

## Xyza Cruz Bacani: We Are Like Air

Mother and Daughter's Unlikely Journey

Private View & Reception Thursday 2 May 2019, 6-8 pm Exhibition 3 May - 8 June 2019, Tuesday - Saturday 11am - 6pm & by appointment

CHRISTINE PARK GALLERY



Wild birds fly outside and rest on the window sill of the apartment in Hong Kong where Georgia has been working for Kathryn for 20 years. April 29, 2013

We Are Like Air Skyline, 2013 Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper Signed on verso  $16h \times 20w$  in  $(40.6h \times 50.8w$  cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB064)  $24.75h \times 33w$  in  $(62.8h \times 83.8w$  cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB065)

























Georgia and Villamor resting at their home in the Philippines while she visited in April 2017.

Intimate for a Moment, 2017
Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper
Signed on verso
16h x 20w in (40.6h x 50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB066)
24.75h x 33w in (62.8h x 83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB067)



Georgia hugs her youngest daughter Sharila goodbye while Villamor comforts Lexus. She is going back to Hong Kong after her short visit. April 21, 2017.

Cycle of Goodbye, 2017
Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper
Signed on verso
16h x 20w in (40.6h x 50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB068)
24.75h x 33w in (62.8h x 83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB069)



Georgia and a reflection of the photographer Xyza while out running errands in Hong Kong. August 30, 2017.



Lexus cries as her grandmother Georgia says goodbye at Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila as she leaves to return to Hong Kong for work.

This photo is blurry because it brings back a lot of memories for the artist. She remembers the recurring childhood pain every time her mother would leave for Hong Kong. Her trauma of being left behind will always remain, no matter what age. April 21, 2017, Philippines.



Georgia Bacani, left, with her daughter Sharila, top, and her grandchildren Lexus and Winter in Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines, during a rare trip home from her job as a domestic worker in Hong Kong in July 2017.

Three Generations, 2017
Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper
Signed on verso
16h × 20w in (40.6h × 50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB074)
24.75h × 33w in (62.8h × 83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB075)



Georgia and Villamor share a light moment in Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines. The tricycle was their first investment as a couple. July 24, 2017.



Villamor reflects during a quiet moment in their farm. He is a farmer and earns a modest income to help Georgia with the expenses. He is the artist's father. August 02, 2017.

Father, a Farmer, 2017 Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper Signed on verso 16h  $\times$  20w in (40.6h  $\times$  50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB078) 24.75h  $\times$  33w in (62.8h  $\times$  83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB079)



Kathryn Louey and Georgia wait for the children inside Kathryn's home in Hong Kong. Georgia has been living and working at Kathryn's home in Central Hong Kong for two decades. August 22, 2017.

Mama and Mrs. Louey, 2017
Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper
Signed on verso
16h x 20w in (40.6h x 50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB080)
24.75h x 33w in (62.8h x 83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB081)



Georgia holds hands with her granddaughters and Sharila before going back to Hong Kong. She chose to go back to continue working for her granddaughters. September 24, 2018.



Villamor looks out the window while his son-in-law cares for Winter.

Georgia and her family are in a van headed to Nueva Vizcaya from the Manila airport during one of her few visits to the Philippines. April 16, 2017.

Divided by Miles, 2017
Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper
Signed on verso
16h x 20w in (40.6h x 50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB084)
24.75h x 33w in (62.8h x 83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB085)



Lexus reaches up to touch the head of Villamor as they play in their home in the Philippines. October 05, 2016.

Unconditional Love, 2016
Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper
Signed on verso
16h x 20w in (40.6h x 50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB086)
24.75h x 33w in (62.8h x 83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB087)



Georgia prays to Wong Tai Sin, a Chinese deity, in Hong Kong for her Chinese employer. She is a Catholic but it is a part of her job to pray for her employer. September 15, 2018.

The Prayer, 2018
Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper
Signed on verso
16h × 20w in (40.6h × 50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB088)
24.75h × 33w in (62.8h × 83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB089)



Georgia, cleaning the balcony of her employer's home on the 44th floor after a typhoon intensity 10 hit Hong Kong. August 24, 2017.

After the Typhoon, 2017 Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper Signed on verso  $16h \times 20w$  in  $(40.6h \times 50.8w$  cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB090)  $24.75h \times 33w$  in  $(62.8h \times 83.8w$  cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB091)



Villamor in their family farm in Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines, April 15, 2018.

Our Father, 2018 Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper Signed on verso  $16h \times 20w$  in  $(40.6h \times 50.8w$  cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB092)  $24.75h \times 33w$  in  $(62.8h \times 83.8w$  cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB093)



Kathryn and Georgia eat a meal together at Kathryn's home in Hong Kong. Some employers require their workers to stand nearby in case they need something during dinner, but Kathryn welcomes Georgia and her family to share their meals together. September 16, 2016.



Georgia opens her employer's home in Hong Kong for 19 years. Chinese New Year decorations are displayed in the entrance. February 18, 2018.

Welcome, 2018 Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper Signed on verso  $16h \times 20w$  in  $(40.6h \times 50.8w$  cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB096)  $24.75h \times 33w$  in  $(62.8h \times 83.8w$  cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB097)



Shirley Dalisay, 31, from the Philippines, suffered burns on her back and arms when a pot of boiling hot soup fell on her after her employer "accidentally" put the soup above the family's shoe rack where Shirley stored her shoes. July 02, 2014, Hong Kong.



Shirley Dalisay shows her burned back. Dalisay's treatment required hospitalization, but her former employer refused to take her to see a doctor, did not permit her sick leave, and instead terminated her contract, against Hong Kong law. She stayed in Bethune house shelter for nine months during her recovery. August 16, 2014, Hong Kong.



Migrant domestic workers in a beauty pageant in Hong Kong. Beauty contests are one of the recreational activities of domestic workers in the city. April 05, 2015.



Migrant domestic workers dancing under the bridge during their day off in Hong Kong. April 04, 2017.



Migrant workers pack their balikbayan (care package) boxes to send to their families back home. August 20, 2017, Hong Kong.



Migrant workers congregate in a public space in front of an advertisement in Hong Kong, April 23, 2018.



Migrant workers hang out together in Central, Hong Kong, September 03, 2017.

Contemplate, 2017

Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper

Signed on verso

16h x 20w in (40.6h x 50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB110) 24.75h x 33w in (62.8h x 83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB111)



A migrant domestic worker helps her elderly employer in Mid-levels, Hong Kong, April 06, 2017.



Josefa and Amelia inside Saint Joseph's Church in Hong Kong, February 12, 2018.

Amelia, 2018 Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper Signed on verso  $16h \times 20w$  in  $(40.6h \times 50.8w$  cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB114)  $24.75h \times 33w$  in  $(62.8h \times 83.8w$  cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB115)



Amelia's father, Michael, lifts her in the air while Ada watches from the couch and Josefa checks her phone near the window in Hong Kong, August 26, 2017.



A balloon floats in an empty section of the departures area in Hong Kong International Airport. April 16, 2017.



A portrait of Razel and her daughter Tanisha in their home in the Philippines. Razel is a migrant domestic worker in Hong Kong. August 02, 2017.

Mother and Child, 2017
Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper
Signed on verso
16h x 20w in (40.6h x 50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB120)
24.75h x 33w in (62.8h x 83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB121)



Migrant workers in Hong Kong pray in Saint Joseph's Church. Religion is an integral part of their lives and migration in general. Migrant workers often bring their beliefs and practices to their country of employment and use it as a form of expression. August 31, 2017.



Three Indonesian migrant workers laugh with their friends while participating in a rally for workers' rights in Hong Kong, September 03, 2017.

Workers, Not Slaves, 2017
Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper
Signed on verso
16h x 20w in (40.6h x 50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB124)
24.75h x 33w in (62.8h x 83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB125)



A cardboard box used as a makeshift shelter for migrants on their Sunday holiday. The majority of them stay on sidewalks due to the lack of space in Hong Kong, September 03, 2017.

Condominium Boxes, 2017
Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper
Signed on verso
16h × 20w in (40.6h × 50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB126)
24.75h × 33w in (62.8h × 83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB127)



Migrant workers hang out together in HSBC Central, a day before Christmas in Hong Kong. December 24, 2017.

Side Streets, 2017 Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper Signed on verso 16h x 20w in (40.6h x 50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB128) 24.75h x 33w in (62.8h x 83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB129)



Belinda smiles as she carries her belongings out of Jane's Hong Kong home on her last day of work. January 31, 2018.

Happy Separation, 2018
Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper
Signed on verso
16h x 20w in (40.6h x 50.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB130)
24.75h x 33w in (62.8h x 83.8w cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP (XCB131)



Jana, 2018
Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper
Signed on verso
52.5h x 11.75w in (134h x 29.85w cm) (6 images)
8.75h x11.75w in (22.23h x 29.85w cm) (each)



Araceli touches Jana's face after picking her up at Hong Kong International Airport. Jana has arrived to begin working as a domestic worker in Hong Kong. February 26, 2018, Hong Kong.



Araceli gives a few last notes to Jana as she walks down the hallway into her new employer's home in Hong Kong.

Araceli has worked in Hong Kong for 23 years and Jana became a second-generation domestic worker just like her mother. February 18, 2018.



Migrant domestic workers train at an agency in the Philippines. A domestic worker training course is compulsory before they leave for employment to train them in better household management in different countries. November 24, 2017.



Jana poses for a portrait inside her home in the Philippines.

Jana is getting ready to leave her son in the Philippines so she can go work in Hong Kong just as her mother did. August 04, 2017.



Araceli and her 25 year old daughter Jana inside their home in the Philippines.

Araceli left Jana when she was 3 years old to go work in Hong Kong as migrant domestic worker. August 11, 2017.



Jana and Araceli spend the day exercising while Araceli is visiting the Philippines from Hong Kong. They only see each other once every two years. August 12, 2017.









The Prayer, 2018

### Religion and Migration

Georgia Bacani, the artist's mother, has been Catholic since birth. She was baptized, married and remains a devout believer in the Catholic faith, but because of her job as a migrant domestic worker, she learned to pray to Chinese gods for her Hong Kong employer Mrs. Louey.

Great Immortal Wong (Wong Dai Sin 黃大仙) is the God of Health and thousands of people from Hong Kong go to his temple to worship and ask for good luck. Kwun Yum (gun I yam I 觀音), the Goddess of Mercy is the mother of all gods in Hong Kong. She is the single deity that stands above the rest. Worshippers in the city offer incense to ask her for blessings and good fortune. It became a part of Georgia's daily life to pray to these gods and although the practice began involuntarily, she began believing in their abilities to spread good luck and fortune.

Migration and religion are tightly interwoven. Faith is the ultimate source of strength that has enabled many migrant workers to overcome the hardships they face while working away from their homes and families. When an employer and employee spend so much of their lives together, like Georgia and Mrs. Louey, what aspects of their beliefs and culture are shared? Where do the boundaries of faith and religion lie within this context?

#### Instructions:

- 1. Light an incense
- 2. Kneel and think of a wish or prayer
- 3. Shake the joy stick until one falls down
- 4. Find the meaning of the stick in the book

#### Prayer tapestry

A Catholic prayer tapestry that the artist's father, Villamor, carried with him when he worked in Saudi Arabia. He gave it to the artist's mother, Georgia, when she left the Philippines to work in Singapore. She has kept it with her to this day.





Invisible Hands (Angels), 2019

Cross-stitch embroidery, which was created by migrant workers in Hong Kong with the artist, inspired from her photographs. The embroidery serves as a physical representation of how society operates through the work of the invisible hands, performing multiple kinds of labor. Every Sunday, the artist witnesses women migrant workers creating beautiful patterns with cross-stitch on their day of rest after working six days a week. A tradition of migrant worker families, normally done by the women of the household, use cross-stitching as a means to embellish and personalize household linens and dishcloths. It has now become a popular expression of creativity for women to hang as decorations on the walls of their home. Similar to their experience as migrant workers, the process of creating a cross-stitch is also unseen and only ever acknowledged as a final product, separated from the hard work and labor devoted to it. This similarity is not new, the parallels between cross-stitching and labor are created by the physical flow of hands, just like the air they have come to personify. It is unfinished, and visitors are encouraged to participate using the hanging needles and threads.

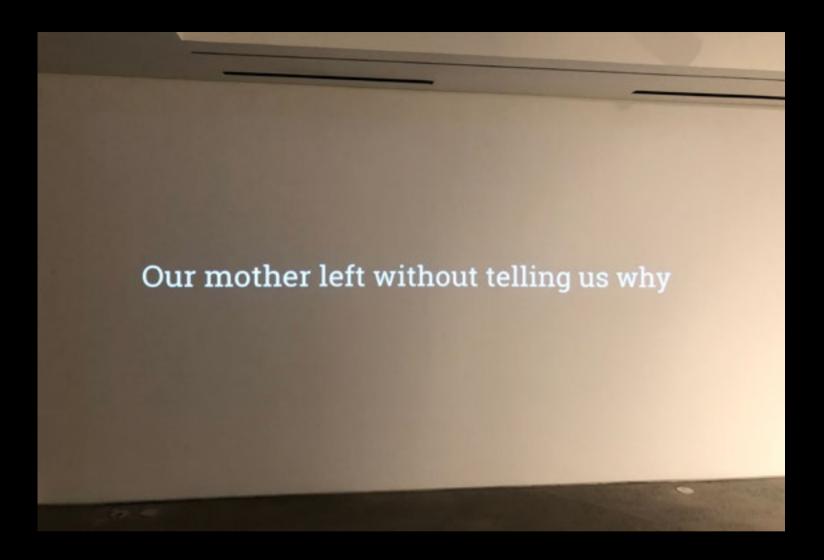
Instructions:

Use a mobile phone camera to view the pixelated image.





Invisible Hands (Angels), 2019 (Detail)



The video projects quotes from the author and the people she photographs in her book We Are Like Air.

Instead of showing a film, the artist chose to project the quotes as a silent conversation with the viewers.

Often, when migrant stories are told, people believe they are giving migrant workers the voice and platform to share their stories, when in fact; migrant workers already have voices of their own. People just need to stop ignoring them and start listening.

Are you ready to welcome a stranger?

# XYZA CRUZ BACANI

Born in Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines in 1987. Lives and works in Hong Kong.

EDUCATION			Photofairs San Francisco 2018 presented by Christine Park Gallery,	
0015		0017	San Francisco	
2015	Tisch School of the Arts, New York University, New York	2017	Moving Walls 24, Open Society Foundations, New York	
2003-2			Bearing Witness, Galley 102, Washington DC	
1998-2	002 Nueva Vizcaya State University Laboratory School, Philippines	2016	What Works, Bronx Documentary Center, New York	
			Women In Photography, Objectifs Centre, Singapore	
SOLO EXHIBITIONS & ART FAIRS			Expressions, Millennium Corniche Hotel Abu Dhabi, UAE	
			After Work, Para/Site Gallery, Hong Kong	
2019	Photofairs Shanghai 2019 presented by Christine Park Gallery, Shanghai	2015	Unpredictable Unscripted: Street Photography by Filipinos, Vargas Museum,	
2019	We Are Like Air, Christine Park Gallery, New York		Quezon City	
2018	We Are Like Air, Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong	2014	Streetscapes, The Photographic Angle, UK touring exhibition	
	We Are Like Air, Open Source Gallery, New York	2013	Manila Photo, SM Aura Atrium and Samsung Hall, Manila	
2017	American Chamber of Commerce Gallery, Hong Kong		The Nature Conservancy, Hong Kong	
	Street Photography International Photography Hall of Fame and Museum Saint Louis,			
	Missouri		AWARDS	
	Modern Slavery, Cho Why Gallery, Bangkok			
	Modern Slavery, Bangkok Arts and Cultural Centre of United Nations Women, Bangkok	2018	Asia 21 Young Leaders Class of 2018, Asia Society	
2016	Under Represented, Christine Park Gallery at Apiary Studios, London	2017	Open Society Documentary Photography Grantee	
	Modern Slavery, Kong Art Space, Hong Kong		WMA Commission Grantee	
	Humans of Makati, Ayala Triangle Gardens Metro, Manila		PDN's New and Emerging Photographer to watch	
2015	Behind Concrete Walls, KUC Space, Hong Kong		Philippine Tatler Generation T	
	Shared Past, The Foreign Correspondents' Club, Hong Kong	2016	Pulitzer Center Grantee	
	Mono, Kong Art Space, Hong Kong		Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia: The Arts	
	Slices of Life, Macau Old Court Building, Macau		Photo Boite 30 Under 30 Women Photographers	
2014	Mono, The Foreign Correspondents' Club, Hong Kong		Style Weekend Women Who Wow	
	Xyza in Focus, The Philippine Consulate General, Hong Kong	2015	BBC 100 Women	
			The Standard Young Visionary of the Year (Photojournalism)	
GROUP EXHIBITIONS & ART FAIRS		2014	Justice Centre Human Rights Arts Prize	
			Human Rights Press Award (Special merit)	
2019	Dallas Art Fair 2019 presented by Christine Park Gallery, Dallas		HIPA Photography Awards: Face Category (Fifth place)	
	Art Fair Tokyo 2019 presented by Christine Park Gallery, Tokyo		National Geographic Awards, Hong Kong (Finalist)	
2018	Photofairs Shanghai 2018 presented by Christine Park Gallery, Shanghai	2013	National Geographic Awards, Hong Kong (Finalist)	
		2012	National Geographic Awards, Hong Kong (Finalist)	

PHOTOJOURNALISM

2019 Migrant workers are like air. People need us, but they don't see us, Condé Nast Traveler A Mother and Daughter's Unlikely Journey as Migrant Workers, The New York Times Lens Blog Climate Change and Human Trafficking in Indonesia, Pulitzer Center 2017 Once 'Invisible', She Now Photographs Other Domestic Workers, The New York Times Lens Blog Migrant Workers in Singapore, South China Morning Post Singapore Runaways, Pulitzer Center 2016 Coming Clean: The Prevalence of Forced Labour and Human Trafficking for the Purposes of Forced Labour Amongst Migrant Domestic Works in Hong Kong, Justice Centre Hong Kong The Dark Side of Hong Kong's Prosperity, Foreign Policy When Hong Kong's Domestic Helpers Need Help, ChinaFile Online Magazine 2015 Human Trafficking in New York, Redux Pictures Photographing Human Trafficking in New York, The New York Times The Nature Conservancy, Hong Kong A new perspective: 10 years as a domestic helper in Hong Kong, now a globe-trotting photography, South China Morning Post An Exclusive Photostory About Mideo Cruz, Wondereur Magazine A lens into the hidden lives of Hong Kong domestic workers, CNN.com In Photos: 900 square feet of Hidden Hope, Rappler.com 2014 Taking Care of People and Pictures in Hong Kong, The New York Times HK pro-democracy marchers demand universal suffrage, GMA News Online Police remove scores of protestors from Hong Kong financial district, GMA News Online Hong Kong News, November issue International Street Photography Magazine, September/October issue International Street Photography Magazine, November/December issue On the Streets of Hong Kong, International Herald Tribune Occupy Central Hong Kong: Through Filipino lens, Rappler.com

San Miguel Corporation, August issue

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All the works are available for sale. They will be printed in Giclée print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Paper in the following two sizes:  $16h \times 20w$  in and  $24.75h \times 33w$  in All are in editions of 5 + 2 AP. The works can be framed or unframed.

For inquiries, please contact us at info@christinepark.net.





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**IMAGES COURTESY OF** Christine Park Gallery and the Artists **DESIGN BY** Jiin Ahn PUBLISHED BY Christine Park Gallery, New York, 2019

