

CHRISTINE PARK GALLERY

Xyza Cruz Bacani: *Ancestors/Descendants*

20 March – 20 April 2022

Viewing Rooms: www.christinepark.net/viewing-room/

Xyza Cruz Bacani's Viewing Room opens on Sunday, March 20, 00:00 HKT / Saturday, March 19, 12:00 EST

For Immediate Release

CHRISTINE PARK GALLERY is pleased to present *Ancestors/Descendants*, a solo exhibition featuring a new body of work by Xyza Cruz Bacani. This Online Exhibition presents a tightly curated selection of 24 photographs taken in the Philippines between 2020 and 2021 while Xyza Cruz Bacani was staying in her homeland documenting life during the COVID-19 pandemic. Wanting to spotlight the beauty of humanity during an unprecedented time and to document the stories surrounding her, this exhibition showcases 8 color photographs taken in her village, Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya, and 16 black-and-white photographs from her iconic Project Ugnayan. Commissioned by Ayala Corporation, Project Ugnayan provided food aid relief to 2,837,367 families in the Greater Manila Area through distribution of food vouchers and packages. Shot during the first months of the pandemic, Xyza Cruz Bacani's Project Ugnayan series celebrates the generosity and courage of frontline volunteers who delivered food to those in need during this health crisis. Each photograph featured in the exhibition holds on to a moment in time, depicting the realities of pandemic life to show future generations.

This Online Exhibition aims to bring to life the narrative unfolded by Xyza Cruz Bacani, who published this Artist Statement recalling the times she spent in her hometown with her family and fellow villagers as they were engaged in a fight against the pandemic. A part of the Project Ugnayan photographs in this exhibition is currently featured in the duo exhibition, *Pilipinas Ngayon. Filipinas ahora.* at the Museo Nacional de Antropología in Madrid from 28 January to 12 June 2022, and will be shown in the Gallery's art fair booths at Beijing Dangdai and Taipei Dangdai from 19-22 May 2022.

Being a transnational citizen means having my heart scattered in different places. It can be a gift, but the pandemic has made it almost a curse. When the pandemic started, I was in the Philippines on a short visit that turned 19 months away from my art community friends, and I felt isolated. My heart was broken repeatedly as news of friends, acquaintances, and community members succumbed to the virus.

Before Covid, I was a visitor to my own home, viewing it from an outsider's lens as I spent more time travelling and documenting different cities and countries. Since I left the Philippines to work in Hong Kong when I was 19, I have never really returned. The pandemic that upended lives forced me to stay

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and become part of my hometown. I returned to the place of my ancestors and started documenting the lives of the people I grew up with, our neighbors, and the place that was once just a memory.

The way I view the world has evolved because of the pandemic's uncertainties. When it started, I was as scared as everyone else, but I decided to document it because I am doing it for my descendants. I documented healthcare workers' who bravely combat the unseen enemy; women's issues like homebirth and farmers who suffer from food insecurity. As an artist with the facts, I subscribe to the tradition and ethics of journalism. I let things happen and never intervene, but when documenting a pregnant woman who needed to be in the hospital. I felt at that moment that, given the circumstances, I needed to help. I was reminded that I am human first before I am a photographer. As an ancestor, the life saved that day is more important than an image.

Why do we do the things we need to do? If not for us, then for who? This series of images is about my hometown in the Philippines during the pandemic. I became an ancestor to my homeland. It guided my process, as it is not about me anymore but about those who will come after me. I felt the urgency to spotlight these stories for the future generation because tomorrow is never promised.

Xyza Cruz Bacani, New York, March 2022

This exhibition is supported by Ayala Corporation and FujiFilm USA.

The exhibition will be available online-only on its dedicated Viewing Room page at www.christinepark.net/viewing-room/xyza-cruz-bacani-ancestors-descendants/. All Press and Sales inquiries can be made directly from the Viewing Room or by emailing to christine@christinepark.net.

For further information, please contact the gallery at christine@christinepark.net or WeChat Official Account [cpgallery](https://www.wechat.com/qrcode?scene=scene_qr).

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About the Artist

Xyza Cruz Bacani (b.1987) is a Filipina author and photographer based in Hong Kong and New York who uses her work to raise awareness about under-reported stories.

Having worked as a second-generation domestic worker in Hong Kong for almost a decade, she is particularly interested in the intersection of labour migration and human rights. She is one of the Magnum Foundation Photography and Social Justice Fellows in 2015, has exhibited worldwide, and won awards in photography.

Xyza Cruz Bacani is also the recipient of a resolution passed by the Philippines House of Representatives in her honour, HR No.1969. She is one of the Asia 21 Young Leaders (Class of

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2018), the WMA Commission grantee in 2017, a Pulitzer Center and an Open Society Moving Walls 2017 grantee. She is one of the BBC's 100 Women of the World 2015, 30 Under 30 Women Photographers 2016, Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia 2016, Fujifilm ambassador and author of the book *We Are Like Air*.

About the Gallery

CHRISTINE PARK GALLERY is a young gallery dedicated to supporting both emerging and established international artists. Located in TriBeCa, New York's burgeoning art hotspot, and Anfu Lu, in the historical heart of Shanghai's former French Concession, the gallery has an extensive program of solo shows, conceptually curated group exhibitions, and special installations. With a constantly developing roster of innovative artists, the gallery prides itself on exhibiting works in a range of media, seeking to provoke cross-disciplinary debate and extend the boundaries of the current contemporary art scene.

Our vision is to provide a platform to allow artists to develop and gain greater recognition. Therefore, as well as providing a commercial space that artists can use as a canvas to realise their projects and present their works to the public, we actively foster relations with art foundations, public museums, and private clients.

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