

# MAH

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## SANTA CRUZ MAH ANNOUNCES THE RETURN OF 'BEYOND THE GRAVE' SERIES

Performances return to Evergreen Cemetery, May 12–20, 2023



IMAGE CREDITS (FROM LEFT): ISOLA TONG, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; GHOST ENSEMBLE, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; LULING OSOFSKY, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; TASTING MENU, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

**SANTA CRUZ, CA** (March 28, 2023) — The **Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (MAH)** is pleased to announce the return of its popular **Beyond the Grave** series, a collection of ticketed performances at **Evergreen Cemetery** on **May 12, 13, 19 and 20, 2023**.

The multidisciplinary series, now in its third year, offers a new way of interacting with the cemetery by activating it through music, sound, and movement. The one-hour program features performances taking place at and in collaboration with historic Evergreen Cemetery, where its monuments and storied landscape are used as reference points for producing site-specific works. For this year's edition, the MAH has once again teamed up with local concert producer **Indexical** to present the work of **Ghost Ensemble, LuLing Osofsky, Tasting Menu, and Isola Tong**. The artists perform the same program on both weekends.

Entitled ***Writing Ghosts***, this year's program examines the cemetery as a place full of writing. Grave markers are a written historical record of a multigenerational history—yet what ghostly elements have remained unwritten? In ***Writing Ghosts***, the idea of writing threads through the nonphonetic aspect of Chinese script, written accounts of a traumatic death as recorded by the police, musical practices of phonography (or “sound-writing”), and the minimalist text scores of composer Pauline Oliveros as facilitated by her late-in-life collaborators Ghost Ensemble. Taking a nod from philosopher Jacques Derrida's twin notions of “nonphonetic writing” and “hauntology,” the program explores the personal and sociological—ever-present hauntings that intersect with grief, ghosts, and history.

“The opportunity for long-term engagement with a historic space brings out artists’ work in a way that nothing else does,” said Indexical Executive Director and Curator of Beyond the Grave **Andrew C. Smith**. “The artists involved take this occasion to deeply engage with the history of the site, the city, and their own personal relationships in a truly unique way.”

All performances take place at Evergreen Cemetery, located at 261 Evergreen Street in Santa Cruz. In case of inclement weather, performances will be rescheduled to May 21; ticket holders will be contacted prior to the event if a weather cancellation occurs.

**Performance Schedule:**

Friday, May 12, 2023 • 5-6pm

Saturday, May 13, 2023 • 5-6pm

Friday, May 19, 2023 • 5-6pm

Saturday, May 20, 2023 • 5-6pm

*\*Rain Day: Sunday, May 21 • 5-6pm*

**Tickets:**

\$25 General, \$15 MAH & Indexical Members

Available through the MAH website

[www.santacruzmah.org/btg](http://www.santacruzmah.org/btg)

Beyond the Grave is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding for the MAH’s performing arts programming is provided by the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation.

**ABOUT THE PROGRAM & ARTISTS**

A Ghost—*geist, spirit*—is a trace that is left over from a history. It lives through the collapse of vision and hallucination, of memory and invention, of the collective history of a site and of the subjective experiences and trauma of an individual. Through performances evoking the personal and the sociological, the historical and ever-present hauntings, the four artist-ensembles engaged with Writing Ghosts explore what happens when a no-longer-present entity is written, fixed. These artists encompass musical practices dependent on writing, language, and phonography, written accounts of trauma, and a meditation on the physicality and ghostliness of Chinese script.

**Ghost Ensemble** engages in the Deep Listening practice of composer Pauline Oliveros, in which participants are instructed to listen both inside and outside themselves, to sounds real and imagined. This practice dissolves the boundary between objective (exterior) and subjective (interior) listening. Ghost Ensemble leads attendees in one of Oliveros’s many Deep Listening exercises in order to attune to the surrounding space and develop awareness of one’s interior soundings.

**LuLing Osofsky** writes of a former relationship with an individual later killed in a police shootout. She asks: In the name of the ghost, is there a kind of ethics? Weaving this narrative together with written police reports, flashbacks, and a meditation on her mixed Chinese-Jewish

heritage, Osofsky considers the Chinese ghost in the frame of memory—something to be tended to, not dispersed, not exorcised.

**Tasting Menu** will use lost, found, and made sounds to map an aural history of Evergreen Cemetery conjuring what you may have heard yesterday, today, or never heard at all. What did the cemetery sound like in 1865? 1950? 2000? Tasting Menu asks these questions through a performance of fabricated and historical field recordings, live performance, and found objects. You're encouraged to move freely through the site and imagine where these sounds place you in time and how these sounds complete a broader picture of this singular place in Santa Cruz.

**Isola Tong** enacts the performativity of Chinese script, and the haunting of Chinese ghosts as it relates to the early histories of Evergreen Cemetery. In a discussion of Chinese script, the philosopher Jacques Derrida writes: "Nonphonetic writing breaks the noun apart. It describes relations and not appellations." Tong transforms her body—trans-femme, bi-cultural Filipino-Chinese—into an instrument of this writing, bringing these ghostly spirits into relation with the living.

**Indexical** has been dedicated to experimentation in music since 2011. Since moving to Santa Cruz in 2015, relocating from an old converted chapel in Brooklyn New York, Indexical has presented over 100 performances, artist talks, participatory workshops, and large-scale public art events. Since 2021, they have operated a performance and gallery space at the Tannery Arts Center in Santa Cruz, presenting over 50 events annually.

### **ABOUT EVERGREEN CEMETERY**

Established in 1858, Evergreen Cemetery is one of the oldest cemeteries in California, and it is the final home to many of Santa Cruz County's early pioneers, leaders, and makers of history. Tucked into a forested hillside adjacent to Harvey West Park in Santa Cruz, the property is owned and managed by the MAH and tended to by an active committee of volunteers. The cemetery is open to the public and free to visit from sunrise to sundown, seven days a week.

### **ABOUT THE MAH**

The MAH is a thriving community gathering place that offers a full slate of art and history exhibitions, visual and performing artworks, public festivals, education and outreach programs, and cultural celebrations in collaboration with its many partners. It maintains a permanent collection of regionally significant art and artifacts, a research library, a historical archive, and historic sites including the Evergreen Cemetery, Octagon Building, and Davenport Jail. It is also home to Abbott Square, a vibrant public plaza on the museum's doorstep that offers food, social events, and year-round creative happenings.

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