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**Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art
University of Nevada, Las Vegas**

February 1, 2021–April 2, 2021

Proof is part of a partnership between the Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art and the Womxn of Color Arts Festival.

Support for this exhibition is provided by the WESTAF Regional Arts Resilience Fund, a relief grant developed in partnership with The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support arts organizations in the 13-state western region during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This program is funded in part with support from Nevada Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Tiffany
PROOF Lin

The Internet enables us to choose our own truth and avoid a shared reality. Paradoxically, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced educators to employ the Internet as a democratizing tool that brings people together. The digital classroom has supplanted physical sites of learning, yet it has opened new pathways for mutual understanding.

The blue fabric alludes to the universality of the sky and the contemporary omnipresence of the online world, while the snakes refer to ancient symbols of wisdom and healing. Can we work together to imagine a new reality, one in which the Internet acts as a regenerative force instead of a destructive tool?

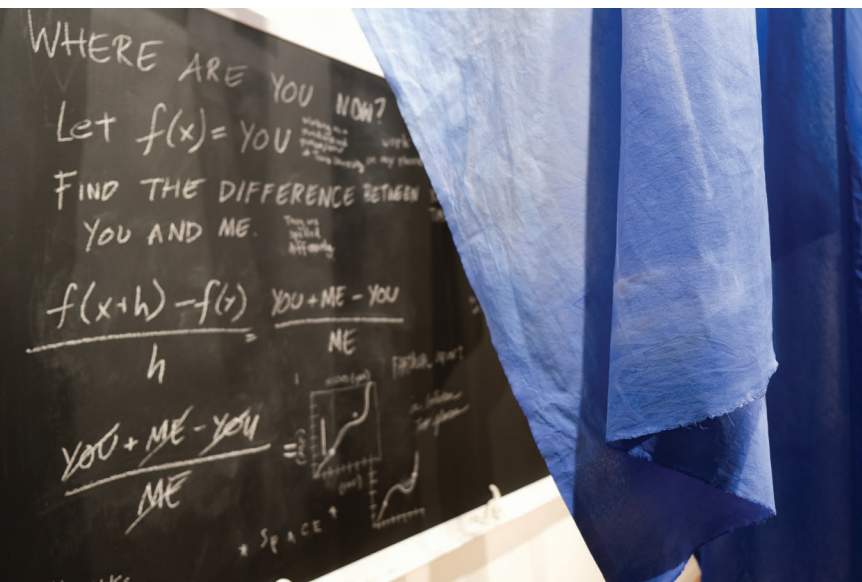


Tiffany Lin is a visual artist whose work examines how power is expressed in the subtext of American vernacular. Through a multidisciplinary practice that spans drawing, writing, and performance, she demonstrates how language and data are deployed tactically to reify colonial legacies and state power. Utilizing both creative and sociological methods, she combines participatory action, interviews, and social theory to support her claim that desire and belonging in the United States are mediated by external politics.

Lin holds a MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Illustration Practice and a BA in Gender & Women's Studies and Psychology from the University of California, Berkeley.

She currently lives and works in Las Vegas where she joins the Department of Art at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas as a Visiting Assistant Professor.





Tiffany Lin wants you to see a blueprint. In her first exhibition at the Marjorie Barrick Museum, entitled *PROOF*, the artist presents a multimedia installation reminiscent of a classroom with references to both virtual and real life academic settings. Five blue flags hang in a staggered line above a chalkboard, facing a small audience of ceramic snakes who are tuning into a recording of a Zoom class playing on a CRT monitor at low volume. Originally from the Bay Area, Lin recently relocated to Southern Nevada to teach courses in graphic design, illustration, and printmaking at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and quickly moved her teaching practice online during the COVID-19 pandemic. *PROOF* is a direct expression of an educator under duress, working amid chaos, resolve, and relentless questioning of educational settings. As the interactive and the immersive are key to the installation, *PROOF* offers a blueprint of exploratory components for online interventions that divest from corruptive virtual forces such as online harassment, echo chambers, and manipulative data tracking. These conditions of the artwork

TANYA GAYER CURATOR | WRITER

utilize engagements valued within remote academic environments as catalysts to form sustainable methods for evaluating information in virtual spaces. By prioritizing such methods, *PROOF* proposes new models of dialog and communal enrichment amongst the myriad of influences that oscillate between the virtual and the real.

Although Lin's workday while remote teaching is bound to virtual spaces, the artist takes solace in the nearby Mojave Desert and its ability to provide unadulterated sight; there are no buildings, tall trees, nor abundant life to visually crowd the desert environs. The five blue flags that hang above the chalkboard in *PROOF* recall the Nevada sky and its contribution to this visual swell. Varying blue hues of the fabric suggest changes in season and temperature, and thus the growth and rejuvenation of plants, animals, and humans as one locates the limits of existence along a visible horizon line and immensity of the landscape. The middle flag, however, vibrates with a more shrill blue—computer-error-screen blue. It bisects the chalkboard like a curtain and divides the installation into two sides, or rather, two ways of seeing the world. An important component of Lin's remote classes took stock of this first view: the ability to see beyond immediate bodily space. Turning our gaze away from the other view—of the screen, data, and surveillance—can allow for a shift in perspective and redefine traditional locales in which knowledge is generated. To incorporate this ethos within her teaching practice the artist considered where and how interpersonal engagements initiate online.

Throughout the installation in the Barrick Museum there are small, white ceramic snakes who appear to slither amongst the flags, chalkboard, and CRT monitor. Their abundance suggests they gather for an incantation, or act as an authoritative figure of sterility given the association of white color with purity and the placement of the snakes curling around the flagpoles high above the viewer. Snakes are ancient symbols of wisdom and healing, as well as markers of violence and trickery according to Judeo-Christian beliefs. These associations are emblematic of arenas constantly negotiated throughout the pandemic: trust in the sciences





and belief in conspiracy theories. The prevalence of the snakes, and thus their symbolic implications, reinforces Lin's interest in focusing conversations within the online classroom amongst the abundance of information and opinions also circulating online throughout Twitter, Reddit forums, or news sites. Although remote classrooms exist on a separate platform from social media and news outlets, the ads and algorithms generated from these platforms often construct information and beliefs that the user holds as true in spaces such as the classroom. This dynamic establishes an echo chamber with factions of people who reify and repeat one side of a social or political matter due to their limited diverse exposure to digital information. To illustrate a rupture of this informational cycle in *PROOF*, Lin invites museum visitors to respond to various prompts on the chalkboard using chalk cast in serpentine forms. Virtual visitors participate as well by sending in responses via social media, whereby museum staff subsequently write their answers on the board. The prompts exist somewhere between mathematical equations and poetic inquiry.



In one prompt Lin asks, "What is the difference between you and me?" and displays a difference quotient (a fundamental equation in calculus) using the variables "you" and "me." In other prompts, the artist asks viewers to complete the following sentence "I LOVE _____ / DOG THAT I AM."

Responses vary wildly, from bizarre to quotidian,

"I love my family, friends, and coffee," "i love existential dread," "PLANDEMIC, I LOVE,"

"I love Nour and Miral, reunited after 7 years, thank God [translated from Arabic]."


In another instance, Lin features the equation for the frequency of the color blue, along with the prompt, "BLUE IS / BLUES ARE." By using the snakes

themselves to write their answers and thus transpose traditional meaning of the reptile and what has circulated throughout the pandemic, Lin urges viewers to be fully accountable and individual agents in their presentation of personal truths.

The chalkboard as a forum initiates conversations amongst strangers and offers a physical platform for visitors to leave their insular communities online and offline. By combining the virtual and real with both audience responses as well as classroom settings, *PROOF* asks if there are more decisive actions to truly break the echo chambers' polarizing cycle and if exposure to diverse opinions in a classroom is the key to setting us toward a course of collective understanding and unity.

To further analyze the remote classroom as a site that allows for the possibility of disengagement from echo chambers and improve informational dynamics, Lin's inclusion of the CRT monitor in *PROOF* outlines how modes of communication might be altered to bridge gaps between disparate groups and opinions. Placed next to a wall facing the blackboard, a CRT monitor on the floor of the Barrick gallery plays a video of Lin during an active printmaking demonstration taking place via Zoom. Student profile windows become





spotlighted when they ask questions and engage with the content, however, their cameras are turned off and their names are obscured, which allows for their physical identities to remain hidden. The small monitor size, low volume, and position of the TV additionally makes the conditions difficult for viewers to construct any sense of the individuals on screen.

The surge of communicating and engaging online through a variety of platforms during the pandemic created a context that was ripe for students influenced by echo chambers to enforce singular perspectives. In an effort to mediate between the extremes, Lin facilitated active discussions of political movements and controversy in her virtual classroom. To reframe the dynamics of virtual space to accommodate for such discussion, Lin asked her students to rename themselves within the Zoom classroom as 'Anonymous,' and thus created an unobstructed virtual arena to more freely see, engage, and develop individual thought. Anonymous personas on the Internet can encourage some of the most detrimental harassment online, however, once Lin's students came to perceive no one and everyone simultaneously in the remote classroom, they conversely offered genuine critique and praise for opinions amongst each other. In this single corner of online engagement, the students could turn away from their reflection traditionally noted in separate social media platforms where interactions are recorded, tracked, and monetized. The artist's interest in visual and physical perception here through anonymization allowed her students to heighten their understanding of the self and ability to form new ideas in the collapsed classroom. The dynamics of Lin's classroom are comparable to the chalkboard discussions, as a reminder of the communal spirit of education. The ability to converse, challenge, and build upon ideas is the cornerstone of knowledge, and Lin reinforces these components through utilizing the tools of both online and offline realities.

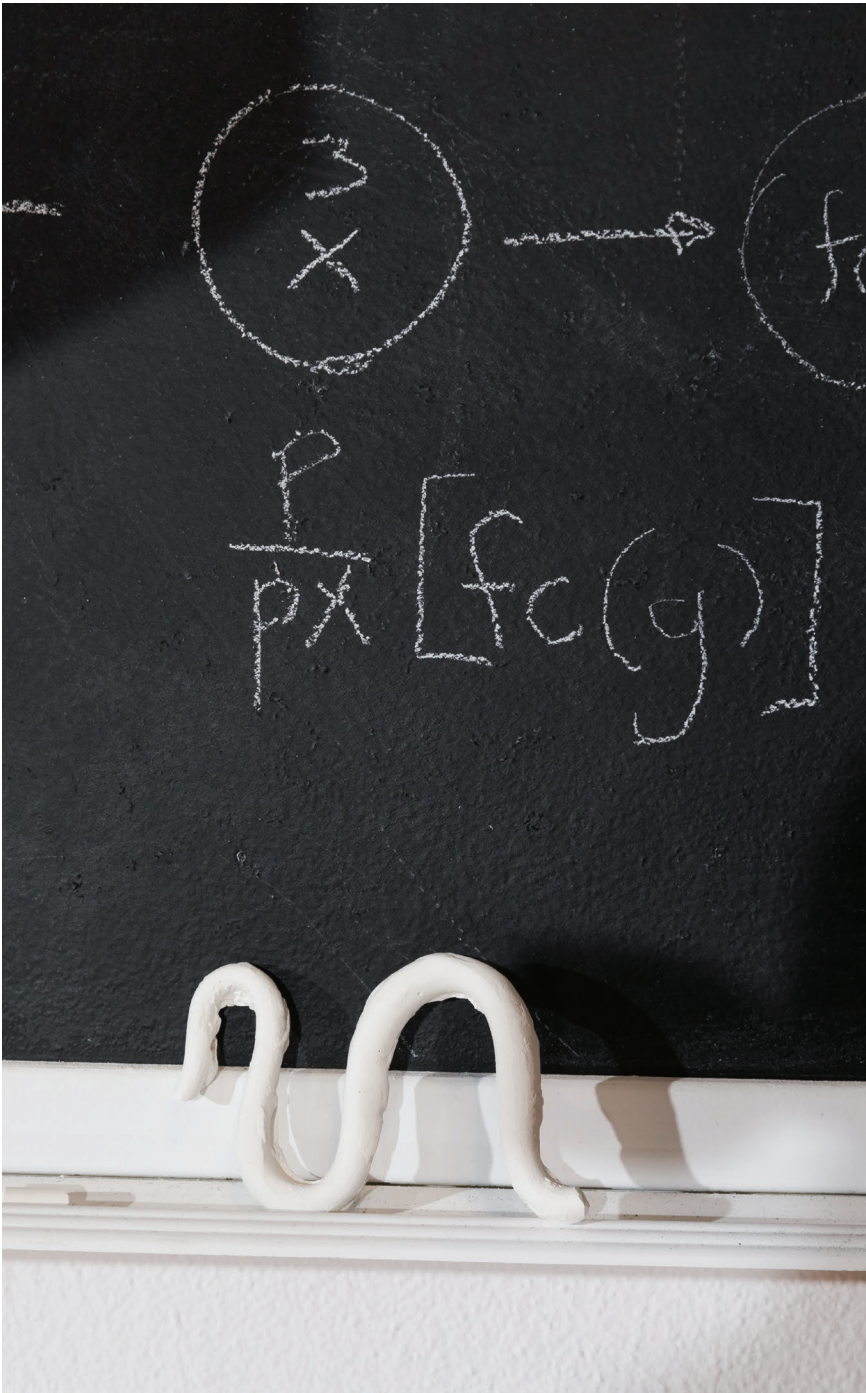
The title of the installation, *PROOF*, references a term in mathematics where a proof is created to argue for a line of reasoning based on a set of assumptions. Lin's experience of online teaching acts as this principle—as an argument that if we protest the current trajectory of forming information and identity online, there is a mode of the internet in which we can genuinely speak, learn, and support each other. Importantly, the artist's resolution for a productive relationship to virtual spaces is not to entirely start over. New norms and ideals would be required for this type of approach, as well as regulating and policing to build "it" back up. Starting from scratch additionally suggests a desire for a pure form, and maintaining or defining purity is a dangerous precedent to uphold. The remote classroom in *PROOF* is not to suggest that her class structure should eclipse what in-person learning can accomplish, but offers alternatives to current limitations set by social media or virtual informational sources in terms of gaining and evaluating knowledge. As Lin turned towards the desert for inspiration to alter the dynamics of remote education, her methods were generated out of how far she could perceive and the vastness of her surroundings. The next stage of virtual life comes out of a moment where online interactions are at their peak, and *PROOF* illustrates the potential of such synergy by broadening the virtual dynamics of dialog and identity within the remote classroom to see and become something more than what is immediately offered.





*The good desert
No foot disturbs it,
Created being
Never enters there:
It is, and no one knows why.
It is here, it is there,
It is far, it is near,
It is deep, it is high,
It is in such a way
That it is neither this nor that.
It is light, it is clear,
It is totally dark,
It is unnamed,
It is unknown,
Free of beginning or end.
It stands still,
Pure, unclothed.
Who knows its dwelling?*

Mustard Seed by Meister Eckhart



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This exhibition was produced with the help of Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art Executive Director Alisha Kerlin, along with Chloe Bernardo, Paige Bockman, Dan Hernandez, LeiAnn Huddleston, Emmanuel Muñoz, DK Sole, John Stoelting, Lonnie Timmons III/UNLV Creative Services, Mikayla Whitmore, and the staff at the UNLV Lied Library Makerspace. Tiffany Lin would like to extend a special thanks to Shaun Chang, Tanya Gayer, Annie Wong, and all of her incredible students.



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Pages 5, 6, & cover

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Pages 10, 11, 12, 13, & 15

**ABOUT THE MARJORIE BARRICK
MUSEUM OF ART**

The Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art believes everyone deserves access to art that challenges our understanding of the present and inspires us to create a future that holds space for us all.

Located on the campus of one of the most racially diverse universities in the United States, we strive to create a nourishing environment for those who continue to be neglected by contemporary art museums, including BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ groups. As the only art museum in the city of Las Vegas, we commit ourselves to leveling barriers that limit access to the arts, especially for first-time visitors. To facilitate access for low-income guests we provide free entry to all our exhibitions, workshops, lectures, and community activities. Our collection of artworks offers an opportunity for researchers and scholars to develop a more extensive knowledge of contemporary art in Southern Nevada. The Barrick Museum is part of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV).

Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art

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