

For Immediate Release
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Umber Majeed, *Body of Water* (video still), 2015.

The Immigrant Artist Biennial 2023: *Contact Zone*

Enmeshed, Dreams of Water

October 6 – November 1, 2023

Curated by The Immigrant Artist Biennial

Keren Anavy, Sanie Bokharie, Magdalena Dukiewicz, Carlos Franco, Kathie Halfin, Bonam Kim, Umber Majeed,
Jamie Martinez, Jonathan Ojekunle, Sa'dia Rehman, Leila Seyedzadeh, Masha Vlasova

October 6, 6:30-8pm: Opening Performance by Kathie Halfin: "*Body of Water and Land.*"

October 13, 6-9pm: Opening Reception:

October 27, 6-8pm: Artist Panel Discussion

NARS Main Gallery

As part of The Immigrant Artist Biennial 2023: *Contact Zone*, NARS Foundation is pleased to present *Enmeshed, Dreams of Water* an exhibition featuring twelve artists exploring metamorphosis and

reflection at the intersection of sculpture, painting, fiber, video, and performance art. *Enmeshed, Dreams of Water* explores how new morphologies of identity emerge across time, place, and patterns of self-reflection. Here, water is reimagined as an access point that connects different parts of the self and of histories that cross generations. Whereas water is often a place through which borders and divisions are marked out, the artists featured here reclaim this space as a source of transformation and persistence. Fluidity and malleability reign.

Many works in the exhibition imagine an almost magical transportation across elemental routes, expressing paths of migration that require passage by ocean, air, or land to a new shore. In Umber Majeed's *Body of Water*, two family members swing over a rug that resembles the ocean. Masha Vlasova's work—composed of reflections on the lakes and streams of Northern Minnesota known as the Boundary Waters—is a meditation on natural life cycles and the potentialities of cinema. Centering a local waterway, Leila Seyedzadeh's new installation *East River* is based on one of her bilingual poems in Persian and English; the visual image based on a diagram of her voice creates a mountainous landscape while a suspended piece of fabric imagines New York City's saltwater tidal estuary that connects Upper New York Bay to Long Island Sound

Other works raise questions about what it is like to be influenced by a place yet not fully assimilate to it by centering 'enmeshed' relationships between the body and surrounding environments. Jamie Martinez's painting *The Spirit of the Octopus* invites the audience to think of the likenesses between humans and mollusks. Like us, they build cities—albeit underwater—they are adaptable in nature, and their memory is intergenerational. Martinez channels this intergenerational awareness by incorporating Pre-Columbian spells in his work, turning to his ancestors for protection. Jonathan Ojekunle's self-portrait recognizes the environmental aspects of growth and journeying. The artists engage in metamorphic processes that speak to a continual capacity for growth.

Body Of Water And Land is an interactive healing performance nurtured by research, shamanism, and ceremony. Kathie Halfin uses flower essences native to her native Crimean steppe and mountains to evoke the traditional customs of the region that has been annexed by Russia since 2014. While manifesting dignity and healing, Halfin moves across a canvas map of Ukraine and smudges it with herbal essences, acknowledging the harm being imposed by the Russian state on Ukrainian land and its people. The sound for this performance is created in collaboration with multimedia sound artist and composer Julia Santoli. Artists will also participate in an Artists' Talk as part of NARS' *Entree/Encore* series on October 27th, 6-8PM.

Enmeshed, Dreams of Water is part of *The Immigrant Artist Biennial 2023: Contact Zone* held across venues in New York and New Jersey from September 2023 to January 2024. [Find TIAB's full program here.](#)

About the artists:

Sanié Shoaib Bokhari, b. Lahore, Pakistan, Her current practice is an undertaking of an inquiry of the broad range of prospects presented by contemporary painting. She holds a Bachelors in Painting from the National College of Arts and was enrolled at the MFA program in painting at Rhode Island School of Design.

Umbur Majeed, b. 1989 New York, is a multidisciplinary visual artist and educator. Her writing, performance, and animation work engage with familial archives to explore Pakistani state, urban, and digital infrastructure through a feminist lens. Majeed lives and works in New York, USA and Lahore, Pakistan.

Keren Anavy, b. Israel, is a multidisciplinary visual artist, working in drawing, painting, installation and performance. A chapter about her work related to Transnational Landscapes was recently published in an Anthology by Bloomsbury Publishing, UK (2023). Anavy holds an MFA from Haifa University, Israel and BA in Art History, from Tel Aviv University.

Jonathan Ojekunle, b. Nigeria, is a portrait artist. Drawing inspiration from nature, history, and life experience, his practice includes painting, sculpture, ceramics, public art, and installation. He holds a Master's Degree from Brooklyn College and a BFA from Obafemi Awolowo University.

Kathie Halfin, b. Crimea, Ukraine, is a New York-based interdisciplinary artist working in textile, installation and performance art. She has exhibited her work widely at venues including Bronx Museum AIM Biennial, A.I.R. Gallery, Brooklyn, Itinerant Performance Festival, Art In Odd Places Performance Festival, and Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center.

Bringing attention to fragmented and hybrid realities, **Sa'dia Rehman's** art practice focuses on the relationship between printed images, text, and the body. Queering media images, family photographs, and artwork reproductions she enacts the labor of undoing this world and building another..

Magdalena Dukiewicz, b. Warsaw, Poland, is a visual artist based in New York. Her multidisciplinary and often site-responsive practice is rooted in methodologies of process and material experimentation. In Fall 2023, she will be a resident artist at Pioneer Works in Brooklyn.

Masha Vlasova is an award-winning experimental filmmaker. She has exhibited and screened her films at various film festivals and art institutions. Currently, she teaches film production at Oxford College of Emory University in Atlanta, GA.

Jamie Martinez, b. Ibagué, Colombia, is an interdisciplinary artist who explores the intersection of history, research, indigenous spirituality, and ancient beliefs. He has exhibited at the Queens Museum, Spring Break Art Show, Petzel Gallery, Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Gallery at the New School, and all over the world.

Leila Seyedzadeh, b. 1986 Tehran, Iran, is an interdisciplinary artist and curator who addresses ideas of imaginary landscapes, placelessness, and memory. She holds an MFA in Painting & Printmaking from Yale School of Art and a BFA in Painting from Tehran's University of Science and Culture.

Bonam Kim, b. Seoul, Korea, is a Brooklyn-based multi-disciplinary artist working in Brooklyn. She holds dual MFA degrees from Pratt Institute and Hongik University.

Carlos Franco is an artist living and working in Brooklyn.

The New York Art Residency and Studios (NARS) Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit arts organization committed to supporting artists and curators on an international level as well as engaging the local community in Brooklyn and the Greater New York area. Our mission is to present diverse platforms on which to nurture creative inspiration and innovative cross-pollination of ideas.

The NARS Galleries are open Monday - Friday from 12 to 5 pm. For further information, please contact us at www.narsfoundation.org / info@narsfoundation.org / 718-768-2765.

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