

Midway Contemporary Art

Karthik Pandian

Surrendur

March 15 – June 10, 2025

surrendur

sur•ren•dur

1 a. Land Back

- i. to return the land to the stewardship of native peoples
- ii. to divest from whiteness as property

b. Right of Return

- i. to recognize that native people migrate
- ii. to open the borders
- iii. to come home to ourselves

2 a. Identity

- i. to find one another through food, language, laughter
- ii. to go deeper, touching into the universal love of The Mother

3 a. Time

- i. the end is the beginning
- ii. to escape the predations of the state by going underground, communing in time
- iii. to endure

related rendur to describe this world, destroy it, open the portal to the next, and repeat

Midway Contemporary Art is pleased to present *Surrendur*, a moving image and sound installation and exhibition of drawings by **Karthik Pandian**.

Pandian describes the title work as “a machine for homecoming — a platform to gather, find our relations, receive light, and feel the vibrations of a liberated future”. Revisiting themes from his 2010 exhibition *Before the Sun* at Midway Contemporary Art and his 2022 off-site project *In the River*, *Surrendur* intends to help seed the spiritual ground for Land Back on Turtle Island and beyond.

Surrendur emerges from the artist’s ongoing collaboration with American Indian Movement activist **Mike Forcia** (Bad River Anishinaabe), composer and sonic sculptor **Douglas R. Ewart**, and Indigenous Earth Protector **Ta Pejuta Wicahpi Win** (Hunkpati Dakota Oyate) and features contributions from Amina Claudine Myers, Cameron Patricia Downey, Jonathon Rosemond, Bailey Samber, Julia Helen Rice, Sam Phipps, Azuré Kauikeolani Iversen-Keahi, Isa Gagarin, Thomas Draskovic-Chetan Ohitika (Standing Rock Lakota), Sam Aros-Mitchell (Texas Band of Yaqui Indians), Lela Pierce, Leila Awadallah, Lakota “Hokie” Clairmont (Hochunk/Lakota), Akičita Šun̄ka-Wakaŋ Ska (Standing Rock Lakota), Niko Georgiades and Unicorn Riot, Luis Arnías, Robby MacBain, Ernst Karel, and the artist’s mother, Lalitha Pandian.

Thanks to Paige Johnston, Aaru Motherwell Pandian, Ganesh Pandian, Vidhya Pandian, Anand Pandian, Reshma Hussam, Mariah Garnett, Helen O'Leary, Nicole Otero, Rhayne Vermette, Lisa E. Harris, Adrian Williams, Andros Zins-Browne, Zakaria Almoutlak, Michael Silverman, Lama Rod Owens, Anthony Romero, Elias, Jiraiya, Taylor from Friends Print Collective, Jumana Manna, Eben Kowler, Mike Wiggins Jr., David Stone Jr., Jason Forcia, Kristine Sorenson, Katie Soule, Stefan Grabowski, Xiaolu Wang, Max Nesterak, George Liu, Xochitl Morales, Gabby Preston, Kat Chavez, Yolanda Yang, Nace Zavrl, Regina Daniels, Bridget Sabatke, Casey Lurie, Arielle Jennings, Jim Heal, Palita Chunsangchan, Elliott Powell, Isa Gagarin, Pao Houa Her, Joseph Pierce, Fraser McCallum, Erin Gleeson, Kelsey Olson, Matt Friesen, John Ballinger, Rob Simmer, Ben Manley, Candice Davis, Megan McCready, and John Rasmussen.

Special thanks to Gabby Menomin (Forest County Potawatomi) and Wakanj Tipi Awanyanjapi for their partnership in cultivating this work.

Surrendur is dedicated to Pope.L

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Karthik Ramanan Pandian is a conductor of energy. He is the son of healers Mariappan Ganesapandian (body) and Lalitha Pandian (spirit), who landed in the Bronx region of Turtle Island in 1972. Karthik is the grandson of South Indian Tamil Nadars who moved from rural villages to urban centers as far flung as Okpo, Burma, surviving invasion, perilous migration, and caste discrimination long enough to see the end of British colonialism. Karthik was born on the ancestral territory of the Tongva peoples in what is now known as Southern California in 1981. He was an unexpected and doted on third child, surrounded by the love of his older siblings and parents as well as the comforts afforded by his father's income as a cardiologist. His mother is a proud caregiver and devout Hindu whose spiritual energy carries into Karthik's practice, which spans film, sculpture, theater, dance, and music. He has presented his work at exhibition venues including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Hammer, and Midway Contemporary Art and on digital platforms such as the Criterion Channel and Triple Canopy. Karthik cares for and is cared for by his partner Paige K. Johnston and his son, Aaru Motherwell Pandian. They share a home and studio on unceded Nipmuck territory which they call Sun & Moon Refuge. Karthik teaches nearby in the Department of Art, Film, and Visual Studies at Harvard University. He is also a guide, certified in offering Lama Rod Owens' Seven Homecomings.

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