

Patricia Fernández & Ian James
Hand of Basajuan

Holiday Forever is pleased to announce the collaborative exhibition by artists Patricia Fernández and Ian James, on view February 7 – March 17 at the gallery. The works in this exhibition are sculptural maps inspired from yearly walks along the Basque shepherd's transhumance paths in the lower canyons of California's Eastern Sierra, to the Humbolt-Toiyabe mountains surrounding Ely, Nevada.

The annual trails of the shepherders were disparate, yet interconnected, as different groups of solitary herders led their flocks across various terrains of the Mountain West, including journeys still taking place throughout Wyoming and Idaho. According to seasonal change, walks would lead the flocks through deserts, mountains, high alpine meadows, and valleys. Along the creeks shepherders would water their flock and carve into the soft bark of the aspen trees to create arborglyphs, passing time and sharing messages amongst each other. From testaments to the self, to carvings of the mysterious figure "Jani", to lamentations of loneliness, the trees bear messages from the lives of shepherders who walked the meadows and mountains of the early 20th Century.

James and Fernández began recording the arborglyphs in 2018 through the process of photography, drawing and sculpture. Alginate casts record the writing in the aspen groves; stones and shells create site markers, representing the geologic history of the high sierras as well as the geography of unrooted bodies. A copper hand is a trace of presence, an identifying gesture of human will that states: here is my name. An etched vessel carries the symbol of the Basque lauburu with sheep's wool. On one side of a sculpture of burnt wood hangs a calendar of an Ikastola, a Basque language school, made illegal during Franco's dictatorship; on the other is an alginate of a man's image from 1964. Small framed silver gelatin photographs become documents against erasure as the trees burn or reach the end of their 150- year life cycle. Together, the fragments become a sculptural map and represent the charged space of the grove as a series of notational spaces that imperfectly record an experience bound to site.

Accompanying the exhibition is the artists' book, *In many valleys, the sun, was the eye of god*, published through Colpa Press of San Francisco, and a new limited artist edition made for Holiday Forever. This book, *Hand of Basajuan*, documents some of the artists' process, travels, and delineates the trails of Nevada and California. The works in the exhibition are disparate ends of an empirical and ephemeral endeavor that is an ongoing investigation into re-presenting forgotten histories.

Patricia Fernández and Ian James are artists based in Los Angeles. This collaborative body of work was partially made possible through a 2019 Research Grant from the California State University of Bakersfield and the Gamboa Family of McGill.

Fernández holds an MFA from California Institute of the Arts. She was an artist in residence at Forest Island (Mammoth Lakes), Headlands Center for the Arts (Sausalito), and Recollets (Paris). She is a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Sculptor and Painter's Grant (2019), Pollock Krasner Grant (2017), California Community Foundation Fellowship (2011), France Los Angeles Exchange Grant (2012), and Joan Mitchell Grant (2010). She has exhibited her work at Commonwealth & Council, the Hammer Museum, LA><ART, and Orange County Museum of Art.

Ian James holds an MFA from California Institute of the Arts. He was an artist in residence at SÍM in Reykjavik, Iceland and The Wassaic Project (Wassaic, NY). He has participated in exhibitions at the Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art, the UNLV Barrick Museum, Roberts & Tilton (Los Angeles), vacancy Los Angeles, ltd Los Angeles, REDCAT (Los Angeles), Holiday Forever (Jackson, WY), and Self Actualization (Houston, TX).