SONGS of EMERGING ENDANGERMENT

EXHIBITION GUIDE

CLOCKSHOP

TJ Shin

October 25, 2025 – February 22, 2026
Los Angeles State Historic Park

Songs of Emerging Endangerment by artist TJ Shin, commissioned by Clockshop, is a sound installation using mimicry to map systems of global migration. Installed at Los Angeles State Historic Park in a city shaped by Cold War–era urban planning and waves of migration from the Asia-Pacific, the project features a 30-foot-tall sculptural air raid siren that projects a composition of imitated bird calls scheduled throughout the day.

In an open call process, over 50 participants connected to regions along the East Asian–Australasian Flyway were asked to imitate the calls of endangered bird species that travel the world's largest bird migratory path. Participants in the first round imitated the field recordings of 15 species, selected based on their image, geographic range, and habitat. In the following rounds, participants mimicked the voices from the previous ones, creating a structure of repetition and response. This process of interpretation between people, birds, and their environment amplifies and reorganizes how information, bodies, and architectures circulate through landscapes shaped by US militarization.

Birdhouse air raid sirens, nicknamed after their appearance and once used as instruments of civic defense until 1985, can still be found throughout the Los Angeles landscape. Set to sound hourly from dawn to dusk, the reproduced two-channel siren serves as a timekeeper, punctuating the surrounding park and city's rhythms. Projecting compositions of sonic feedback to hear the calls distinctly in proximity and faintly in distance, the work examines how mimicry —and the differences it produces in process and perception—both extend and transform instruments of the Cold War and their fields of power. The resulting sounds become signals, emphasizing how communication between people and surveillance technologies informs our relationships with natural, social, and built environments. At once a sonic rehearsal and social strategy, *Songs of Emerging Endangerment* invites reflection on the ways our urban spaces are shaped, and how our relationships to them might be reimagined.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

TJ Shin (b. 1993, Seoul) is an artist and writer based in Los Angeles. Their multimedia practice, spanning film, video, installation, and sculpture, explores how structures of power discursively shape perception, form, and environment. Shin has exhibited at the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Queens Museum, Buffalo Institute of Contemporary Arts, Lewis Center for the Arts, Montclair State University Galleries, Doosan Gallery, Knockdown Center, and more. Their writing has been published in Active Cultures, Asia Art Archive, the *Brooklyn Rail*, *Mousse Magazine*, and the Vera List Center for Art and Politics.

READING LIST

Of Mimicry and Men, Homi Bhabha (1984)

Tonal Intelligence, Sunny Xiang (2020)

Cold War Reckonings, Jini Kim Watson (2021)

PROGRAMS

Opening Reception with TJ Shin
Saturday, October 25, 2025
2:00-4:00 PM

Signal and Response: Workshop
Co-presented with GYOPO
Saturday, December 6, 2025
2:00-4:00 PM

Listening by Moonrise
Ivana Dama and Ears to the Ground
Sunday, February 1, 2026
3:00-5:00 PM

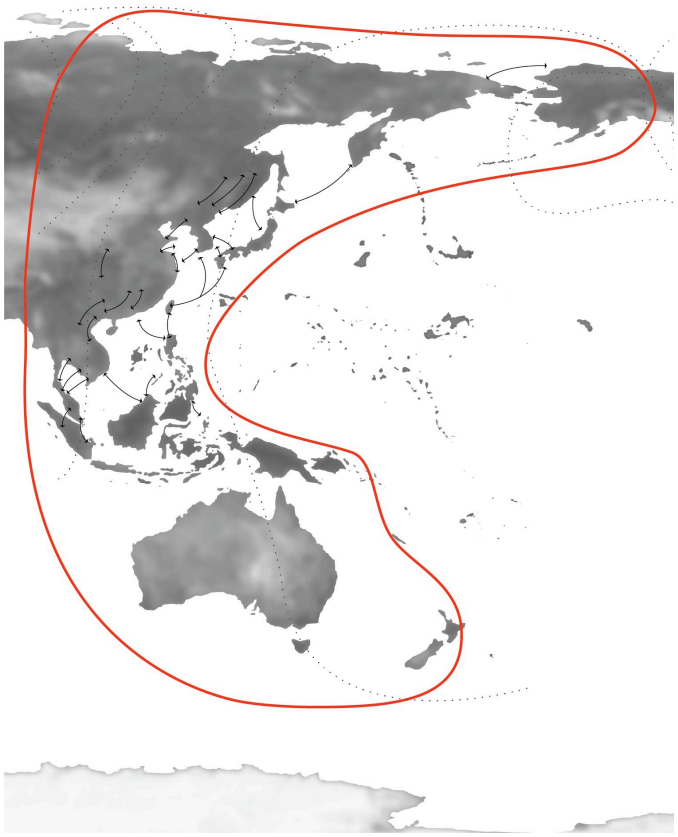
Signal and Response: Closing Reception and Conversation
Co-presented with GYOPO
Sunday, February 22, 2026
2:00-4:00 PM

ABOUT CLOCKSHOP

Clockshop works with artists to deepen the connection between communities and public land, in order to build a shared vision of a future based in belonging and care. As a Los Angeles-based arts nonprofit, we produce free public programming and commission contemporary artist projects at Los Angeles State Historic Park in Chinatown and Rio de Los Angeles State Park (“The Bowtie”) in Glassell Park, in collaboration with California State Parks.

We cannot do this without acknowledging that the land we occupy was originally and still is inhabited and cared for by the Native First Peoples of this region. Read our full statement and how we are going beyond land acknowledgment on our website under “Location and Land Acknowledgement.”

Learn more and RSVP on our website.



The East Asian–Australasian Flyway, the largest bird migratory path in the world, stretches across Southeast, South, and East Asia, as well as the Western and Central Pacific. Each year, about 50 million migratory birds travel from Eurasia to lower latitudes during winter. The flyway is home to 600 bird species, 54 of which are considered threatened, near threatened, or endangered due to habitat loss caused by agricultural expansion, urbanization, hunting, and climate change. Its geographies intersect and overlap with those of the transpacific, contested zones of circulation and conflict with whose environments and its inhabitants, human and nonhuman, are intimately linked.

The *transpacific*, a geopolitical and economic term that gained prominence in the mid-20th century, describes a network of states and territories spanning from the Asia-Pacific to the western borders of the Americas. This geography was envisioned as a strategic zone of economic expansion and interconnected markets, where trade and cultural capital could freely flow. This vision extended into the Cold War (1947–91), whereby US military and economic expansion positioned the Pacific as a space of geopolitical alliances, framed in defense of liberal democracy against the threat of communism. The deployment and maintenance of military infrastructures by the United States, including 200 military bases and three territories across the Asia-Pacific, continue to reshape the region's natural and built environments.

Therefore, the term transpacific, in the context of the Cold War, contains both the production and contestation of spatial, economic, and political power, linking American militarization to postcolonial nation-building that produces uneven geographies of progress across the Pacific. These conditions have generated waves of displacement and migration from civil wars, political instability, and proxy conflicts, navigating transpacific routes to resettle in the American West, particularly in Los Angeles and its suburbs. Today, LA County is home to the largest diasporic Asian American Pacific Islanders in the country, situating the area as a site of convergence and diasporic cultural production.

The landscape of Los Angeles, as one of the nearest economic centers on the US mainland to the Soviet Union, was also subject to Cold War militarization and anxiety. Beginning in World War II, the city deployed a civil defense system composed of Federal Signal air raid sirens, which was then significantly expanded during the Cold War, when an attack seemed imminent. A network of 225 sirens directed Angelenos to the nearest fallout shelter; of this number, two-thirds remain. The sirens were tested on the last Friday of every month until 1985, following the discovery that many were broken, and neighborhoods had expanded beyond the sirens' hearing range. Determining that their removal would be too expensive, the sirens were left in place,

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physically marking these legacies.

For this project, Shin reproduces the siren's form while recasting its sonic function, projecting bird calls—associated with signaling alarm and coordinating movement—vocalized by 50 participants with connections to the East Asian–Australasian Flyway. Across three open calls, participants mimic the voices of the round preceding them, beginning with field recordings of the birds traveling through the flyway. Starting from Los Angeles, the call expanded into wider networks, crossing distances, spaces, and generations. With each round, these imitations evoke the recursive relationships between perception and projection of sound, information, and social systems that inform the overall sonic composition of the installation.

Mimicry, the central process of the work, echoes what theorist Homi Bhabha claims is the ambivalence of colonial discourse, *a subject that is almost the same, but not quite*. The participants' voices simultaneously become instruments and channels of projection, amplification, and transformation. Through the shared and contested histories of the Asia-Pacific, the open call thus becomes a process by which difference or slippage (a linguistic term referring to meaning's ambiguities in interpretation) reveals and ruptures structures of power and the social forces that shape the audibility of the Cold War.

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