Raid the Icebox Now with Triple Canopy in collaboration with CFGNY: Can I Leave You?, November 22, 2019–July 19, 2020

How do artworks and design give rise to nations and national identities? What do they tell viewers about what—and whom—to value? How has the United States been shaped through the consumption and display of goods and the subjugation of people whose labor or likenesses mark them?

This installation considers how early European Americans defined themselves through products from and portrayals of China, whether porcelain bowls or travelogues, out of admiration or animus. The video and sound installation are linked by an epistolary narrative that involves time travel, fictions about China and Chinese people, and a “house attack”—a colonial-era targeting of white elites who pursued wealth and power at the expense of their community.

Can I Leave You? is named after a song from the tradition of Sacred Harp, a particularly democratic form of choral music that originated in New England in the late 1700s. This song describes the anxieties of immigration and raises the possibility of abandoning nationality as the source of belonging. A recording of “Can I Leave You?,” made with the vocal ensemble Ekmeles, provides the basis for the video’s soundtrack.

For Can I Leave You?, Triple Canopy commissioned the fashion collective CFGNY (Concept Foreign Garments New York) to create Synthetic Blend V, a capsule collection and campaign video. Prompted by the combination of European American and Chinese objects in Pendleton House, CFGNY’s collection considers how Asian American identity is forged and perceived, especially through the global circulation of styles and materials. CFGNY worked with tailors in Hồ Chí Minh City, Vietnam—Nguyệt Huế, Bùi Thị Mỹ Linh, Bùi Thị Lan Anh, Da Trần Văn Tân, and Namsilk Tailor—to develop designs. These garments provide an uncanny reflection of the objects that surround them. They also give the impression of the house being inhabited—or haunted—by those who don’t belong in such a “typically American” environment, and whose presence might have a transformative effect. CFGNY’s and Triple Canopy’s videos are projected in the Spalter New Media Gallery, and the garments are installed throughout Pendleton House.

Triple Canopy, based in New York and founded in 2007, is a magazine devoted to sustained inquiry and creative research through collaborations with artists, writers, technologists, and designers. Issues are published online and include digital works of art and literature, public conversations, exhibitions, performances, books, and software. Triple Canopy’s installation will also lead to an issue of the magazine that includes works by additional artists, writers, and researchers, to be published in the spring and available at www.canopycanopycanopy.com/.

CFGNY (Concept Foreign Garments New York) is a New York–based collective and fashion label founded in 2016. Begun as a dialogue between Tin Nguyen and Daniel Chew on the intersection of fashion, race, identity, and sexuality, CFGNY continually returns to the term “vaguely Asian”: an understanding of racial identity as a specific cultural experience, combined with the experience of being perceived as other. Rather than represent what it means to be “Asian” in the singular, CFGNY encourages the visualization of the countless ways of being in the plural.
CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Triple Canopy
American, 2007–present
A Portal, of the Light Reflected by the Sea, of Notes Never Before Sung, for Traversing, 2019
Four-channel sound installation
Courtesy of the artists TL173.2019.1

Triple Canopy
American, 2007–present
If the Limbs Grow Too Large for the Body, 2019
Three-channel color video with four-channel sound
Courtesy of the artists TL173.2019.2

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Synthetic Blend V, 2019
Single-channel color video with sound
Courtesy of the artist EXL10.20193.1

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Nguyệt Huệ Nguyệt
Bùi Thị Mỹ Linh
Bùi Thị Lan Anh
Da Trần Văn Tân
Namsilk Tailor
Synthetic Blend V, 2019
Capsule collection with nine looks comprised of seventeen garments
Courtesy of the artist TL167.2019

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Namsilk Tailor
Double-Collared Button-Up with Stripes (B/W), 2019
Cotton, shell buttons, cotton thread
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.14

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Da Trần Văn Tân
Long Smoking Jacket with Yellow Silk Detail, 2019
Cotton, silk, metal zipper, plastic buttons
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.8
CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Nguyệt Huệ Nguyệt
Fuzzy Vest with Oriental Loops, 2019
Synthetic polymer fiber, cotton thread, metal
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.3

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Bùi Thị Mỹ Linh
Skirt with Leather Grid, 2019
Cotton, wool, lamb hide, metal zipper, cotton thread
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.11

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Bùi Thị Mỹ Linh
Tennis Dress with Grid, 2019
Cotton, silk, shell buttons, cotton thread
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.7
CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Bùi Thị Lan Anh
Open-Mesh Long Sleeve, 2019
Synthetic polymer fiber, cotton thread
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.10

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Da Trần Văn Tân
Clubbing Pants with Yellow Pockets, 2019
Cotton, silk, plastic buttons, metal zipper, cotton thread
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.13

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Bùi Thị Lan Anh
Front-Zip Drop Pants, 2019
Cotton, metal zipper, cotton thread
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.15
CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Namsilk Tailor
Patch Skirt, 2019
Cotton, synthetic polymer fiber blend, metal zipper, cotton thread
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.4

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Bùi Thị Mỹ Linh
Two-Toned Leather Vest with Zip, 2019
Lamb hide, synthetic polymer fiber lining, metal zipper, cotton thread
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.9

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Nguyệt Huệ Nguyệt
Transparent Pants with Floral Embroidered Cuff, 2019
Synthetic polymer fiber, cotton thread
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.6
CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Nguyệt Huệ Nguyệt
Vest with Tassels, 2019
Synthetic polymer fiber, beads, cotton thread
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.1

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Namsilk Tailor
Skirt with Sequins, 2019
Cotton, wool, metal zipper, plastic, sequins, cotton thread
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.2

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Da Trần Văn Tân
Long Smoking Jacket in Red Silk, 2019
Silk, metal zipper, plastic buttons
Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.16.ab
CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Da Trần Văn Tuấn
Zipped Bell-Bottom Pants in Red Silk, 2019
Silk, metal zipper, plastic buttons
 Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.17

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Namsilk Tailor
Double-Collared Button-Up with Stripes (R/B), 2019
Cotton, shell buttons, cotton thread
 Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.5

CFGNY
American, 2016–present
Bùi Thị Lan Anh
Plaid Tank, 2019
Synthetic polymer fiber, cotton thread
 Courtesy of CFGNY TL167.2019.12