

# Where Do We Come From?

# Where Are We Going?

## Curatorial Statement

Curated by Finn Leong and Carley Nolan

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The exhibition title is a nod to Paul Gauguin's painting *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* from the late 19th century, which reflected his spiritual contemplation of natural life and human interaction. The exhibition is a reflective process of space and time within our human existence. The intangible words "space and time" are part of a universal narrative about how we connect our human experiences to the world around us. There is the inevitable desire of identifying who we are and where we are from, expressed through painting, digital work, photography, cyanotype print, sculpture, and installation. The artists in the exhibition, experience cultural, spiritual, and physical displacement; creating a juxtaposition between life's higher purpose and existential challenges.

Thinking about space and time is a part of our human existence. However, each person has their thoughts and ideas which shape their perceptions about space and time. The words "space and time" unfold as we all try to understand the way we shift and move, and the moments and places we make room for ourselves in the world. This conversation creates the most profound internal or external contemplation, like looking at reflections rippling and drifting in an endless stream.

Water carries lives and objects from one space to another at different times. Its fluidity and eternal existence are often compared to space and time metaphorically. Humans are always thinking about these three entities because they coexist and are eternal elements in mortal human life. As a catalyst, water transforms materials and life through chemical reactions and shapes landscapes through erosion. Movement throughout each person's life can result in a sense of loss. We correlate water with the journey of displacement in space and time because of its natural fluctuating movement, a rhythm that is part of our eternal existence.

We understand time through quantifications. A framework for the duration of a period or a continuum happening from the past to the future, it is impalpable but measurable. Space contains the meaning of both the three-dimensional physical world and the abstract personal space. The dichotomous characteristic of space and time encompasses the purpose of life, which causes an existential crisis. Holistically, people find a parallel between their personal experiences and the ultimate truth; whether that be scientific, spiritual, or philosophical. People are drawn like gravity to learning and connecting with the universe. These experiences of private moments and group interactions create meditative dispositions.

Here, we curated an exhibition showcasing works, using either traditional medium or new media in different ways, by artists who come from different places and in different generations. All the artists in some form have incorporated technology whether contemporary or traditional in their process, or finished work. They address our relationship with time and space from their roots and where they reside now. Whether living in the U.S as first-generation immigrants or part of the historical diaspora, the foundation of our diverse cross-cultural society originates from cultural dispositions. Prompting with the questions—where do we come from, and where are we going?— This exhibition intends to offer a meditative perspective of sense of belonging, changes, and shifts in these chaotic moments of time and space.