

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts presents

Dohee Lee's Puri Arts

“MU–Connector/When the Land Stands Alone”

with Storytellers and Manose

“मेरो गीत मेरो यात्रा, *Mero Geet Mero Yatra, My Song My Journey*”

June 23-24th, 2023 7-9:30PM at [Yerba Buena Center for the Arts](#)



DOHEE LEE

MU–CONNECTOR/WHEN THE LAND STANDS ALONE

June 23-24, 2023 • YBCA Forum



ASIAN REFUGEES UNITED

I HEAR A BUTTERFLY

June 25, 2023 • YBCA Screening Room

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PROGRAM NOTES

We call upon the spirit of land and the ancestors who hold the umbilical cord of our birth and theirs, to bridge where we belong to this unceded Ohlone land where we all live with the Ohlone ancestors and their descendants. Our body as connectors, we are learning to listen to the land and our ancestors. As immigrants, settlers and guests, we learn to find our ancestry through this place where our ancestors had to migrate, leaving their birthplace where they buried their placenta to connect to their ancestral lands. As we explore our histories, we also are reconnecting and remembering the resilience, strength and guidance of our ancestors and Chilseong/vital life—for healing.

We are calling out and naming our sickness to purge and deconstruct all these systems that oppress our people, our communities, and beyond, that exist here and back on our ancestral lands. Cultural and ancestral values are ignored, controlled, buried, and exploited by white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism—all of which destroy the value of human life and earth, nature, and environment.

From the Ocean to Mountain to the Ohlone Shellmound Sacred Site, we dedicate this ritual to our ancestors, to the struggling earth where we all confront our identity, ancestral blockage, climate change, natural disasters, and a global pandemic that has taken so many lives. We share our prayers for liberation “독립 (DokRip) Independence/Liberation” for our ancestral lands and the land we are on, the unceded Ohlone land and people, until the lands stand alone.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Dohee Lee Puri Arts weaves her multiple virtuosity in drumming, dancing, and singing into immersive ritualized theatrical creations. Born on Jeju Island, Korea, she trained at the master-level in music and dance styles rooted in Korean shamanism. In 2002, Dohee immigrated to Oakland, CA and found Puri Arts in 2004 to create a new art form. Since then, she has contributed both traditional and contemporary arts. She emphasizes the mythical, experimental, ritualistic, historical and healing aspects of performance and installation, catalyzing new relationships between identity, nature, spirituality, and the political. Dohee is Artistic Director of [Dohee Lee Puri Arts](#); Director of Art and Healing with [Asian Refugees United](#) and is faculty at [Tamalpa Institute](#).

PROGRAM



Part I. मेरो गीत मेरो यात्रा, *Mero Geet Mero Yatra, My Song My Journey*

Mero Geet, Mero Yatra (My Song, My Journey) is a performance project featuring traditional and new Nepali music staged with movement and spoken word narrative. The project is a collaboration with master Nepali musician/composer, Manose, supported by Creative Work Fund.

Manose, Nepal-born and globally recognized Grammy-nominated composer & multi instrumentalist artist, has been touring for more than two decades. He has won millions of hearts all over the world.

Storytellers, a group of Nepali-speaking Bhutanese youths from 5 different US states, share their experiences of their journey from the start of the production of a theater performance piece. The performance piece revolves around the stories of displacement, identity crisis, the search for home, belonging, connection to roots, and hope for humanity.

Created by Storytellers with guidance from Dohee Lee

Choreography and Stories: Dohee Lee, Jyoti Gurung, and MGYM members

Music Composition: Manose

Costume Design: Nawal Rai

Storytellers: Jyoti Gurung, Robin Gurung, Paras Maharjan, Beebak Rai, Nawal Rai, Manose, Biplu Subba, Jharna Subba, Nergis Subba



Part II. *MU-Connector/When the Land Stands Alone*

With our body as connectors, we are learning to listen to the land and our ancestors. We are honoring their stories and histories that are woven within our lives and finding ways to heal our stories through our bodies. This is our communities' (CoRazOn, CRE Cohorts) ritual and creative art practice in decolonizing our bodies from the many oppressive systems that exist here and back on our ancestral lands. As people of the Asian diaspora, there are various reasons and histories that made us or our ancestors immigrate to this country. These unresolved histories continue in our bodies. As we explore these histories, we also are reconnecting and remembering the resilience, strength and guidance of our ancestors and Chilseong/vital life. From the Ocean to Mountain to the Ohlone Shellmound Sacred Site, we dedicate this story to our ancestral lands and ancestors. We also share our prayers for liberation “독립 (DokRip) Independence/Liberation” for our ancestral lands and the land we are on, the unceded Ohlone land and people, until the lands stand alone.

1. 연유닥음 (Yeonyudaggum) Announcing intention of ritual
2. 초감제 (Chogamjae) Creation prayer song from Jeju Island
3. 성주풀이 (Seongjoopuri) Placenta - Ancestral Land and Ancestors
Calling ancestors name and Ancestral Land and their spirits to invite to connect
4. 공시풀이 (Gongsipuri) Stories of Heomaengyee
5. 두린굿 (Duringut) Heomaengyee - Ritual of Sickness
6. 칠성신 (Chilseongsin) Dipper stars/snake deity - Ritual of revival vital spirit for life

Concept and Direction: Dohee Lee

Choreography and Stories: Dohee Lee and CRE members

Music Composition: Adria Otte

Costume Design: Dana Kawano, Soyeun Shin, Dohee Lee and CRE members

CRE Cohorts/CoRazOn Performers: Frances Cachapero, laura ann coelho, Emily Encina, Sapho Flor, JaeEun Jun, Mi Kyong Kim, Inhui Moonstone Lee, Tiff Lin, Rebekah Sze-Tung Olstad, Sol Rhee, Katie Tao, Seh-reum Tom, Mợ (Trang) Trần, Dongyi Wu, Justine Xu



Part III. 칠성 새남굿 (Chilseong Saenamgut) “Ritual for Sickness”

칠성 새남굿 (Chilseong Saenamgut)- *Ritual for Sickness* is a performance ritual inspired by the sacred rituals originating in the artist's hometown of Jeju Island, Korea

1. 사낭갑서 Chilseong deity-칠성신 Dipper star/Snake (Life force-Vital spirits) Sanamgut song: Rebirth of Chilseong
2. 군문열음 Acknowledging all the gates for ancestors and 18000 deities
3. 지장 본풀이 Offering song for Jijang (Jijang who became the birds deity, represents all our overcome life)
4. 푸다시 Pudash - purging for Heomaengyee - Monstrous spirits 허맹이 which cause the sickness
5. 군문닫음 Closing the gates

MU Ritual and Drummers: Adria Otte, Codie Otte, Emily Encina, Eugene Kang, JaeEun Jun, Sol Rhee, Yong Chan Miller

Somi: Mi Kyong Kim

Ritual Facilitator: Dohee Lee

All Production (MGMY/MU/Chilseong Saenamgut)

Lighting Design: José María Francos

Creative Director & Producer: Dohee Lee

Stage Manager and Production Manager: Jose Maria Francos

Sound Director: Adria Otte

Production Assistance: Justine Xu

Funded by Creative Work Fund, Zellerbach Foundation, Kenneth Rainin Foundation, City of Oakland, Creative Work Fund, California Arts Council, New England Foundation for the arts, Fleishhacker Foundation, East Bay Community Foundation, Alameda County, Akonadi foundation, AHL Foundation, CCI, Dancers' Group, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation 50 Arts Commissions premieres of “Mu: 9 Goddesses” and the National Endowment for the Arts. Partnerships: Sogorea Te' Land Trust and Asian Refugees United

This project was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project and the MAP Fund, supported by the Doris Duke Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.



ABOUT OUR COMMUNITIES

MU Ritual Drummers: Collective of Korean drummers living in the Bay Area. As Koreans in diaspora, playing together is a powerful spiritual and political act. Through drumming, we are able to connect with and reclaim our cultures and identities, and uphold our ancestors' legacy of resistance and resilience.

Connect/Reflect/Enact Cohorts / CoRazOn: This Bay Area collective of immigrant-heritage artists/activists is dedicated to decolonizing our relationships to land and one another by honoring and practicing matriarchal ancestral wisdom through the use of ritual as performance.

मेरो गीत मेरो यात्रा, **Mero Geet Mero Yatra, My Song My Journey by The Storytellers:** A group of Nepali-speaking Bhutanese youths from 5 different US states. Thousands of Nepali-speaking Bhutanese were exiled in the late 1980s/early 1990s due to Bhutan's "One Nation One People" policy—living in refugee camps in Nepal for 15+ years and then resettling to the US in the late 2000s. The performers share their experiences of multiple displacements, search for identity, home, belonging, connection to roots, and hope for humanity.

Partnership Organizations

Sogorea Te' Land Trust

An urban Indigenous women-led land trust based in the San Francisco Bay Area that facilitates the return of Indigenous land to Indigenous people. (sogoreate-landtrust.org)

Asian Refugees United

An arts and healing leadership center. The mission is to cultivate and restore wholeness in communities impacted by displacement through embodied training programs, collective power-building, ancestral practices and connection to land. (asianrefugees.org)

ABOUT THE PURI ARTS TEAM

Adria Otte (Sound Director) is a musician, composer, sound engineer, and educator that has a passion for using music technology to expand the possibilities of live performance. Her eclectic musical background includes classical violin studies, electric guitar and bass in rock bands, traditional Korean drumming, free improvisation, and experimental electronic music. For over ten years her artistic work has been centered around music composition, sound design, programming, and playback for dance and theater. She has worked as a recording engineer at Women's Audio Mission studio in San Francisco and continues to do freelance on-site classical recordings working with Lolly Lewis of Transparent Recordings. Adria has been on the faculty at the College of San Mateo since 2019, where she currently teaches full-time in the music department.

José María Francos (Lighting Designer) After a short career as a dancer and forced to leave his native Argentina for political reasons, Francos made the Bay Area his home. He has designed for Opera, Ballet and Theater among them Oakland Opera, Oakland Ballet, The Wall Flower Order, Joseph's Papp NYC/San Francisco Festival Latino, June Watanabe In Dance, Vanessa Redgrave's Amnesty International Festival, Ellen Bromberg Ensemble, Joanna Haigood, Robert Moses KIN, Dance Brigade, Dohee Lee, Amara Tabor Smith, Edris Cooper-Anifowoshe, NAKA Dance Theater and The Eastside Arts Alliance. He worked for many years as Director of Production and Technical Director for Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco from which he retired in 2017. Since then he has continued to work as a freelance theatrical designer.

Dana Kawano (Ritual Wear Designer and Scenic/Installation Visual Artist) is versed in a multitude of artistic mediums. Her focus is to create 'visual landscapes' of elaborate wearable and/or scenic art that incorporate textiles, found materials and traditional mediums while integrating cultural/ritual layering to tell the story.



ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Frances Cachapero is a first generation american-born Ilokana and a daughter of immigrant parents from Ilokos Norte (*Amianan*), Philippines, is a multi-disciplinary arts practitioner. On a lifelong journey of healing ancestral and historical trauma, she is truly grateful for the supportive communities, chosen families and all their ancestors who hold her with great care, patience and love on this path. Agyamanak unay, unay, amin apo! Thank you very much, dear ones! *I would not be here without the collective - I/we can not do this alone.*

laura ann coelho is a queer kid of immigrants from Goa, India and Virac, Catanduanes in the Philippines, born a settler with class privilege on stolen Ohlone land. laura is lost, searching for home and learning each day how to stay with the complicatedness of being human and the contradictions of being alive at this time. laura is grateful to work with ancestors, family, community, land along the journey.

Emily Encina is a non-binary, mixed corean in diaspora with ancestors from méxico and north and south korea. they are a survivor and find purpose in tending to the fragments of their childhood, connecting to ancestors and spirits in the night sky, and building a family of their dreams.

Sapho Flor (they/them) is a descendant of immigrants from Zambales and Iloilo, in the so-called Philippines. They come from a lineage of farmers, weavers, teachers, and healers. They center play, rest, and building care in community/village. They join others in diaspora, exploring the landscape of the body and our relationship to the land we stand on—moving through all the stories and memories that flow in our bloodlines.

Jyoti Gurung (she/her) was born in Bhutan, grew up in Khudunabari refugee camp in Nepal, and currently lives in New York City. Growing up she struggled with her identity of not being Bhutanese-enough or Nepali-enough. The constant migration has left her wondering about the meaning of home. After years of storytelling, personal and professional explorations, she has reached a space where she chooses to celebrate different parts of her identities: Bhutanese-Nepali-American. She is still in search of the meaning of home, but for now, she finds home in people, memories, fragrances, and stories.

Robin Gurung (he/him) is an ethnic Nepali Bhutanese American, who was born in Bhutan and raised in a Bhutanese refugee camp in Nepal. He lived in Oakland, California from 2012 to 2020 and now lives in Harrisburg, PA. Robin is passionate about community organizing, healing and leadership development.

JaeEun Jun (they/them) is continually exploring what liberation, decolonizing and wholeness means as a corean person in diaspora on turtle island with community rituals and sound through Puri Arts, legal advocacy with communities impacted by incarceration through Unapologetically H.E.R.S., and learning to listen and care with plants and seeds and their stories through Second Generation Seeds.

Mi Kyong Kim (she/her) is a Korean immigrant with 40 years living in the U.S. She comes from a maternal line of shamanistic tradition in South Korea. She is a transpersonal therapist in San Francisco. Her practice strives to blend her cultural upbringing with contemporary threads of holism, art, and mindfulness.

Eugene Kang (he/him) grew up in the bay, and feels fortunate to call Oakland/Lisjan Ohlone Territory home. As an educator, activist, and park ranger, he is deeply committed to community-led transportation, immigration, education, housing, anti-police violence, and environmental justice work. As a Corean in diaspora, Eugene has found drumming to be an important and healing way to connect with ancestors, culture, community and place.

Inhui Moonstone Lee (she/they) born in South Korea, in the middle of the Korean(USA)War (1950-1953). from ancestral lineage of Mudang (woman shaman) and Geomancy masters who have been degraded from Shaman queen/king to the class of the Untouchable. College student activist against military dictatorship (1961-1979), political fugitive in their own country. First generation immigrant, in diaspora. PhD in Philosophy and Religion with Women's Spirituality. Working on suppressed and submerged indigenous peoples' spirituality, memory, knowledges, herstories, and healing medicines through MU.



Tiff Lin (they/them) is a 1.5 generation gender expansive Taiwanese American with ancestry from Fujian province. Oftentimes riding the waves between resistance and courage, they wish to honor their ancestors' deepest wishes - to do good and live a good life. And are humbled to keep choosing a life of building cultures of belonging, sparking collaboration within community, cultivating self through art and healing practices. Through CRE, they are learning how to connect more deeply to their body, and to understand their impact in this land, space, and time.

Paras Maharjan (he/him) is a Nepali immigrant living in the U.S. for over a decade. He grew up in Kathmandu Valley around indigenous people and their culture. He is an aspiring musician, an avid plant lover, and plant medicine enthusiast.

Yong Chan Miller (she/they) is an activist and community organizer working towards our collective liberation. YC's drumming journey is based in the tradition of pungmul in the resistance movements in Korea, and as a way honor our ancestors who gave their lives for freedom.

Rebekah Sze-Tung Olstad (she/her) is a Chinese American herbalist, educator and organizer, focused on supporting personal and collective healing through relationships with plants and restoring the sacred. She also advocates for watershed and salmon restoration.

Codie Otte is a gardener and plant lover. She grew up playing classical piano but ended up pursuing a career in science. She rediscovered her interest in music in 2010 through playing with Korean drumming groups in the Bay area.

Beebak Rai (he/him) is a Bhutanese refugee born in Nepal. In 2011, he moved to the US from Pathari refugee camp. Now he lives in Richmond, Virginia.

Nawal Rai (he/him) was born in Sanischare Camp in Nepal, and he currently lives in Des Moines, Iowa. He is passionate about community development and community organizing. Through *Mero Geet Mero Yatra* performance, he wants to share his community's journey as refugees and stand in solidarity with communities through their experiences.

Sol Rhee (they/them) is an immigrant whose ancestors walked on the lands of north and south Korea. They are on a journey towards reconciliation with their full-self through cultivating liberation alongside community and the land. They find joy, nourishment and strength from exploring the foodways of their roots and being a student of ancestral medicine and Korean drumming.

Biplu Subba (he/him) is a Nepali/Bhutanese refugee and has been living in the U.S. for 13 years. He is currently living in Oakland, California, and he considers Bhutan his homeland. He is one of the many Nepali refugees who is trying to get his community's stories and voices heard. His passion is teaching and learning new things and new stories in this vast world. He wants to teach others what he has learned from his experiences, help people understand his story, and help them explore their stories as well.

Jharna Subba (she/her) from Khudunabari Camp, Jhapa Nepal. Founding members of BABY (Bay Area Bhutanese Youth). Passionate about exploring my roots, and understanding intersectionality. Beginner gardener, to connect to nature.

Nergis Subba (she/they) currently lives in Oakland. She has a passion for volleyball and currently attend high school. Additionally, she finds great joy in exploring the depths of history, constantly seeking to absorb knowledge and expand my understanding

Katie Tao is a student, a dreamer, a mover born on turtle island to immigrants with chinese ancestry in jiangxi and guangdong. as a queer diasporic child descended from a lineage of teachers, healers, and weavers, they



continually practice and explore what it means to embody ancestral dreams/memories in community-village. They are landing in body, returning home, revitalizing the source of life that flows within and connects them with all beings and the many realms we belong to.

Seh-reum Tom is a celestial water harmonizer. a student of the dolphins, the bees and the stars, their maternal lineages are from Jeju Island, Corea and paternal lineages are settlers in California from Southern Coastal China. they honor and acknowledge their Japanese and Mongolian ancestors through complex histories of colonization, migration and imperialism and give deep reverence and thanks to the Ohlone, Lenape, Tongva and Chumash lands and waters that have raised, shaped and given them life.

Mơ (Trang) Trần is a child of the moon/ descendant of dragon and fairy/ grandchild of legendary turtle, sharing their creative journey towards self and collective liberation. Born in Sài Gòn, Việt Nam, and growing up on stolen Ohlone land. They co-founded QTViệt Cafe Collective, a creative cultural hub dedicated to Queer and Trans Việt (QTViệt) liberation through ancestral practices, the arts, and intergenerational connection.

Dongyi Wu is seeded in the subtropics of the Pearl River Delta, transplanted onto Ohlone lands. Their art and life practice is informed by the cyclical nature of all beings, kinship and growing relationship to the earth body/land.

Justine Xu always wants to know what you're dreaming up for yourself and your world. Their Chinese ancestry weaves through the city of Xi'an, and Henan and Guangdong provinces. With roots in trans and queer Asian American organizing, they are guided to heal our people through land, ancestors, body, ritual, and art—while building transnational liberation here and on our ancestral lands. You can catch her eating hand-pulled noodles, learning weaving and pottery, looking at the moon, or loving on their nibbling.

ABOUT YBCA

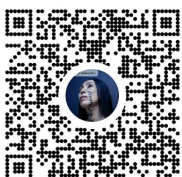
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) is San Francisco's center for art and progress. Opened to the public in 1993, YBCA was founded as the cultural anchor of San Francisco's Yerba Buena gardens neighborhood. Our work spans the realms of contemporary art, performance, film, civic engagement, and public life. By centering artists as essential to social and cultural movement, YBCA is reimagining the role an arts institution can play in the community it serves. Our mission is to generate culture that moves people.

YBCA LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts acknowledges that we are on the unceded ancestral lands of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples. We honor and pay respect to their elders, past and present, and express our gratitude for their stewardship of this land throughout the ages.

We also acknowledge the deep history of colonization and the ongoing struggles that this action has caused right here and across the world. We recognize the injustices and displacement endured on this land by countless communities as a result of colonization and land theft.

Purchase our Connect/Reflect/Enact Zine



Donate to Asian Refugees United





ABOUT THE FILMS

YBCA and Asian Refugees United present “I Hear A Butterfly” Film Screening



Film Screening 1: *Mero Geet Mero Yatra: Artists Share* (11:44, Dir. Asian Refugees United)
Participants in *Mero Geet Mero Yatra* (MGMY) share their experiences of their journey from the start of the production of a theater performance piece. The performance piece revolves around the stories of displacement, identity crisis, search for a home, belonging, connection to our roots, and our hope for humanity.



Film Screening 2: *Samangut Sulmunda: The future of the disappeared* (17:00, dir. Bulwhigong (Jinoh Han, Dohee Lee, Yongye Yu))
Through the visual art of ritual performance, this film exposes the deadly destruction of the land and many sacred sites by senseless industrial development in the Jeju Islands, South Korea, and shows how to heal the earth through arts and shamanic rituals.



Film Screening 3: *The Waiting Eyes: Waiting for reunion* (16:00, dir. Parsu Adhikari)

This real life documentary that sheds light on the lives of Bhutanese refugees who are still waiting for their chance to return home. By following the lives of three generations of refugees who have been living in camps for decades, the film explores both the harsh realities of life in the camp, and the resilience of the refugees in their hopes for a better future. (parsu.adhikari@gmail.com)



Film Screening 4: *(Lo)Về Quê(er): Queer and Trans Việť on the Road Returning to Việť Nam* (7:40, dir. QTViệť Cafe Collective and Sunkissed Productions)

This film shares the story of the Queer & Trans Việť (QTViệť) Cafe Collective, a project of Asian Refugees United (ARU), is a creative cultural hub dedicated to Queer and Trans Việť (QTViệť) liberation through ancestral practices, the arts, and intergenerational connection. Since 2017, the Collective has supported and organized events supporting Queer and Trans Việť art, healing, and culture in the San Francisco Bay Area.



Film Screening 5: *MU-Connectors/When the lands stand alone* (25:00, dir. Dohee Lee Puri arts and Fox Nakai, Filmed and edited by Fox Nakai, Footage of Headlands by Emily Encina, Music by Adria Otte)
This film (created 2020-2023) carries aspects of our communities' (CoRazOn, CRE Cohorts) ritual and creative art practice in decolonizing our bodies from the many oppressive systems that exist here and back on our ancestral lands. As people of the Asian diaspora, these unresolved histories of ancestral immigration continue in our bodies. With our bodies as connectors, we are learning to listen to the land and our ancestors, honoring their stories and histories woven within our lives, and finding ways to heal our stories through our bodies.

DONATE TO ASIAN REFUGEES UNITED

