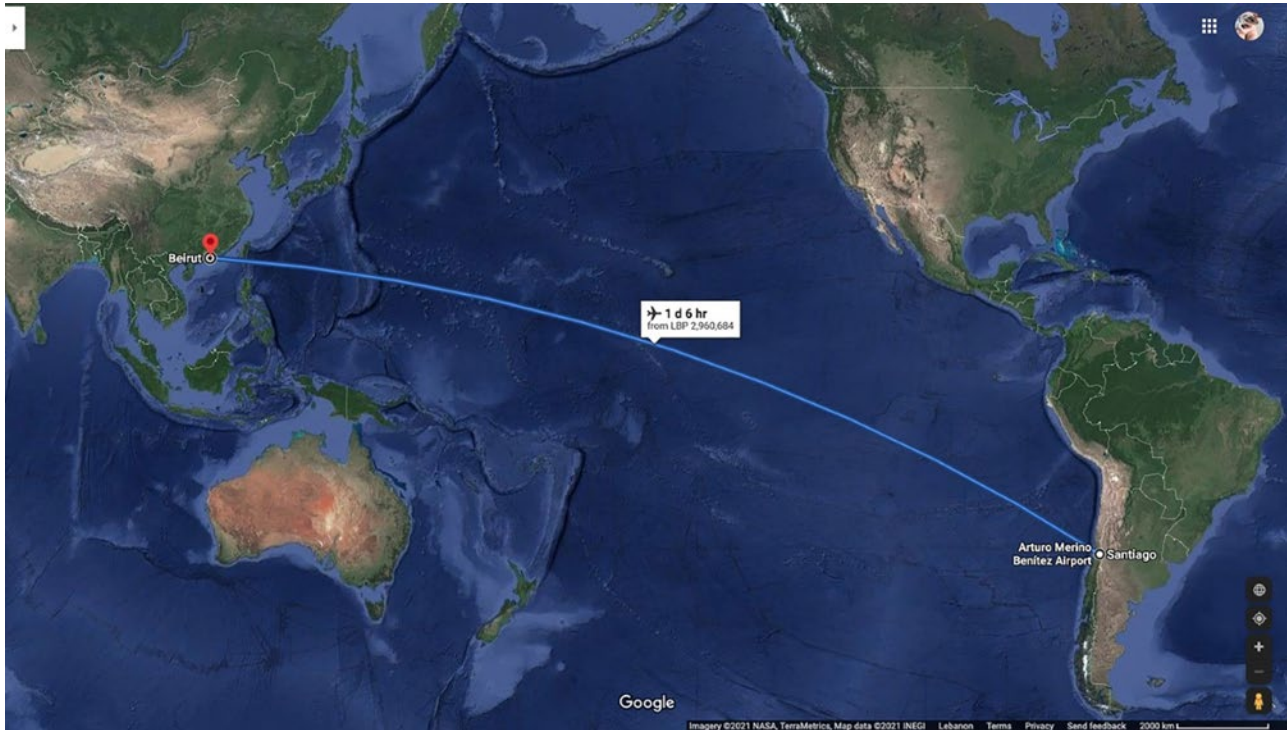




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Tues.–Sat., 12–6 p.m.

## PRESS PREVIEW KIT



## Revolution Everywhere: Thresholds of Resistance

Curated by Juli Carson

Contemporary Arts Center Gallery and Room Gallery

On View: October 9 – December 11, 2021

Opening Reception: October 9, 2–5 p.m.

**IRVINE, Calif.** – The University of California, Irvine’s University Art Galleries (UAG) is pleased to present *Revolution Everywhere: Thresholds of Resistance*. The exhibition features 3 large-scale installations by Panos Arahamian, Heather M. O’Brien, and Simon Liu, whose artworks have been shaped by the recent revolutions taking place in Lebanon and Hong Kong. Though their aesthetic tactics and political subject matter differ, a common stance by Arahamian, O’Brien and Liu can be observed. Within the current devastation of failed nation states and forced Disapora, a poetic approach to political events ‘makes life worth living.’

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### ***Revolution Everywhere***

The exhibition's political title derives from an interview of the Lebanese journalist, scholar and activist Joey Ayoub and the Hong Kong based Lausan Collective on June 13, 2020, entitled “‘Revolution Everywhere,’: A conversation between Hong Kong and Lebanese protesters,” <https://lausan.hk/2020/revolution-everywhere-conversation-between-hong-kong-and-lebanon/>. Central to both the Hong Kong and Lebanese protestors, they argue, is a temporal angst and fear of cultural disappearance. Significantly, this interview was conducted just weeks before Chinese President Xi Jinping signed the Hong Kong national security law, which criminalized four types of activity – secession, subversion of state power, terrorism and collusion with foreign entities – carrying a penalty of up to life in prison. The interview was also published a month prior to the catastrophic Beirut port explosion that occurred at 6:07pm on August 4, 2020, which left more than 160 dead, 6,000 injured, 300,000 homeless, including 100,000 children without shelter. And yet, in the wake of all this destruction, Ayoub and Lausan's assertion still rings true: “The momentum for liberation is never lost; it simply picks up at different speeds in different places, at different times.”

### ***Thresholds of Resistance***

Carson's curatorial vision takes a cue from Bernard Stiegler's book *What Makes Life Worth Living*, wherein art is conceived as a kind of pharmakon. “Pharmakon” – or *poison-cure* – is what Plato called writing because transcription simultaneously “cures” generational forgetfulness while potentially “poisoning” the spoken word's authenticity. Accordingly, the pharmakon is what enables us to *take care of* something – as remembering an historical event for instance – but the pharmakon must also be *taken care of*, lest the care it seeks to give proves destructive. On this account, witness the current circulation of imagery and reportage on social networks regarding the global pandemic. What, then, might instance a more *curative* than poisonous pharmakon in art? It is *Revolution Everywhere's* guiding principle that artworks produced at the *aesthetic threshold* of political resistance – wherein the poetics of space is allowed to play out on the margins of revolution – imagine the power that art-pharmakons might have today. Correspondingly, when historical amnesia all too often ushers in the recycling of historical dilemmas, Aprahamian, O'Brien and Liu's respective poetics demonstrate the art-pharmakon's curative power, *productively* guiding us through an Anthropocene defined by global pandemics, rising authoritarianism and global networks of civil disobedience.

###

*Image: Panos Aprahamian, Thresholds of Resistance, Google Maps Collage, 2021*



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## PRESS PREVIEW KIT



*like the delayed rays of a star*

**Heather M. O'Brien**

**Photographic installation and artist book, 2021**

**Book Launch: October 9, 2–5 p.m.**

**Contemporary Arts Center Gallery**

*like the delayed rays of a star* contemplates the role of the gaze in photography while attempting to pierce the propaganda surrounding US-centric perceptions of Beirut. The work immerses the viewer into the

photographer's domestic space through sun-drenched portraits from her Ottoman-era home. The images aim to question the misplaced anxieties of what it means to grow up in a post 9/11 image landscape, to live and work in Lebanon, and give birth to one's first child in Beirut on August 4th—the same day as the catastrophic 2020 Beirut explosion.

The book's central question—*What is a home?*—poignantly resonates with the condition of forced emigration and uprising in the face of multiple global crises. It's also a question that plays forward in the book's installation form featured in the exhibition *Revolution Everywhere: Thresholds of Resistance* simultaneously opening at UC Irvine's University Art Galleries.

The photographs aim to confront a conditioned culture of fear by documenting a confluence of “perfume, smoke, fruit, flowers, baking bread, and exhaust fumes” with the subtleties of passing time ruptured by light; these nuanced moments draw inward, decentering the authorial lens, intentionally shifting how mediated photographs affect one's community. The book also considers what it means to make image-based work about a place when the author is not understood to be from that place. How are understandings of “place” made and what subjective and historical registers urge artists to ground their practice in a politics of solidarity. The photographs and accompanying essays consider the privilege of mobility, decolonial strategies for documentation, the legacy of images of war and domesticity, and Trinh T. Minh-ha's idea of “speaking nearby.”

In moments charged by Beirut's October 17, 2019 rebellion, the ongoing Lebanese economic collapse, the pandemic, and the 2020 blast, *like the delayed rays of a star* seeks to resist narrative tropes of a Western gaze, by asking us, “Will there ever be another way to see Beirut?”

Foreword by Juli Carson | Texts by [Corinne May Botz](#) & [Yasmine Nachabe Taan](#)

Published by [Seaton Street Press](#) | Design by George Hanna | Printed by [brilliant](#): | Edition 100, 2021

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### Bios:

**Panos Arahamian** is an artist, filmmaker, and writer. His practice explores the spectral presence of the past and the future in bodies, spaces, and social relations. His work has been shown at festivals and institutions internationally, including *Mediterranea Biennale*, *Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen*, *European Media Arts Festival*, *Museum of Contemporary Art of Gallarate*, *Akademie der Künste*, *Beirut Art Center*, *Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival*, and *Open City Documentary Festival*. In 2015 he received his Master's degree from the University of the Arts London, was a Home Workspace Program fellow in 2018, and taught at the American University of Beirut between 2019 and 2021.

**Heather M. O'Brien** is an artist, filmmaker, and Assistant Professor of Cinema and Photography at Southern Illinois University. Her work builds encounters with familial archives, constructs of nationhood, and the illusion of accurate memory within the domestic sphere. She has held faculty positions at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, California State University Long Beach, and Moorpark and Citrus Community Colleges in California. O'Brien received an MFA from California Institute of the Arts, a BA from Loyola University New Orleans, and a director's fellowship from the Creative Practices Program at the International Center of Photography New York.

**Simon Liu** (b. 1987, Hong Kong) is an artist filmmaker who has exhibited at festivals and institutions globally including the Sundance Film Festival, NYFF, IFFR, TIFF, ND/NF, BFI, The Shed, M+, Tai Kwun Contemporary, *Cinéma du Réel*, *Sheffield Doc/Fest*, "Dreamlands: Expanded", and a solo-presentation at the Museum of Modern Art as part of their *Modern Mondays* series. He is a 2019 Jerome Hill Artist Fellow, a teacher at the Cooper Union School of Art, and his work is in the Permanent Collections of MoMA and the M+ Museum. Liu is currently editing his first feature film, *Staffordshire Hoard*.

**Juli Carson** is a professor of art, theory and criticism in the Department of Art at UC Irvine. From 2018-19 she was the Philippe Jabre Professor of Art History and Curating at the American University of Beirut. Her books include: *Exile of the Imaginary: Politics, Aesthetics, Love* (Vienna: Generali Foundation, 2007) and *The Limits of Representation: Psychoanalysis and Critical Aesthetics* (Buenos Aires: Letra Viva Press, 2011). Her most recent book, *The Hermeneutic Impulse: Aesthetics of An Untethered Past*, was published by PoLyPen, a subsidiary of b\_books Press in 2019.



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## PRESS PREVIEW KIT

### *Revolution Everywhere: Thresholds of Resistance*

#### Fact Sheet

**Exhibition:**

On View: October 9 – December 11, 2021  
Curated by Juli Carson

**Events:**

Opening Reception & Book Launch: October 9, 2–5 p.m.  
Contemporary Arts Center Gallery Lobby

**Location:**

Contemporary Art Center (CAC) Gallery, Bldg 721  
Room Gallery, 1200 Art Culture Technology, Irvine, CA 92697-2775

**Description:** *Revolution Everywhere: Thresholds of Resistance* features 3 large-scale installations by Panos Arahamian, Heather M. O'Brien, and Simon Liu, whose artworks have been shaped by the recent revolutions taking place in Lebanon and Hong Kong. Though their aesthetic tactics and political subject matter differ, a common stance by Arahamian, O'Brien and Liu can be observed. Within the current devastation of failed nation states and forced Disapora, a poetic approach to political events 'makes life worth living.'

**Gallery Hours:**

Tues. – Sat., 12–6 p.m.  
Holiday closures: Nov. 11 & 25-28, 2021  
Free admission

**Parking:**

UC Irvine [Mesa Parking Structure](#), 4000 Mesa Rd., Irvine, CA 92617

**More Info:**

<https://uag.arts.uci.edu/exhibit/messiah-triangle>

**Note to editors:**

Selected high-resolution images for publicity only may be downloaded from [Google Drive](#)  
(Key to images attached)



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Contemporary Arts Center Gallery and Room Gallery, Claire Trevor School of the Arts

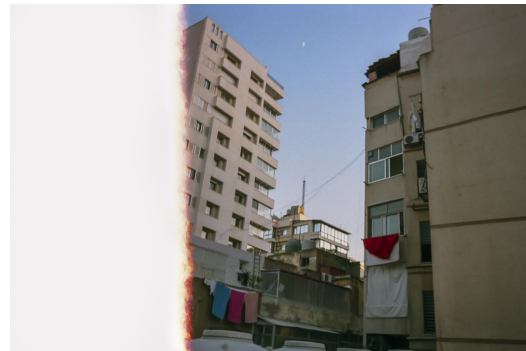
***Revolution Everywhere: Thresholds of Resistance***

Curated by Juli Carson

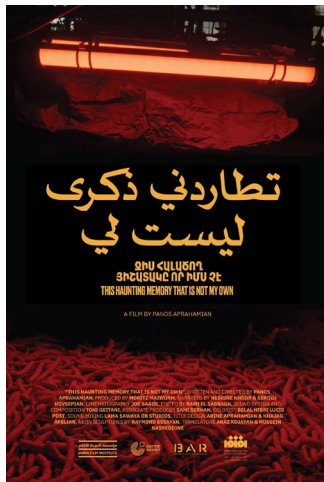
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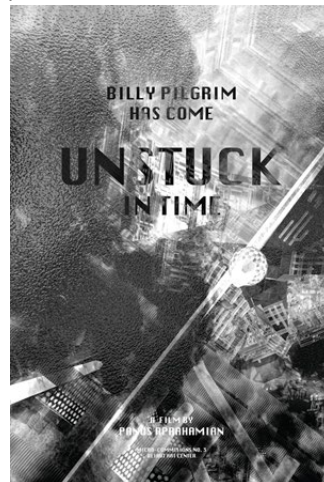
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Photo credit:

1. Heather M. O'Brien, *like the delayed rays of a star*, detail, image courtesy of the artist.
2. Heather M. O'Brien, *like the delayed rays of a star*, detail, image courtesy of the artist.
3. Panos Aghajanian, *This Haunting Memory That Is Not My Own*, film poster, courtesy of the artist.
4. Panos Aghajanian, *Unstuck in Time*, film poster, courtesy of the artist.
5. Heather M. O'Brien, *like the delayed rays of a star* (book cover).

The images are approved only for publication in conjunction with promotion of the exhibition. Reproductions must include the full caption information, and images may not be cropped or altered in any way or superimposed with any printing.

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### About the UAG

The University Art Galleries are committed to promoting an inter-generational dialogue between 60s/70s neo-avant-garde art and contemporary visual culture. Accordingly, the curatorial mission is to keep an eye on the modernist past while promoting the most innovative aesthetic and political debates of the post-modern present. From this vantage, the projects commissioned provoke intelligent debate on the subject of art in its most expansive poetic definition. What distinguishes the program is its unwavering commitment to publishing scholarly texts in catalogue/book form in order to disseminate research-based information into the community, providing a venue for the promotion of innovative discourse surrounding mixed media production today. The UAG program provides several exhibition platforms for inter-generational and interdisciplinary dialogue. The Major Works of Art Series commissions original projects by canonical artists working today. The Emerging Artist Series features solo projects by a set of younger artists informed by the legacies showcased in the Major Works series. The Critical Aesthetics Program commissions new work by internationally renowned mid-career artists. Augmenting this inter-generational dialogue, UAG also produces larger thematic group exhibitions alternately showcasing historical and contemporary art and film projects. UAG further promotes an active dialogue between UCI residents and the local and international art communities through colloquia, conferences, visiting artist lectures and theme-based films series, all of which are open to the public. As the galleries continue to mature, they stand committed to being an experimental exhibition space different from the current - but largely traditional - art biennial and film festival platforms.

### About UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts

As UCI's creative laboratory, the Claire Trevor School of the Arts explores and presents the arts as the essence of human experience and expression, through art forms ranging from the most traditional to the radically new. The international faculty works across a wide variety of disciplines, partnering with others across the campus. National-ranked programs in art, dance, drama, and music begin with training but end in original invention. Students come to UCI to learn to be citizen-artists, to sharpen their skills and talents, and to become the molders and leaders of world culture. For more information, please visit [www.arts.uci.edu](http://www.arts.uci.edu).