

ABSOLUT ART.



Bovey Lee, photographed by Elizabeth Weinberg

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Typically, residencies take artists to secluded woods, an Italian villa, a humming metropolis, or even a container ship abroad on the high seas. These days, a residency is much more likely to be at, well, an artist's own residence. In the coming months, Absolut Art will take you into the home studios and the daily routines of our "artists in residence" across the globe.

First up: In celebration of **Earth Day** today, we're spotlighting Hong Kong-born, Los Angeles-based Absolut artist **Bovey Lee**, who has exhibited everywhere from the Brooklyn Museum to the Museum of Fine Arts, Beijing; and the Fukuoka Museum of Art, Japan. Lee uses xuan (rice) paper in a nod to her heritage, and handheld tools to create cut paper art that studies a seeming paradox among many modern humans: our need for an urban lifestyle along with our desire to experience nature.



Preserving Coral I; Preserving Coral II - works available for purchase on our [site](#)

What's on your mind as we approach Earth Day?

We're not playing the role with nature that we're supposed to, as custodians. Nature can do without us and thrive. So **finally we can do nothing and give nature time to recover, just as we are trying to recover from the virus.**

This crisis reaffirms for me that we are so disconnected from nature that for the most part we see it as a theme park. We cherry-pick what we want from nature and romanticize it. We expect paradise, comfort, relaxation on our vacations in nature but we never think about how we damage nature on those trips. I hope we understand because of the virus that we can't cherry-pick which part of nature we enjoy. A virus is part of nature, and it wants to survive. Even though one person perhaps started this, because of global travel it brings the world to its knees. I'm wondering whether our attitudes will change because we have a better understanding of nature. We're not separated from it. I hope we can reframe our sense of powerlessness and anxiety.

What if we do something positive and wake up to the fact that we as individuals actually are powerful, and that each of us individually can have an impact on the world?

What have you been working on since hunkering down at home?

I'm working on a number of things. I'm going to be in an online exhibition that FOST Gallery, in Singapore, is putting on, called "***Come Together.***" For this show, the gallery's artists choose each other's work as a way of expressing how we are connected even though we are in different locations.



Sarah Sze photographed by Deborah Feingold

Which creatives are killing the content game?

Sarah Sze did a video on Gagosian Gallery's Instagram where she paints in her studio. I'm a big fan, and it's lovely to see her talking about her paintings.

Mark Bradford recorded a video for his 2019 show *Cerberus* at Hauser & Wirth gallery's website. He talked about what he did when he was a kid, shooting Super 8 films and projecting them onto the clouds for his friends. I mean, what was I doing when I was 8? Mark Bradford was such a cool kid! I loved seeing him talk about his process, since I'm always so curious how artists' ideas evolve.



Mark Bradford photographed by Cathy Carve in front of the artist's installation *Pickett's Charge* at the Hirshorn Museum

Can you tell us about the [video](#) you made for us in celebration of Earth Day's 50th anniversary?

I wanted to create a cut paper class for people that brings nature indoors, inspired by what I really miss seeing and hearing. There are motifs like the ocean, sun, and birds inhabited within a five-petal flower.

What art shows are you viewing from the comfort of your couch?

I was hoping to see [Zoe Leonard](#)'s exhibition *The Ties That Bind* at Hauser & Wirth before NY was locked down. But at least they created an online exhibition, which is great.



Surfaces: Gibi, 2020 by artist Vik Muniz

Which solo shows are you looking forward to seeing solo (assuming they go virtual)?

I'm looking forward to seeing **Vik Muniz**'s upcoming show, *Surfaces*, which looks amazing, at Rena Bransten in San Francisco, the gallery that also represents me. And **Dawoud Bey**'s show *An American Project* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, a retrospective honoring the power of the black subject. Also **Yukinori Yanagi** at Blum & Poe. He's a Japanese sculptor who studied at Yale; I fell in love with his work when I saw his sculptures in a group show at Blum & Poe last year.

What's keeping you sane, while still keeping a safe distance from the world?

I practice a sound meditation each morning, and because I live in Los Angeles I typically hear a lot of traffic along with birdsong. Now, without the traffic, I'm hearing the birdsong much more. I'm not sure if it's just me hearing it more or whether they're singing more. I get the sense that they're singing happy songs, different from the ones I have heard in the morning in the past. It could be just my interpretation; maybe it's my state of mind projected onto what I'm experiencing.

And a lot of cat videos!

Is there a mantra or inspirational quote that gets you through the day, hours, minutes?!?!?

This too shall pass. If you look at history, there have been many plagues. We will overcome this.

–Team Absolut Art