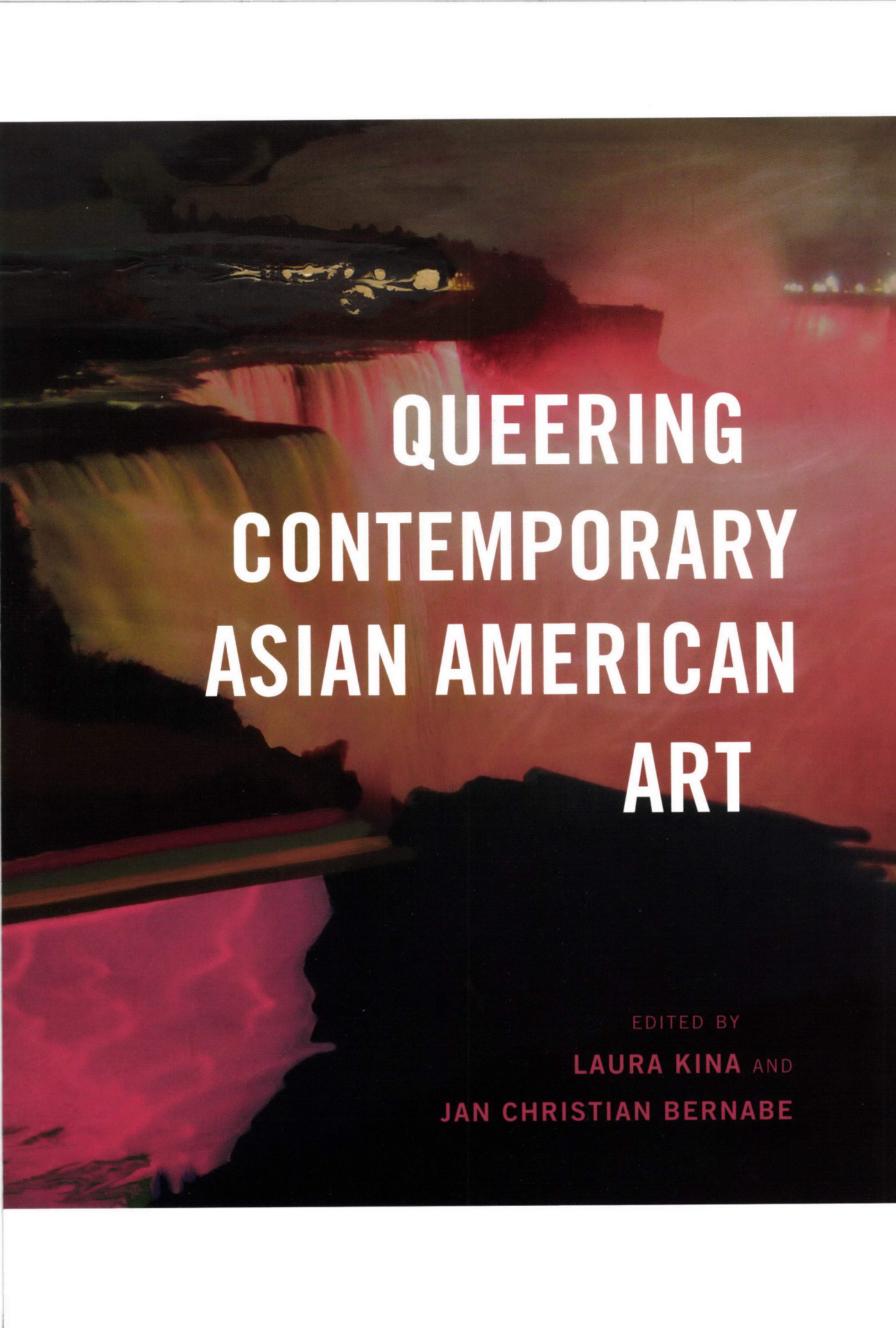


An abstract painting of a waterfall. The water is depicted with vibrant rainbow colors, transitioning from red at the top to yellow, green, and blue as it falls. The surrounding landscape is dark and moody, with some distant lights visible on the right side. The overall composition is dramatic and evocative.

QUEERING CONTEMPORARY ASIAN AMERICAN ART

EDITED BY
LAURA KINA AND
JAN CHRISTIAN BERNABE

THE JACOB LAWRENCE SERIES ON AMERICAN ARTISTS

THE JACOB LAWRENCE SERIES
ON AMERICAN ARTISTS

Storm Watch: The Art of Barbara Earl Thomas by Vicki Halper

Elizabeth Catlett: An American Artist in Mexico by Melanie Anne Herzog

Dox Thrash: An African American Master Printmaker Rediscovered by John Ittman

Alfredo Arreguín: Patterns of Dreams and Nature / Diseños, Sueños y Naturaleza by Lauro Flores

Yun Gee: Poetry, Writings, Art, Memories edited by Anthony W. Lee

Portraits of a People: Picturing African Americans in the Nineteenth Century by Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw

The Prints of Roger Shimomura: A Catalogue Raisonné, 1968–2005 by Emily Stamey

Joe Feddersen: Vital Signs by Rebecca J. Dobkins, Barbara Earl Thomas, and Gail Tremblay

Ruben Trejo: Beyond Boundaries / Aztlán y más allá edited by Ben Mitchell

William H. Johnson: An American Modern by Richard J. Powell et al.

Queering Contemporary Asian American Art edited by Laura Kina and Jan Christian Bernabe

QUEERING CONTEMPORARY ASIAN AMERICAN ART

EDITED BY

**LAURA KINA AND
JAN CHRISTIAN BERNABE**

University of Washington Press
SEATTLE AND LONDON

Queering Contemporary Asian American Art was supported by a grant from the Jacob Lawrence Endowment, established through the generosity of Jacob Lawrence, Gwendolyn Knight, and other donors.

This book was also made possible in part by funding from the DePaul University Research Council, the Asian/Pacific/American Institute at New York University, and the Center for Art + Thought.



ASIAN | PACIFIC | AMERICAN INSTITUTE AT NYU



CENTER FOR
ART + THOUGHT

Copyright © 2017 by the University of Washington Press
Printed and bound in the United States of America
Design by Katherine Wong
Composed in Minion Pro, typeface designed by Robert Slimbach

21 20 19 18 17 5 4 3 2 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

University of Washington Press
www.washington.edu/uwpress

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Kina, Laura, 1973– editor. | Bernabe, Jan Christian, editor.

Title: *Queering contemporary Asian American art* / edited by Laura Kina and Jan Christian Bernabe.

Description: Seattle : University of Washington Press, 2017. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016027925 | ISBN 9780295741376 (pbk. : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Asian American art—21st century. | Group identity in art. | Art and society—United States—History—21st century.

Classification: LCC N6538.A83 Q44 2017 | DDC 701/.03—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016027925>

Cover image: *Niagara* by Kim Anno, 2013. Oil on inkjet on aluminum. 36 x 42 in.
Collection of Berkeley Art Museum. Courtesy of the Berkeley Art Museum

The paper used in this publication is acid-free and meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48–1984. ∞

In memory of

KARIN HIGA

(June 19, 1966 – October 29, 2013)

CONTENTS

Foreword by Susette Min	xi
Acknowledgments	xv
Introduction: For the Love of Unicorns: Queering Contemporary Asian American Art BY JAN CHRISTIAN BERNABE AND LAURA KINA	3

CHAPTER 1 QUEERING SURVEILLANCE

“You Blushed”: Queering Surveillance after 9/11 in the Work of Jill Magid and Hasan Elahi BY HARROD J SUAREZ	24
Performance, Surveillance, and Sousveillance: A Conversation with Wafaa Bilal and Hasan Elahi BY JAN CHRISTIAN BERNABE AND LAURA KINA	38

CHAPTER 2 QUEERING TIME

Pacific Standard Time: Queering Temporality in Asian American Visual Cultures BY MARIAM B. LAM	49
Promiscuous Time Traveling (on Leaving and Returns): A Conversation with Lin + Lam and Việt Lê BY LAURA KINA	67

CHAPTER 3 QUEERING AFFECT

Filipino Diasporic Queer Killjoy: Recuperating Failure in Jeffrey Augustine Songco’s <i>Guilty Party</i> and <i>BOMH</i> Series BY JAN CHRISTIAN BERNABE	80
Negotiating Desire and (Queer) Masculinity: An Interview with Kenneth Tam BY JAN CHRISTIAN BERNABE	91

CHAPTER 4 QUEERING METHODOLOGY

- Queer Zen: Unyoking Genealogy in Asian American Art History
BY ALPESH KANTILAL PATEL 100
- Pin@y Projections: Urban Spaces, Digital Ephemerality,
and Planned Obsolescence: An Interview with Eliza Barrios
BY JAN CHRISTIAN BERNABE 110
- Queer Traveler—on Desiring and Failing Sublime Landscapes:
An Interview with Kim Anno
BY JAN CHRISTIAN BERNABE AND LAURA KINA 114

CHAPTER 5 QUEERING SUBJECTIVITY

- Risky Subjectivity: Select Works by Korean Adoptee Artists
BY EUN JUNG PARK 120
- Dazzle: A Conversation on Transgender Subjectivity with
Greyson Hong and Kiam Marcelo Junio
BY JAN CHRISTIAN BERNABE AND LAURA KINA 129

CHAPTER 6 QUEERING MIXED RACE

- Liminal Possibilities: Queering Mixed-Race Asian American Strategies
in the Art of Maya Mackrandilal and Zavé Gayatri Martohardjono
BY LAURA KINA 138
- Chimera: A Conversation on Mixed Race/Mixed Methods with
Sita Kuratomi Bhaumik and Saya Woolfalk
BY LAURA KINA 152

CHAPTER 7 QUEERING ASIAN AMERICA

- Open-Source Identities: Identity and Resistance in the Work of
Three Asian American Artists
BY VALERIE SOE 163
- Muscles, Mash-Ups and Warning Shots—Queering Japanese American
History: An Interview with Tina Takemoto
BY JAN CHRISTIAN BERNABE AND LAURA KINA 178
- The Buddhist Bug*—Spanning Borders and Bodies:
An Interview with Anida Yoeu Ali
BY LAURA KINA 185

Afterword: To Be Queer Being to Queer It . . .	
BY KYOO LEE	192
Notes	195
Bibliography	215
About the Contributors	227
Index	233

Plates follow page 48

AFTERWORD

To Be Queer Being to Queer It . . .

KYOO LEE

QUEERING TAKES ON A RELATIONAL POSITIONING BY WELCOMING IDENTIFICATORY MARKERS OF DIFFERENCE WITHIN ASIAN AMERICA THAT CONSTITUTE FOR US THE QUEER HORIZON.

Jan Christian Bernabe and Laura Kina, "Introduction"

Let me go *straight* to the point, something of a meta-queer conundrum, a challenge: how we—whoever you are—relate, “re-relate,” to queerness today, its obscure, avant-garde alterities, when the neoliberal-motorized, global transcultural machine is going all over, soaking up all the queer-edgy energy “out there,” with its turbo-spongy orderliness, leaving almost all stone-walls touched up, remastered, upscaled. Queer is being normalized and *queer-normativized*, fast, as if, now, norms could outpace themselves.

“Now listen, you queer,” just about a few decades ago (1968), some vocal folks such as William F. Buckley would readily liberally threaten some other vocal folks such as Gore Vidal on TV, with this sort of incendiary line, “Stop calling me a crypto-Nazi or I’ll sock you in the goddamn face and you’ll stay plastered,”¹ and yet, you should not be surprised to hear the same sort of scene popping up today—although, again, it has been already fifteen years since the publication of the ground-breaking *Q & A: Queer in Asian America* (1998), and the Series Q of Duke University Press, another phenomenal success, concluded a few years ago (2012) already.² And as you may also have heard, nowadays, marriage is practically just for gay people (at least in the United States) to the point where some sexually active televangelist such as Pat Robertson warns that “gays will force Christians to like anal sex and, eventually, polyamory, and bestiality” (2015)³—a worry aired with a comedic twist in another country, in movieland, where a gay man about to get same-sex-married would come “in” out of the closet as a heterosexual kisser as he sleeps with a girl “for the very first time” (*Toute première fois*, trans. *I Kissed a Girl*, 2015). Also, last but not least, these days, no self-respecting queer theory class, undergrad or grad, would be seen without QCC (queer color critique) loud and clear, while asexuals too are joining the “Q” fast & furious . . . and now, listen again, you queer.

As Michael Warner observes in his 2012 essay, “Queer and Then?,” quite truly, “People seem to long for a present in which they can be postqueer.”⁴ The invisible through-line is a somewhat utopian, paradoxical imperative: what would be the point of queer, if not, in a sense, to end “it,” to reach the world of no-more-*queer*? Such a (death) drive of the unruly, swerving queer present, constantly auto-critiqued and instituted by evolving networks of norm-questioning psycho-sexual, eroto-social, ethico-cultural practices that give themselves their *raison d’être*, continues to resonate with the critical-creative query channeled in this anthology.

What this volume of queer synesthesia explores while “*cruising* the corpus of contemporary Asian American art” (Introduction), itself a moving map in the making, is the very conceptual *mélange* and edges of *serial Qness*, where eclectic synergy brings out the very pulsation of the possible, including the dialogical and intercategory openness of the Q & A. Here, let’s say, Q & AAA (Queer & Asian American Anonymous/Areal/Abnormal/Anyhow) in *transit*, transforming “it,” whatever it is, originates from and cuts across the specifically “Asian American” context. With originality indeed, the artists and theorists in this assemblage of work on auto-queered/queering “identities,” still a dominant category of concern even and especially for those into “disidentitarian” ethos and practices, confront the very interfacial, interstellar twists and turns of *Asian Americana*.

Then what are we (talking about), Q & AAA, you ask? What, or who, else continues to queer the “queer Asian horizon” taken as a (w)hole?—if not just “Sum Yung Mahn, perhaps the only Asian to qualify as a gay porn ‘star,’ variously known as Brad Troung or Sa or Sum Yung Mahn” back in 2000.⁵ In search, in various ways, of a way out of *and* across the polarized aesthetic politics, today, of anti-identitarianism, deracialization, and gender-neutralization, etc., etc., forward-looking folks brought here, as the editors put it, to pursue the category-questioning and creative projects that are “recuperative and community oriented” (Introduction) while actively inscribing, for instance, *oldnew* “Asian” American perspectives into canonically “white” materials, as shown in the piece “Queer Zen,” by Alpesh Kantilal Patel, for instance.

Just another example: as parodically re-indexicalized by the transnational and transgendering work by Việt Lê, *Love Bang!* (2012), a meta-queer sexperimental embodiment of “promiscuous time traveling” (chapter 2 interview), Q & AAA at work becomes a zone where “‘hyperreal’ . . . meets realpolitik” and “thanatourism” meets real fakery (chapter 2 interview). Areal becomes real, as one acts queer and stays queer, and queerness stays viral-vital across and beyond, for instance, the “Pacific Standard Time,” which Mariam Lam interrogates with an eye for counterpoints of being. In other words, to be queer—identified as such, self-, mis-, dis-, post-, whatever

else—is to queer it, “it,” the very referentiality of *X-ness* steely-stereotyped into portable or locatable things, e.g., Asian American “stuff” now being stuffed otherwise, queerly.

Quite simply, the impact this volume of query would have on the lives and afterlives of Asian American Studies and Art and beyond is obvious and remains immeasurable. By now, queer or not, you will have read it—or else read it right now!