

National

Adam Farcus, Maria Gaspar, Mathew Paul Jinks, Rebecca Mir, Irene Peréz, and Allison Yasukawa
curated by Adam Farcus

*The culture that's going to survive in the future is the culture that you
can carry around in your head.*

Nam June Paik

A group of people who share a common identity and ancestry are designated members of a nation. This national identity is defined and often re-defined by its members. Nations are frequently identified by a variety of prescribed demarcations including country (Japan), state (Catalonia), and region (Punjab). The people of a nation leave their marks on it; altering the landscape and constructing a national identity. In a similar manner, the cultural markers of peoples' homelands shape their personal identities. Our current climate of globalization, marked by migration flows, uproots people and their identities. This physical displacement can call attention to societal norms that influence one's actions and memories years later. It is up to each individual to respond to, accept, forget, ignore, or embrace what is carried from place to place. Within the development of self, a small personal event may leave a lasting impression, while greater cultural stereotypes could be avoided altogether.

The five artists in this exhibition explore nationality through personal experience and related cultural issues. In a personal and nostalgic gesture, Irene Peréz's *Untitled (el Charco)* measures the distance between Spain and the US. El charco, translated as "the pond" in English, is made from an altered world map. To ask for a new understanding of colonialism, Mathew Paul Jinks addresses the complex relationship between England, India, and the US by creating a narrative that references the 1951 film "The Man in the White Suit" and utilizes excerpts from theorist Homi K. Bhabha's book, "The Location of Culture." Rebecca Mir employs nautical flag semiology to create a self defined explorer-nation of one. Surprisingly idiosyncratic, Allison Yasukawa's work attends to traits of her grandparents that cross and mix the national identities of Japan and the US. In *Home*, Adam Farcus returns to his childhood home town in search of an explanation of what home is now that he lives in Chicago. Maria Gaspar constructs a delaminated location in the gallery, titled *You Think You See Things*, that confront racially charged responses to Hispanic culture.

Adam Farcus grew up in white middle-class rural Illinois and currently resides in Chicago. Maria Gaspar resides in her home town, Chicago, IL. Mathew Paul Jinks is a US citizen and British expatriate. Rebecca Mir is a Chicagoan by way of Palmer, Alaska and Maine. Irene Perez recently moved back to Barcelona, Spain, after ten years in the US. Allison Yasukawa was raised in Wisconsin and is of Japanese descent.