

# ERIKA SHIBA

2021 Marshall Dulaney Pitcher Award Winner  
*All Is Zenith* and *Red Orb Strain*

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Erika Shiba](#) is an illustrator and printmaker born and raised in Hong Kong to Japanese parents. She received her BFA in illustration and printmaking from Parsons School of Design, New York (2018), and will receive her MFA in printmaking from Illinois State University in 2021. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at The Hole, New York City; Artlink Contemporary Gallery, Fort Wayne, Indiana; and Yui Galleries, New York City.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

Through her practice of printmaking and drawing, Erika Shiba creates a psychological universe that she calls a "mentalscape." Each work exists as a document of discovery in this space. *All Is Zenith* and *Red Orb Strain* is a collection of etchings and graphite drawings excavated from the mentalscape world. Through the ritual of journaling, Shiba records and reflects on personal thoughts and memories. She then translates these entries into cryptic symbols and codes. She uses this codified language to gesture towards an explanation, which is never actually provided. By pretending to offer the truth, she plays with the ideas of revealing and concealing.

Shiba also explores notions of otherness, feelings of displacement, and the loss of home(s). Home, for her, exists as a transitory space; it is not quite Hong Kong but not quite Japan. Her emotional allegiance oscillates between these two places. She considers the intersectionality of her identity as a multi-cultural diasporic individual and interprets it through world-making and code-making. She processes her experiences, shares them (to a degree), and invites viewers to examine them.

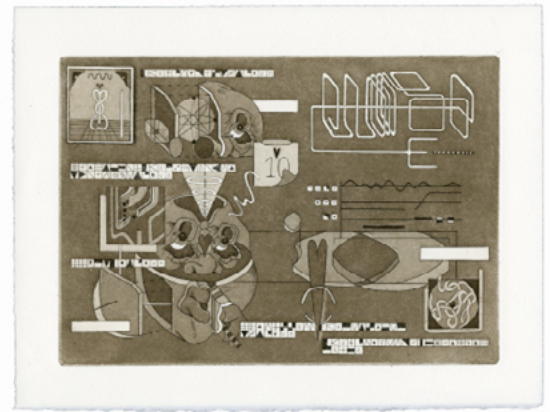
## Questions for Viewing

- Compare the compositions of *Mentalscape Study* and *Document 54*. Based on what you see, what do you think the artist's mental state was when making each work?
- Look closely at each work and describe what you see. What do you think these codes and symbols represent?
- How does Shiba's use of printmaking and drawing techniques relate to the theme of documenting personal thoughts and memories?

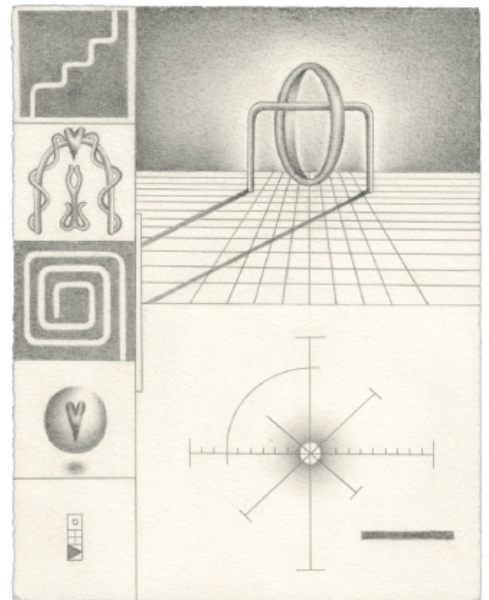
## Vocabulary

- **Etching:** a process where acid is used to carve into a metal plate
- **Mentalscape:** a term used by artist Erika Shiba to describe a visual representation of thoughts and feelings
- **Codes:** a cryptic language system used to conceal information from the viewer
- **Symbol:** an image or object that represents something, such as a heart shape for love
- **Conceal:** keep from sight; keep something secret; hide
- **Displacement:** the state of something or someone being removed from their original position
- **Transitory:** brief duration; temporary
- **Diasporic:** a shared history and culture connected to a territorial homeland

By Graduate Assistant Aaron Caldwell



Erika Shiba, *Document 54*, 2020, copper etching on BFK paper, 9x12 inches. Courtesy of the artist.



Erika Shiba, *Mentalscape Study*, 2021, graphite on BFK paper, 6x8 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

## ART-MAKING ACTIVITY

Write a journal entry about your thoughts and feelings from the day. Circle important information from your writing. What symbols and imagery could you use to depict these thoughts, feelings, or events?

Create a drawing using your chosen symbols and images. Consider the placement of visual information and how it relates to the sequence of events in, or organization of, your journal entry. What are some of the ways you might reveal or conceal the information? Have you included symbols that others might recognize or ones that only you would understand?