



Open Source Gallery, Inc - 501(c)(3) Organization
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Hours: Wednesday-Saturday: 2-6pm

XYZA CRUZ BACANI: WE ARE LIKE AIR

August 1-25, 2018

Opening Reception: August 1, 7-9pm

Open Source presents *We Are Like Air* an exhibition and public art project by Xyza Cruz Bacani.

Over the past several years, Xyza Cruz Bacani has documented migrant workers in Hong Kong, Singapore, New York and the United Arab Emirates. Having been as a second generation domestic worker herself, Bacani is interested in pursuing stories about the intersections of labor and human rights. Her photographs explore the lives of women who work these jobs and risk their lives to support their families. Bacani's personal experience as a domestic worker in Hong Kong has given her a unique perspective, as well as access to the lives and stories of these women, which has resulted multiple projects focusing on migrants from cities all over the world. But Bacani has often felt that there is something missing in her narrative: the story of her mother.



Xyza Cruz Bacani, from the series "Modern Slavery," 2014-present

Bacani's mother's story will be one of those included in *We Are Like Air*, which will tell the stories of domestic workers in New York and Hong Kong. Domestic workers, many of whom have left their homes to provide a better life for their families, are hidden behind the walls of apartments and high rises in major cities around the globe. According to the International Labour Organization, as of 2015 there were 150 million migrant workers in the international workforce. Unprotected by labor laws, migrant workers risk their safety, working long hours and living frugally to send money home to their families living in poverty. Some domestic workers are parents who may face the task of taking care of their employer's children, even though they had to make the sacrifice of leaving theirs behind.

In June 2018, in conjunction with *We Are Like Air*, a public art display of Bacani's photographs of migrant workers at spaces throughout NYC will spur dialogue with New Yorkers who likely come into contact with migrant workers everyday, but do not know their stories. In August 2018, a multimedia exhibition will further explore the stories touched on by the public art project. *We Are Like Air* includes narratives with a great importance for Bacani, but it also has a more universal importance: Bacani's family is just one of millions who have been disrupted. While *We Are Like Air* highlights the difficulties faced by migrant workers, it is ultimately a narrative about the lengths people go to for the ones they love.

Xyza Cruz Bacani (1987) is a street and documentary photographer. In 2015, Bacani received a Magnum Foundation Human Rights scholarship to New York University Tisch School of the Arts' six-week photography course. Bacani has been recognized for her work as one of the BBC's 100 Women of the World (2015), Women Who Wow Philippines (2016). She has received awards such as the Standard Young Visionary of the Year for Photojournalism (2015) and the Justice Centre Human Rights Award (2014). Her work has been exhibited at Para Site Gallery (Hong Kong), Ayala Triangle Gardens (Philippines) and Kong Art Space (Hong Kong) among others. Bacani's book *We Are Like Air* will be released on November 30, 2018.

For press inquiries, please contact shauna@opensourcegallery.org

Special thanks to our partners 56 Bogart St., LLC, Martin Kaminer, Think!Chinatown, M.S. 136 and NURTUREart.



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