

kate-hers RHEE: Inventing Genealogies

**Opens October 4th at New Media Artspace,
Baruch College, CUNY**



Image: kate-hers RHEE, *Transkoreaning*, bureaucratic documents, 2016–2017.
Image courtesy of the artist.

NEW YORK, NY - October 4th, 2021 - The New Media Artspace is pleased to present *kate-hers RHEE: Inventing Genealogies*, an interactive online exhibition that confronts and problematizes Asian American and diasporic transnational identity. The exhibition is curated by Katherine Behar, Associate Professor of New Media Arts, and is sponsored by the Sandra Kahn Wasserman Jewish Studies Center.

kate-hers RHEE: Inventing Genealogies will be on view from October 4, 2021, through December 3, 2021, at the New Media Artspace website, www.newmediartspace.info. The Sandra Kahn Wasserman Jewish Studies Center and the New Media Artspace will host a public artist lecture livestream on Tuesday, October 26, 2021, from 6:00 to 7:30 P.M. Please visit youtu.be/mHot7bkPWtk to attend.

In common usage, “genealogy” refers to accounts of ancestral descent. But for the transnational artist kate-hers RHEE (이미래/李未來), *genealogy is invention*. The stakes are high when RHEE repositions genealogy this way, because genealogy frequently invokes DNA and other technologies that secure individuals’ legal rights through patriarchal constructs of lineage, birth, and bloodlines.

As a transracial adopted Korean person, RHEE discovered that her family tree was a fabrication created by the South Korean government when she was a small child to falsely construe her as an orphan and thereby expedite expatriating her from Korea to the United States. To claim her own identity and rights without the benefit of a conventional (or factual) family tree, RHEE embarks on *inventing genealogies*, a process filled with twists and turns and difficult choices, which this exhibition illuminates.

Foregrounding choice, *Inventing Genealogies* replaces a deterministic genealogical account of RHEE's identity with a choose your own adventure-style narrative that offers as many paths untaken as paths forward. The online exhibition design, created by the New Media Artspace Student Docent Team, is inspired by family trees and DNA. Plunging through tree rings of a family tree made of documents, viewers tunnel through bureaucratic paperwork as they choose a path linking different artworks. At each work, viewers can interact to descramble an appendix that offers commentary about the project, alluding to the process of learning to communicate as a non-native speaker, and the idea of so-called "broken languages." Meanwhile, viewers to track their progress through the exhibition through a mini map that resembles a DNA double helix. By uprooting the family tree as a concept in itself, *Inventing Genealogies* explores what happens when identity and rights aren't mere matters of inheritance.

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Transnational feminist kate-hers RHEE (오미래/李未來) is an interdisciplinary visual, performance and social practice artist, who works between Germany, South Korea and the United States. She has recently shown work at SOMA Artspace (Berlin), Meinblau Projektraum (Berlin), AHL Foundation (New York), MiA Collective Art, (New York) and Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Berlin). A new installation, dealing with death ritual and the afterlife will be featured at the Pacific Asia Museum, University of Southern California and she is currently preparing for a solo exhibition at the Paul Robeson Galleries at Rutgers University. www.estherka.com

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This exhibition is generously sponsored by the Sandra Kahn Wasserman Jewish Studies Center under the co-directorship of Professors Jessica Lang and Andrew Sloin.

kate-hers RHEE: Inventing Genealogies is curated by Katherine Behar, Associate Professor in the Fine and Performing Arts Department in the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences, Baruch College, CUNY and is produced by the New Media Artspace Student Docent Team. The exhibition is made possible further by support from the Baruch Computing and Technology Center (BCTC), the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences, and the Newman Library. All images appear courtesy of the artist.

Gallery Location: New Media Artspace at Baruch College, Library and Information Building, 151 E. 25th Street, New York, NY 10010

Gallery Hours: New Media Artspace exhibitions and events are open to the public. The gallery is open virtually throughout the Fall 2021 semester. Visit the New Media Artspace website for details: www.newmediartspace.info

The New Media Artspace is a teaching exhibition space in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts at Baruch College, CUNY. Housed in the Newman Library, the New Media Artspace showcases curated experimental media and interdisciplinary artworks by international artists, students, alumni, and faculty.

About Baruch College: [Baruch College](http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/) is a senior college in the [City University of New York \(CUNY\)](http://www.cuny.edu/) with a total enrollment of more than 17,000 students, who represent 160 countries and speak more than 100 languages. Ranked among the top 15% of U.S. colleges and the No. 4 public regional university, Baruch College is regularly recognized as among the most ethnically diverse colleges in the country. As a public institution with a tradition of academic excellence, Baruch College offers accessibility and opportunity for students from every corner of New York City and from around the world. For more about Baruch College, go to <http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/>.

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