

Press Release: **BOX BLUR 2019**

How to Fall in Love in a Brothel

Ellen Sebastian Chang, Sunhui Chang, and Maya Gurantz

Dance Film SF

November 2 – December 21, 2019 (Screenings and performances on November 4, 15, 17, 21 and 23. Details TBA)

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More information: <https://cclarkgallery.com/exhibitions/box-blur-2019-how-to-fall-in-love-in-a-brothel>



Pictured above: BOX BLUR 2019: Ellen Sebastian Chang, Sunhui Chang, and Maya Gurantz; still image of the shoji room, featured in *How to Fall in Love in a Brothel*, 2019; photo: Alexa Burrell; Courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery.

San Francisco: Catharine Clark Gallery announces its fourth edition and programming for BOX BLUR 2019.

BOX BLUR 2019 has fiscal sponsorship for the first time through Dance Film SF. BOX BLUR, founded in 2016, is an exciting initiative to bring visual and performing art into dialogue within the non-proscenium-based space of the gallery. This year we are producing and presenting *How to Fall in Love in a Brothel*, an immersive and interactive installation by Sunhui Chang, Ellen Sebastian Chang, and Maya Gurantz (their biographies follow). This multigenerational and multicultural group of performers and artists have created a timely work that considers how we relate to intimacy in a world increasingly defined by transactional relationships. *How to Fall in Love in a Brothel* is about the interweaving of personal histories and the desire for human connection.

Our partner in BOX BLUR, Dance Film SF, is the presenter of the San Francisco Dance Film Festival, which was founded in 2010. Dance Film SF is a nonprofit organization bringing dance to new audiences through the presentation and development of dance-based media. Along with the annual presentation of its award-winning San Francisco Dance Film Festival, their year-round activities include special screenings, panels, and filmmaking workshops. Its touring and outreach programs send highlight reels to international screens and dance media into local schools. Since our collaboration, Catharine Clark Gallery has hosted the Festival's screenings in the Art & Experimental Films category, as well as multiple responsive live performances.

The 2019 commission began when Sunhui Chang scripted his parents' love story, one that unfolded across the world and across decades. Long-time collaborators Ellen Sebastian Chang and Maya Gurantz imagined how the rich sensory detail of his

writing could be realized in architecture, theater, food, and video. Organically, they took Sunhui's fictionalized personal history as a starting point for an intercultural, mixed-genre collaboration.



Pictured above: BOX BLUR 2019; Ellen Sebastian Chang, Sunhui Chang, and Maya Gurantz; image of traditional Korean *banchan* (pickles), to be served during *How to Fall in Love in a Brothel*. Courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery.

How to Fall in Love in a Brothel is set in an abstracted recreation of a 1950s Korean shoji-room. Viewers will be taught to create peepholes in the walls, referencing a rural ritual where wedding-night consummations were quietly watched by villagers who silently rubbed a hole into the shoji with a wet finger. In the exhibition's immersive space, the invitation to look inside the shoji-screened room is also an invitation to witness intimate moments of conversation that are unassisted by modern technologies.

Inside, viewers peer into a ritual space created by the artists, who have collaged stories and images of their secret family histories which cross the globe—from post-War South Korea to rural Mississippi, from World War II refugee camps in Kyrgyzstan, to Israel in the 1950s, and Guam in the 1970s. The stories sometimes rhyme and sometimes clash, while complicating notions of a “post-racial,” “post-cultural,” and “post-historical” identity in the 21st century. Over the course of the installation, as more holes are created in the shoji, the piece inverts itself—inside becomes outside, marks of intimacy are accreted, and watching and exchange become visible.

The installation will also activate through “Intimacy Hours”, during which visitors will be invited to schedule “appointments,” in which they can occupy the shoji-room for a period of time, without access to phones or external distractions. Participants will learn/enact traditional and ritual routines of floor cleaning, preparing blankets for sleeping or pillow talk, sharing Sunhui's *banchans* (kimchi and pickles), and quietly rediscovering the simple value of being on the floor, cocooned together, conversing and feeding one another.

Throughout the exhibition's run, the gallery will be activated through screenings and performances. On **November 4**, the gallery hosts the San Francisco Dance Film Festival's screenings in the Experimental Film category,

with a live performance; further details to be announced. Following the festival, Ellen Sebastian Chang, Sunhui Chang, and Maya Gurantz will host four evenings of programs on **November 15, 17, 21, and 23**.

At the time of this release, *How to Fall in Love in a Brothel* has received major support from The Kenneth Rainin Foundation, the Sam Mazza Foundation, the Zellerbach Family Fund, and private donors, which totals \$39,000 and which will support the fabrication of the shoji-screened room. In order to fully realize the film and performance aspects of the project, we are seeking an additional \$29,000 for production costs, artist fees for hiring performers and actors, travel costs, and administrative expenses.

Donations to BOX BLUR in support of *How to Fall in Love in a Brothel* is fully tax-deductible, through Catharine Clark Gallery's partnership with Dance Film SF.

Contribute to BOX BLUR 2019 and *How to Fall in Love in a Brothel*, through the dedicated donation page at the link below: <https://donorbox.org/boxblur2019> Contributions can be made via check to the address below:

Dance Film SF
601 Van Ness Avenue, Suite E426
San Francisco, CA 94102 Memo: BOX BLUR

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Biographies for the extraordinary artists and partners behind *How to Fall in Love in a Brothel*—Sunhui Chang, Ellen Sebastian Chang, and Maya Gurantz — as well as our fiscal sponsor, Dance Film SF.



Pictured above: Still from *Ina Light*, 2019; directed by Aniel Karia; on view at the 2019 San Francisco Dance Film Festival, fiscal sponsor for BOX BLUR.



Ellen Sebastian Chang, a legendary figure in Bay Area performing arts, is a director and arts educator whose career spans 50 years. Her current projects include an ongoing collaboration with Afro-Futurist Conjure artist Amara Tabor Smith and the Deep Waters Dance company's *HOUSE/FULL of Blackwomen*, a multi-year site-specific dance theater work that addresses the displacement, sex trafficking, and the creative well-being of black women and girls in Oakland, California. Ms. Sebastian Chang was the cofounder and artistic director of *Life on the Water*, a national and internationally known presenting and producing organization at San Francisco's Fort Mason Center from 1986 through 1995.

Sebastian Chang is also the creative director of The World As It Could Be: Human Rights and the Arts Education Program. In 2013, she was the consulting producer for the HBO production *Whoopi Goldberg Presents Moms Mabley*, and collaborated with Amara Tabor Smith's Deep Waters Dance Theater in the creation and direction of "He Moved Swiftly But Gently..." a tribute to black queer choreographer Ed Mock.

Sebastian Chang was the proud co-owner and general manager of FuseBOX Restaurant, created by chef Sunhui Chang in West Oakland, California. During its run, FuseBOX was cited as one of the top ten restaurants by San Francisco Bay Guardian and San Francisco

Magazine. She is a recipient of awards and grants from Creative Capital, MAP Fund, A Blade of Grass Fellowship in Social Engagement, Art Matters, Kenneth Rainin Foundation, NEA, Creative Work Fund, the California Arts Council, and the Zellerbach Family Fund.



Sunhui Chang was born in Incheon, South Korea. When Chang was 7 years old, his family moved to Guam, where his culinary interest began at age 11. Eight years later, Chang moved by himself to Berkeley to complete high school and attend the University of California, Berkeley, where he studied Sociology. In 1997, he started his own catering company KDR Catering, which focused on intimate catering and arts events. He worked as the Culinary Advisor for performance artist Robert Farid Karimi's "Diabetes of Democracy: The Revolution Starts in the Kitchen" project and collaborated with The Kitchen Sisters for the SFMOMA Maker's Event, and made an appearance in their radio broadcast, *Kimchee Diplomacy*: <http://www.kitchensisters.org/hidden-kitchens/kimchi-diplomacy/>

In 2011, he opened his award-winning FuseBOX Restaurant with theater director Ellen Sebastian Chang, located in the industrial neighborhood of West Oakland. The Bay Guardian named FuseBOX one of its Top 10 New Restaurants and Diablo Magazine honored Chang with a Top Chef Award. In 2017 he worked as the Media & Communication Strategist and Assistant to Executive Director, Maria Blanco, at the UC Immigrant Legal Services Center. His experience in creating businesses with public profiles from the ground up has given him knowledge, skill, and insight in developing and coordinating systems of communication. He is adept at

creating public images for entities, businesses and non-businesses alike. He is a writer whose script based on family stories titled *How to Fall in Love in A Brothel* is currently in development.



Maya Gurantz, an artist in video and performance, has exhibited solo video installations at the MCA Denver, the Grand Central Art Center (commission, funded by Andy Warhol Foundation), Greenleaf Gallery, Pieter PASD, and the Institute of Cultural Inquiry. Her group shows include MoCA Utah, Beaconsfield Gallery Vauxhall, LAND (Nomadic Division), Angels Gate Cultural Center, Navel LA, and Movement Research at Judson Church. Additional site-specific commissions include Art Center College of Design, and the Field Experiment ATL. Gurantz recently received the inaugural Pieter Performance Grant for Dancemakers. Her writing has been published in *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *This American Life*, *Notes on Looking*, *The Frame* at KPCC, *ACID-FREE*, *The Awl*, *InDance Magazine*, *Theater Magazine*, and an anthology, *CRuDE*, published by the École Nationale Supérieure d'Art, Bourges. She co-translated two novels by Israeli writer David Grossman, *Be My Knife* and *Someone to Run With*, for Farrar Straus & Giroux.

In 2015, Gurantz and Sebastian Chang collaborated on *Hole in Space (Oakland Redux)*, a public video commission that created a "portal" between two neighborhoods that are close geographically but worlds apart socioeconomically. Inspired by Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz's seminal *Hole in Space* (1981), the Oakland project made visible racial and class segregations, providing a counterpoint to the city's current accelerated gentrification, economic unrest, and complicating the exuberance of techno-

utopian Bay Area culture; it also revealed our changing relationships between the body, technology, and surveillance. The project screened documentation at the Oakland Museum of California, received national and international press, and was recognized as Best Underground Public Art installation in the Bay Area.



Pictured above: Still from *Hands On*, 2019; directed by Marites Carino; on view at the 2019 San Francisco Dance Film Festival. fiscal sponsor for BOX BLUR

Dance Film SF is a nonprofit organization bringing dance to new audiences through the presentation and development of dance-based media. Along with the annual presentation of its award-winning San Francisco Dance Film Festival, DFSF's year-round activities include special screening events, community outreach programs and filmmaking workshops. Its touring and outreach programs send highlight reels to other festivals and dance media into local educational and cultural organizations. DFSF also commissions original dance films through its Co-Laboratory program, pairing professional choreographers and filmmakers and having them collaborate and create short dance films within a compressed period of time. Dance Film SF will also present a new mini festival exclusively for young audiences and families in spring 2020. Animated and live action shorts along with original works by youth will be featured at this festival.

Celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2019, Dance Film SF will present its annual San Francisco Dance Film Festival with ten days of programming, November 1-10 at multiple venues in San Francisco, including Catharine Clark Gallery. From in-depth feature documentaries and engaging shorts programs to live performances, the festival offers something for diehard dance fans and newcomers alike. Over the last ten years the event has secured a solid place on the international scene, drawing a vibrant and diverse range of participants from all over the world. The Festival offers a platform and venue where independent artists can celebrate their achievements, meet industry leaders from the dance, film and technology fields, and inspire audiences and each other as a unified community. It also serves to introduce dance to those who do not typically attend live performances, while showcasing new international talent before it reaches the Bay Area through traditional venues.

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