

# RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY

## *Summoning*

November 23, 2024 – January 25, 2025

Artists Reception December 7 | 5-7PM



Rena Bransten Gallery is pleased to present the group exhibition *Summoning* with work by Dawoud Bey, Sydney Cain, Jonathan Calm, Rodney Ewing, Rupert Garcia, Doug Hall, Oliver Lee Jackson, Hung Liu, Amalia Mesa-Bains, Robert Minervini, Tracey Moffatt, Viviana Paredes, Rose Piper, and Lava Thomas.

Spanning a variety of media – painting, photography, works on paper, and sculpture – this exhibition highlights how art is used as a tool for evocation. The artists included commune with past and future, often summoning spirits to the present through their powerful work.

We introduce the large, newly published tapestry by Amalia Mesa-Bains *Sleeping Nun*, a portrayal of the monjas coronadas (“crowned nuns”) of 18th and 19th century colonial Mexico. The families of these nuns made donations to the church to protect and sequester their daughters, much like a marriage dowry, and Mesa-Bains alludes to the complexity of women’s roles by layering in a female medical doll. Also included are dancing Calaveras, perhaps alluding to the women achieving freedom in death.

Viviana Paredes’ sculptural work on view – a pair of glass hands holding a string of prayer beads – references a well-known, Mazatec healer Maria Sabina. Sabina used ritual of song, poetry, chanting, and incantation during sacred mushroom ceremonies. By invoking Sabina, Paredes posits there are invisible forces and the existence of things greater than ourselves.

Hung Liu’s dialog with the past is at the foundation of her oeuvre, reimagining historical photographs as paintings and memorializing the extraordinary stories of ordinary people. New works on paper from Sydney Cain continue an exploration of ancestral communing as shadowy, enigmatic figures gather in other-worldly realms. Dawoud Bey’s large scale, black and white photographic series *In This Here Place* uses images of southern plantations as a narrative starting point to consider how the land holds memory; his images become portraits without people, suggesting that the stories of those who existed in these places are ever-present.

**Above Image:** Amalia Mesa-Bains, *Sleeping Nun in Venus Envy Chapter III: Cihuatlampa, The Place of the Giant Women*, 1997-2024, Jacquard tapestry, 57 x 70 inches, edition of 3

All press inquiries and image requests, contact [china@renabranstengallery.com](mailto:china@renabranstengallery.com)