

By Dirk Sutro Apr 11, 2013

Curator Michelle Hyun Brings Fresh Ideas to University Art Gallery

Curator Michelle Hyun's "We'd love your company," at UC San Diego's University Art Gallery through May 10, is the first in a series of exhibits with which she hopes to redefine the gallery's mission.



University Art Gallery curatorial fellow Michelle Hyun with Ethan Breckenridge. Photos by John Hanacek

Hired last summer as the first University Art Gallery curatorial fellow – funded with support from the Division of Arts and Humanities, the Office of the Chancellor and the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor – Hyun said her goal is to “stretch and test the boundaries of what this gallery can do.”

“The fellowship program was developed to encourage greater diversity within the curatorial profession,” said visual arts professor Grant Kester, the gallery’s director. “We understand the question of diversity broadly to include career development for young curators who bring a wider range of experiences to the profession as well as an interest in more experimental approaches to curatorial practice, with a

particular focus on contemporary art.”

“We'd love your company” is the result of Hyun's collaboration with New York artist Ethan Breckenridge, whom she invited to create the show. Hyun said that her role as curator focuses on “producing settings for something to take place,” rather than the traditional use of galleries for displaying and archiving artworks.

Breckenridge sub-divided the gallery with platforms, walls, mirrors, and two-dimensional human figures that seem to emerge from the gallery floor. His and Hyun's idea is that the re-configured space will accommodate a series of events created in response to their call for proposals.

Participants in “We'd love your company” include artists Liz Magic Laser and Martha Rosler, students from The Preuss School UCSD, writer Suhail Malik in collaboration with shadow puppetry performer Van C. Tran, and the Public Education Coalition of UC San Diego.

Hyun grew up in Chicago. She majored in political economy at George Washington University and worked at law firms and political think tanks in Washington D.C. Eventually, she decided that art could provide a more direct means of addressing political and social issues.

She moved to San Francisco and convinced a gallery owner to hire her as manager based on her business background. She attended the graduate program at Bard College's Center for Curatorial Studies, and worked as an independent curator on projects with artists including Israel's Public Movement and the Dutch collective Bik van der Pol.

Hyun's curatorial fellowship at UC San Diego ends in spring 2014. After "We'd love your company," she will create four more exhibits for University Art Gallery.

"What I enjoy the most about curating, which also held true for international relations and political economy," she said, "is this practice of putting ideas and people in proximity to each other and seeing what happens."

For exhibition hours, please visit the [University Art Gallery](#) website.



Gallery discussion with the artist of "We'd love your comp

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