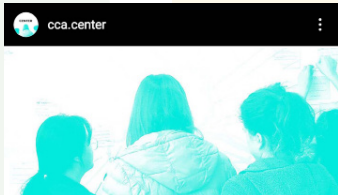


INTERVIEW

Profile: CCA Center

An interview with Katayoun Bahrami, Gordon Fung, and Alia Moussa

by Kristen Wawruck



The [CCA Center](#) is a student-driven platform hosted by the Center for the Arts and Public Life at CCA. Embracing the diverse voices of the CCA student body, it encourages discussion about current events and injustices in weekly meetings. After students have engaged, listened, and learned from one another, they set out to create artwork/content to share on social media.

A few days before Election Day this past November, a new presence within the CCA social media sphere appeared. Defined by a sense of urgency around getting out the vote, the Instagram platform @CCA.Center made its debut through a coordinated series of bold, graphically designed posts. Since then, three images at a time appear in succession, creating discrete stripes of visually diverse artworks within a tiled grid.

The image-makers hail from diverse backgrounds and mediums and are brought together through their work at the Center for the Arts and Public Life. Katayoun Bahrami (MFA 2022), Gordon Fung (BFA Individualized Studies 2024), and Alia Moussa (BFA Graphic Design 2022) have been the driving core group behind @CCA.Center, and they recently took time to discuss their experiences

partaking in a student-led activism coalition. Notably, both Bahrami and Fung are in their second semesters at CCA and have never set foot on campus. Moussa dialed in from her home in Miami, where she temporarily relocated to after the closures last spring.

While partly conceived of as a place where CCA students could share recent works, the overarching impetus for the collective is to provide a space for dialogue and reflection on today's most pressing issues. The group convenes each Friday via Zoom, joined by Tracy Tanner, Manager of Operations & Development at the Center for the Arts and Public Life. Urgent social justice and human rights

issues ranging from immigration, women's rights, and the climate crisis are but a few of the topics to dominate the feed each week. The public form of this discussion then takes shape as an abbreviated digest of sorts and showcases the individual talents of the group. As Fung describes, Tanner provided the initial prompts for voter awareness, but once the Election came and passed, "we began to investigate topics with our own voices."

The CCA Center's work lives primarily online for the moment due to constraints imposed by the current health crisis. But it is through these limitations, coupled with the weekly rigor of posts, that the group has found new and unexpected creative directions within their respective practices. Bahrami's practice has taken different forms and methods in the absence of a studio



Kristen Wawruck in conversation with Alia Moussa, Gordon Fung, and Katayoun Bahrami.



Katayoun Bahrami



Graphic by Gordon Fung, 2020



Alia Moussa, *Home*, 2020, digital collage

space. Working previously in tactile media with fiber as her primary medium, Bahrami has now delved into learning Photoshop and Illustrator and has integrated more photography and video into her work. While her thematic explorations remain the same—delving into femicide and women’s rights repressions abroad—her practice has now taken on immaterial dimensions.

Similarly, through the exercise of semi-regular postings for @CCA.Center, Fung has garnered new skills in Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign. Noting that his background is in conceptual art and as a composer, the challenge of working digitally in more graphic ways has provided new legibility to his practice. His posts provoke awareness of settler

colonialism, ecocide, and the ubiquity of tech companies in a variety of formats, demonstrating the new directions in his practice.

The @CCA.Center platform has provided Moussa a space for recent and older works, many of which focus on her experience as a DACA recipient. In sharing her biographical and photography-based compositions of family portraits, Moussa has found a new voice as an activist and advocate around immigration-related issues.

A shared sense of exchange and collectivity occurs each week among this group of geographically dispersed artists. As Moussa describes, each week there are new political, social, and economic topics to delve into, which may not make it to everyone’s social media news feeds. Nonetheless, the group agrees that the digital aspect of their work is a temporary one, given the glut of screen time in remote learning settings. Their goal is to translate these modes of exchange and discourse into more interactive and tangible modes on campus and around the Bay Area once it is safe to do so. This will hopefully happen sooner rather than later for a group of artists eager to get back into studios and work in tactile or experiential formats.

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