



**MIGUEL A. ARAGÓN:**  
Indices of Silence/  
Índices del silencio

**YOUNG SUN HAN:**  
The Unforever Parallel

**RON TARVER:**  
An Overdue  
Conversation  
With My Father

**THE  
PRINT  
CENTER  
94TH  
ANNUAL**

**94th ANNUAL International  
Solo Exhibitions**

January 17 - March 21, 2020

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The Print Center is pleased to present solo exhibitions of new and recent work by **Miguel A. Aragón** (Staten Island, NY), **Young Sun Han** (New York, NY) and **Ron Tarver** (Philadelphia, PA) selected from 512 international applicants to our 94th ANNUAL International Competition. The esteemed jurors were **Charlotte Cotton** and **Gretchen Wagner**. Cotton, author and curator of photography, is Curator-in-Residence at the California Museum of Photography, Riverside. Wagner is the Andrew W. Mellon Fellow for Prints, Drawings and Photographs at the Saint Louis Art Museum and co-curator/co-author of *Graphic Revolution: American Prints 1960 to Now* (Saint Louis Art Museum, 2018).

*The 94th ANNUAL solo exhibitions highlight new and recent work from three cutting-edge artists: Miguel A. Aragón, Young Sun Han and Ron Tarver, active in the fields of contemporary printmaking and photography. Because of the nature of the competition, our applicant pool always reveals something unexpected; this year – as is often the case – all three exhibitions are concerned with timely topics. They speak to a profound diversity in material, technique and subject. We are proud to exhibit the work of these artists and engage in the critical dialogs ignited by them.*

— Ksenia Nouril, Jensen Bryan Curator



## Miguel A. Aragón: Indices of Silence/Índices del silencio

This exhibition presents examples from printmaker Miguel A. Aragón's long-term engagement with imagery from the Mexican war on drugs. Since 2006, the Mexican government has waged a low-intensity conflict against drug trafficking across its country. While the aim is to reduce drug-related offenses, this war has resulted in countless deaths. Over 100,000 people have been killed, and thousands of others are unaccounted for. The violence has been most heated in Ciudad Juárez, Aragón's hometown, which borders El Paso, Texas. "Before the 'official war on drugs' was declared in Mexico, the violence in Juárez was already deadly, since it's one of the main corridors for the drug trade," said the artist.

In 2011, Aragón began appropriating portraits of the dead – drug cartel members, police officers and innocent bystanders – circulating in the news. "The cartels were still trying to hide the bodies... but the bodies would appear all over the city," he said. The expressions

on their faces specifically caught his interest. More recently, Aragón expanded his research, sourcing images from media outside Juárez, to highlight that the effects of the drug war reach every state in Mexico.

Aragón employs a variety of innovative printmaking techniques to depict the deaths, arrests and general corruption associated with the Mexican war on drugs. He uses an industrial-grade hand drill to cut both large woodblocks and sheets of paper, enabling him to realize prints measuring as large as 51½" x 38½". The hundreds of holes come together like Ben Day dots to create closely cropped portraits of victims at the moment of their passing. In two untitled screenprints made in 2019 with the Texas State University Printmaking Program, San Marcos, Aragón works in the opposite way, zooming out, to give us a picture of the crime scene itself. With these more narrative works, he turns from depicting minute detail to conveying brilliant color that shimmers with haunting iridescence.

It is important for Aragón that none of his subjects are named; yet, he does not want them to exist merely as statistics. His gripping images collectively humanize the victims of this senseless bloodshed.

## About the Artist

**Miguel A. Aragón** (born Ciudad Juárez, México; lives Staten Island, NY) received a BFA from the University of Texas at El Paso and an MFA from the University of Texas, Austin. Aragón has exhibited nationally and internationally at venues including the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Saratoga Springs, NY and the Society of Northern Alberta Print-Artists, Canada. His numerous awards and residences include KALA Art Institute, Berkeley, CA; Zygote Press, Cleveland, OH; as well as Till Richter Museum, Buggenhagen, Germany. His work is held in numerous private and public collections, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago; and Minneapolis Institute of Art. Aragón's work has been published in numerous catalogs and books, including *A Survey of Contemporary Printmaking* (Greenville, NC: Wellington B. Gray Gallery, 2012) and *Peenemünde Project: Geschichte wird Kunst / Imprinting History* (Berlin: Edition Braus, 2017). The latter features Aragón's work made during a residency at the WWII-era power plant in Peenemünde, Germany, where he explored the history of the Nazi-era slave labor missile research center. Aragón is an Assistant Professor in Printmaking at the College of Staten Island, City University of New York.



## Young Sun Han: The Unforever Parallel

The work of multi-disciplinary artist Young Sun Han traverses time and space, taking us on a journey spanning generations and geographies. In this exhibition, Han explores his family's narrative through the turbulent history of North and South Korea in the 20th century. Their immigrant experience began on the 38th parallel north (the border between these two countries) and continues to be represented today in the lens-based work of Han.

Han approaches loss – of home, of nation, of self – from both personal and collective points of view. His *Passages from a Memoir* (2019) is a sprawling multi-part installation of photographs and texts handwritten directly onto the wall. It began in 2018 following the recent loss of his parents and grandparents. “I set out with cumbersome photography equipment to pinpoint and document specific locations mentioned in my grandfather’s memoir [published in 1984 in the United States] – about unsparing agrarian life amidst

changing colonial powers, completely upturned by the arrival of the Korean War in 1950,” he said, summarizing the book from which he quotes. Deeply concerned with capturing fading memories, Han conducted research at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, where he took courses with Dr. Suzy Kim, Associate Professor of Korean History. He found many parallels between the texts assigned, such as the well-known short story “Kapitan Lee” (1971) by Chon Kwang-yong and that of his grandfather. “With every new paragraph [translated from my grandfather’s memoir], I read about previously unknown events and tragedies, many of them contradicting my received memories.” Yet, Han’s recent visit to Korea, which included a special trip to Jeju Island to mark the 70th anniversary of the 4.3 Uprising and Massacre – a rebellion and subsequent violent government suppression that transpired between April 1948 and May 1949, a repercussion of the August 1945 partition of the Korean peninsula – did not make him feel closer to these histories. Overlapping photographs printed on paper and fabric give the work *Damage Gamuts* a textural and sculptural quality. A reference to an incomplete subset of colors in a computerized graphic or digital photograph, the work, which hangs 8 feet from ceiling to floor, grapples with the ineffability of history and the fractured nature of identity.

*The Unforever Parallel* tells – and retells – stories of people, places and events difficult to exhume and distill from the depths of memory. In the current moment of fragile geopolitical relations between the U.S. and foreign countries, like North and South Korea, Han’s work takes on urgent and universal significance.

## About the Artist

**Young Sun Han** (born Evanston, IL; lives Brooklyn, NY) is a visual artist, curator and educator, who is an American citizen of Korean heritage and a permanent resident of New Zealand. He holds a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, where he currently teaches. He has completed additional studies at the Kunsthochschule für Medien, Cologne, Germany and Goldsmiths, University of London, England. Han has worked as Co-Director and Curator at City Art Rooms Project Trust, Auckland, New Zealand; Production Advisor for the Nasty Women Exhibition, Knockdown Center, Maspeth, NY, 2017; and Special Projects Coordinator at David Zwirner, New York. As an artist, he has exhibited at Elijah Wheat Showroom, Brooklyn; Jean Albano Gallery and Zolla/Lieberman, both Chicago; David Zwirner, Knockdown Center; Zimmerli Art Museum, New Brunswick, NJ; LMAK books+design and Printed Matter Inc., both New York; as well as 4A Centre of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia; University of Sydney; Independent Brussels, Belgium; Anti-Art Fair London, England; Sanderson Contemporary Art, Auckland, New Zealand; Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt, New Zealand; and Suter Contemporary Art Biennial, Nelson, New Zealand. Han is the recipient of the Brovero Photography Prize, Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Fellowship and Fred Endsley Memorial Fellowship. He recently completed residencies at the Saas-Fee Summer Institute of Art, Berlin, Germany and Materia Abierta, Mexico City.



## Ron Tarver: An Overdue Conversation With My Father

Ron Tarver reimagines the African American experience in the U.S. under Jim Crow, as interpreted through the lens of his late father Richard Tarver. The elder Tarver was a self-taught photographer who ran a popular portrait studio in addition to an electrical appliance repair shop. “He was a Renaissance man, a kind of a tinkerer,” recalls Ron. Richard’s photographs, taken during the 1940s and 50s, captured the African American community – of which he was an integral part – in Fort Gibson, Oklahoma. At the time, its population was roughly half black, half white. By 1970, its demographics shifted dramatically, leaving the Tarvers as one of only a few black families in a predominantly white town.

“I grew up with a box of my dad’s photographs,” says Tarver, “and when I became a photographer, I wanted to make works that created a dialogue between us that speaks to today’s time.” In this ongoing body of work, he begins by rephotographing his father’s originals, as

he wanted to preserve the archive. Once the images are reprinted, he manipulates the figures by cutting them out or transferring them to glass or transparencies, reassembling them into new constructions. Thus, Tarver literally bridges the old with the new. The images are framed in mixed and matched, ornate, gold-leafed frames found in charity shops and secondhand stores. This presentation points to the treasured nature of the photographs, which are primarily portraits, and to their original display in the privacy of people's homes.

By looking back at his father's archive and appropriating its imagery, Tarver reflects on the deep history of the tight-knit African American community in Fort Gibson, re-presenting its triumphs and tribulations in light of the present day. Together, his photographs are extrapolated documents that abstract specific people, places and things, bringing the past into the present. "I want to use them [my father's photographs] to speak about that place, and the stories I know about that place," says Tarver. His work is not nostalgic or mournful of the loss of this once vital community that he left for Philadelphia in 1983. Instead, it is about the fragility and resilience of community.

## About the Artist

**Ron Tarver** (born Fort Gibson, OK; lives Philadelphia, PA) holds a BA in Journalism and Graphic Arts from Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, OK and an MFA from the University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA. He is Visiting Assistant Professor of Art specializing in photography at Swarthmore College. For 32 years, Tarver worked as a photojournalist at *The Philadelphia Inquirer* where he shared a 2012 Pulitzer Prize for his work on a series documenting school violence in the Philadelphia public school system. He had been nominated three previous times. His photographs have been published in numerous periodicals, including *Black & White Magazine*, *Life*, *Time*, *National Geographic*, *Newsweek* and *Sports Illustrated*. He is co-author of the book *We Were There: Voices of African American Veterans* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), which was accompanied by a traveling exhibition that debuted at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. Tarver has exhibited nationally and internationally in over 30 solo and 50 group exhibitions. His photographs are found in many private, corporate and museum collections, including the State Museum of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg; Studio Museum, New York; Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City; Philadelphia Museum of Art; and National Museum of American Art of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Tarver's additional accolades include a Pew Fellowship in the Arts as well as fellowships from the Center for Emerging Visual Artists, Independence Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

# THE PRINT CENTER 94<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

## About the ANNUAL International Competition

The *ANNUAL* is one of the oldest and most prestigious competitions in the United States. Each year the *ANNUAL* is juried by distinguished colleagues. Artists who use printmaking and/or photography as critical components of their work, or whose work pushes the boundaries of traditional photographic and printmaking practices, are encouraged to enter. This reflects The Print Center's interest in the use of photography and printmaking in intriguing ways, both in content and in process.

**Awards and Prizes for the ANNUAL** include two prestigious museum purchase awards: the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Purchase Award and the Stinnett Philadelphia Museum of Art Collection Award. Additional recognitions include the Awagami Paper Award, *BOMB* Magazine Award, Callan/McNamara Award, Fish/Pearce Award, Olcott Family Award, *The Photo Review* Award, The Print Center Gallery Store Award, The Print Center Honorary Council Award, Renaissance Graphic Arts Award, Society for Photographic Education Award, Trinity Framing Award and the Jacqueline L. Zemel Prize for Printmaking.

## Finalists

Miguel A. Aragón  
Lucy Wood Baird  
Elizabeth Corkery  
Young Sun Han  
Jon Henry  
Priya Kambli  
Yangbin Park  
Rob Swainston  
Ron Tarver  
Guanyu Xu

## Semifinalists

Maggy Aston  
Roxana Azar  
Shawn Bitters  
Lindsay Buchman  
Elena Dorfman  
Odette England  
Enrique Figueredo  
Stephen Foster  
Bang Geul Han  
Alice Hargrave  
Alison Judd  
Larson Shindelman  
Kate MacNeil  
Chris Maddox  
Charles Mason III  
Jonathan McFadden  
Alyssa Minahan  
Marc Ohrem-Leclef  
Lydia Panas  
Kat Richards  
Nadia Sablin  
Sam Scoggins  
Yesuk Seo  
Alan Singer  
David Temchulla

## About The Print Center

For more than a century, The Print Center has encouraged the growth and understanding of photography and printmaking as vital contemporary arts through exhibitions, publications and educational programs. The Print Center has an international voice and a strong sense of local purpose. Free and open to the public, it presents changing exhibitions, which highlight established and emerging, local, national and international contemporary artists. It mounts one of the oldest art competitions in the country, now in its 94th year and the Gallery Store offers the largest selection of contemporary prints and photographs available for sale in Philadelphia, as well as being available online.

## Funders

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## Notes

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