

firstdraft

Gallery 1
4-27 March 2020

Opening,
Wed 4 March, 6-8pm

Artist Talks
Thu 26 March, 6-7pm

From Me To You

Monisha Chippada, Beryl La, Judith Martinez Estrada, James Nguyen, Loc Nguyen, Laura Peacock & Shamen Suku

About the work

From Me To You is an exhibition that explores family and how our relationships to them play important roles in archiving and sharing stories. Families are a point of exchange as histories and memories are passed between generations within its networks. Whether through connection, disconnection or reconnection, our relationships to family are significant in shaping our understanding of ourselves, each other, and the world around us.

This exhibition brings together artists who explore the different connections they have to their own families within their practice. By drawing upon these relationships, and through the journey of creating their intimate works, each artist reveals new ways of learning about their families, and how these connections inform their position within the world.

From Me To You welcomes audiences into these personal experiences of culture, migration, food, language, spirituality, superstition, childhood, lineage and the home in works that have documented and interpreted the artists' family narratives, and for some, even being developed in collaboration with the hands of their family members.

From Me To You acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which this exhibition takes place, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Works (clockwise from left):

+ Radha, திருவிளையாடல் III *The Divine Game III*, 2020, mixed media installation, dimensions variable

+ James Nguyen, Nguyễn Công Ái, Nguyễn Thị Kim Nhung, *On The Border Of Things (Part 3, gloves)*, 2018, polycotton knitted fruit picking gloves

+ Loc Nguyen, Thi Thu Hong Tran and Tan Phuong Nguyen, *All My Love Into The Food*, 2019, table, bowls, plates, teacups, chopsticks, tissue paper, video 11:25

+ Judith Martinez Estrada, *Unknown Portraits (from a family archive)*, 2018, digital print on archival watercolour paper

Gallery 2
White Gilt 2.0
Nathan Beard

Gallery 3
Kalunga: Under the Sea
Paula do Prado & Tomas Marinangeli

Gallery 4
Make It Darker
Jodi Woodward

Firstdraft acknowledges and pays respect to the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the land on which Firstdraft is built and operates.

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Works (clockwise from left):

- + Monisha Chippada, *ilū*, 2018, video projection on Kanchipuram Saree Silk, 200 x 100cm
- + Laura Peacock, *03-08*, 2017, resin, organic debris, paint, teeth, found objects, dimensions variable
- + Beryl La, *Chất độc*, 2016, video documentaion of performance (6 mins)

Curator's Notes

The idea of this exhibition came about two years ago when I was having coffee with James Nguyen. Over coffee, I had expressed the importance of family in my own life and shared that I had wanted to create work with my parents. In that moment, James had told me about how special the experience of creating work with family can be, and that I'd be surprised by the creativity that comes out of collaboration with family. From Me To You brings together different artists who are all finding ways to connect with their families in their own works.

All My Love Into The Food was a work that was co-created with my mother and father, which shares the significance of food and our Vietnamese family restaurant. With documentation of my parents preparing food, the work recounts the ways the restaurant supported the survival of our family after migrating to Australia during the Vietnam War, while equally causing strain on meaningful relationships between family members due to the high demands of the business.

Story-telling through food comes up again in Radha's *The Divine Game*, which draws upon 1960s and 70s Tamil Hindu devotional films. The performance and installation shares stories of gender-fluid Hindu deities that are woven with personal recollections about Radha's own family, while they prepare their family's pickle recipe that is usually reserved for religious occasions.

Threads of spirituality and superstition are woven into Beryl La's *Chất độc (Toxic)*. La's performance satirises the Vietnamese-Chinese superstition her mother would tell her while growing up that shaking her legs while sitting would shake away her wealth, prosperity and ability to get married. Dancing to an audio recording of her mother and Britney Spear's "Toxic", La uses comedy as a way to process ideas she once found harmful.

These undertones of familial pressures placed upon femininity are also seen in Laura Peacock's work, *03-08*. Peacock's work is reflective of her memories growing up and the expectations placed upon her to remain subdued and polite. Her work encapsulates objects from her childhood, her own children's teeth and dried flowers in resin with a plate reading "say sorry, say thank you" - a command and a testament.

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This process of archiving histories and memories are continued in Judith Martinez Estrada's *Unknown Portraits*. The work documents unidentifiable photographs of her ancestors found in her family's apartment in Spain, which the family has resided in for 150 years. As the apartment is passed down from generation to generation, more documents are collected about the family as it grows, yet histories and memories of individuals are slowly erased.

Monisha Chippada's *ilū* is a video projection on a sari which shares interviews with her parents about their migrational struggles, intergenerational language barriers and the duality between new homelands and motherlands. Chippada interviews her parents in Telegu, which she then translates herself into English subtitles. This process of translating her parents' dialogue mediates the way her family histories are recounted and shared with audiences on a flowy and warped material.

James Nguyen's *On The Border Of Things (Part 3, gloves)* is a work that evolved out of Nguyen's compulsion to reconnect with his estranged uncle. Over the last few years, Nguyen had collaborated with his uncle and have created numerous iterations of performances, videos and installations. Their works explore the reconnection between them after migrating to Australia and documents his uncle's experiences of working on farms in rural Australia. Here, Nguyen displays gloves his uncle had used to pick zucchinis on the farm.

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