The Korean American Artist Collective (KAAC) is a group of artists dedicated to supporting, building, and amplifying works that are politically, socially, and culturally engaged, and rooted in the Korean American experience. They do this by creating spaces of connection, collaborating, exhibiting, and distributing works in all media. Their work lies at the intersection of Korean American identity, community, and justice.

In this talk, KAAC members Jeffrey Yoo Warren and Rochelle Youk will discuss the origins and impact of KAAC, why the collective has been a much-needed space for Korean American artists, and how their work reflects emerging directions in Korean American culture. Using examples from their own art practice, recent KAAC projects, and the contemporary art landscape, they will speak on the unique relationship of Korean Americans with Korean craft and traditional art practices.

Jeffrey Yoo Warren (he/him) is a Korean American artist-educator, community scientist, illustrator, and researcher in Providence, RI, who collaboratively creates community science projects which decenter dominant culture in environmental knowledge production. His recent work combines ancestral craft practices and creative work with diasporic memory through virtual collaborative worldbuilding. Jeff is an educator with Movement Education Outdoors and AS220, and part of the New Old art collective with Aisha Jandosova, hosting art-making and storytelling events with older adults; he is also the 2023 Innovator in Residence at the Library of Congress. His current artistic practice investigates how people build identity and strength through their interactions with artifacts and histories, and the ways that objects can tell stories that people can be part of in the present.

Rochelle Youk (she/her) works across media to craft objects informed by her heritage as the American daughter of immigrants from Japan and Korea. Labor-intensive paintings, drawings, and sculptures examine the history between Asia and the United States through the lens of cultural traditions, especially folk crafts. She uses non-traditional materials like plexiglass, and cigarettes, to examine how visual traditions are shared, exchanged, and used to form identity. Her work has been shown widely across the San Francisco Bay area including at The Berkeley Art Center, where she is also a member of the Program Committee. After receiving an MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2010, Youk completed a bookbinding apprenticeship at letterpress publisher, The Arion Press, where she also manages the bindery. She also works as a freelance bookbinder for local artists and publishers, and serves on the steering committee of the Korean American Artist Collective.

Questions? Please contact KoreanStudies@stonybrook.edu