops available by appointment

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 16, 2019

throughout the exhibition. Please contact University Galleries at galleries@ilstu.edu or 309.438.5487 to schedule an appointment. Stipends are available for K-12 schools or community organizations to offset the costs of transportation.

Aram Han Sifuentes: We Are Never Never Other is organized by University Galleries' Director and Chief Curator Kendra Paitz. The exhibition, programming, and publication are supported by grants from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Illinois Arts Council Agency, Harold K. Sage Foundation and the Illinois State University Foundation Fund. Field trip support is provided by a grant from the Town of Normal Harmon Arts Grant Program. An exhibition catalogue is forthcoming.

Sifuentes' work has been exhibited at Pulitzer Arts Foundation, St. Louis; Chung Young Yang Embroidery Museum at Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul; Wing Luke Museum of Asian American Experience, Seattle; The Luminary, St. Louis; Jane Addams Hull House, Chicago; Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago; Chicago Artists Coalition; and DePaul Art Museum, Chicago; among others. She has received awards, grants, and fellowships from 3Arts, Smithsonian Institution, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Puffin Foundation, and Center for Craft, Creativity, and Design. Sifuentes received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago; a post-baccalaureate certificate from Maryland Institute College of Art; and a BA from University of California, Berkeley.

University Galleries is located at Uptown Station at the corner of Beaufort and Broadway streets. Parking is available directly above in the Uptown Station parking deck, and the first hour is free, as well as any time after 5:01pm. If you need special accommodations to participate in any event, please contact University Galleries at 309.438.5487 or galleries@IllinoisState.edu. All events at University Galleries are free and open to the public.

For more information, visit galleries.IllinoisState.edu or call 309.438.5487. Find us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Sign up to receive emails by clicking the Newsletter link on our website.