

Amy Lien & Enzo Camacho  
陰府 (*shady mansion*)  
14 Sep – 28 Oct 2019

‘陰府’ (*shady mansion*) is a Chinese term for hell. For their exhibition of that title at the Kunstverein, Amy Lien & Enzo Camacho construct a subterranean park for an unlivable future.

The structure of their exhibition is based on The Lowline, a proposed New York City project that would make spectacular use of solar technology in order to funnel sunlight underground to support plant life. Complementary to the High Line, a public park on a disused train track in the West of Manhattan, The Lowline has been proposed to be built at the site of a long-abandoned subterranean trolley car station in the Lower East Side. Like the High Line, it is an attraction catering to tourists and novelty-seeking consumers that would contribute to the acceleration of gentrification in a historically minority and lower-income neighborhood which includes Chinatown.

In fact, a one-and-half-billion-dollar real estate development is currently under construction in the immediate vicinity of The Lowline's would-be site, which will accommodate a mixture of new residential, retail, office, and entertainment spaces. The land being developed was once populated by 1,800 mostly Puerto Rican families residing in low-cost tenement buildings, who were displaced by the city in 1967 with the promise that they would be able to return to affordable housing. Fifty years later, the government offered this land to developers, who plan to make half of their residential units “affordable,” though these will be nearly impossible to obtain through a city-wide lottery

application process and will in fact be unaffordable to the average neighborhood resident. Rather, the development's broader and more important role is to aid in reimagining the neighborhood as a new frontier for speculative investment, a dynamic of what ethnographer Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing calls "spectacular accumulation," which harkens back to "the South Sea bubble and every gold rush in history" with all of the colonialist dimensions that this implies. Also part of this reimagining are the planned high-rise buildings in the nearby waterfront area between the Brooklyn Bridge and Manhattan Bridge, known as Two Bridges. The concomitant influx of wealthy residents would change the local infrastructure and cause a rise in living costs that would inevitably force lower-income residents to leave the neighborhood. In virtual renderings of the future waterfront skyline as dreamed by developers, these luxury towers jut out like glassy spears among the public housing projects and tenement buildings that surround them.

## Exhibition Hall

Drawing from these speculative visions, Lien & Camacho transform the Kunstverein's exhibition hall into their own DIY rendition of The Lowline. Light is directed downwards into the darkened hall via rudimentary constructions that mimic the parabolic reflectors and light-transporting tubes of The Lowline's high-tech design. The light falls upon tree sculptures, which represent five high-rise condominium towers that may soon occupy the Two Bridges waterfront. The sculptures have been modeled after Chinese money trees, ritual objects that date back to the Eastern Han Dynasty and are intended to provide the deceased with financial support for their journey into the afterlife. In a further layering of references, Lien & Camacho set their trees into ceramic bases adorned with raccoon dogs. The artists have taken these figures from the popular Japanese anime film Pom Poko, which chronicles a group of shape-shifting raccoon dogs as they collectively attempt to resist the destruction of their habitat by urbanization.

Their most ambitious protest is the staging of an enormous ghost parade, a large-scale illusion by which the raccoons attempt to scare away the humans from the newly built settlements – a form of resistance that mobilizes the power of images and media spectacle.

Meanwhile, in another play on the distinction between the built and the natural, the branches of the tree sculptures make use of materials gleaned from the Black Forest areas around Freiburg, using them to depict speculative scenarios involving the investors, stakeholders and survivors of the Lower East Side, all set within a hellish near future. The objects hanging from the branches function like hieroglyphic symbols. They evoke narrative situations that unfold within each tree like four storyboard images arranged in a cross formation around the trunk. These refer to specific conflicts, fears and imaginary scenes related to the gentrification of the Lower East Side or referencing the commercial 3D-renderings of the planned high-rises, e.g. a woman overlooking the financial district from her penthouse apartment window, slumlords trying to evict rent-stabilized tenants, a cheap Fujianese noodle shop closing or a pet spa. These particular scenarios are barely decipherable within the tree sculptures; rather, the hanging objects suggest an archaic system of signs, appearing like evocative omens that indicate the coming of future events. Descriptions of the individual scenes are presented on written notes clipped to the branches (they can also be found alongside the diagrams in this booklet).

## First Floor Gallery

The upper floor offers a glimpse behind the scenes of the reimagined underground park. What becomes apparent in the brightly lit space is the energy loss that occurs as the light is directed downwards. In fact, only a small portion of the artificial light arrives in the exhibition hall below; everything else is lost through the transfer. Boxes containing the artist's working materials as well as the waste accumulated during the production of the tree sculptures

are stored at the rear end of the space. The upstairs gallery thus becomes a zone of scrap and wasted energy resulting from the staging of the downstairs installation. This might also be thought in terms of “gray energy”, a concept which refers to all the hidden energy that is expended in the production of a good and remains invisible in the finished product.

At the same time, the wasted light also creates an environment for small sculptures positioned in and on the cardboard boxes, which depict trompe l’oeil poke bowls. This meal served in a bowl has its origins in a Hawaiian fisherman’s dish and has since evolved under the influence of Japanese, Korean and Chinese migrant cuisines. As a fresh food option, it started to spread in health-conscious California, from where it developed into a recent global food trend. By now it seems that there is a poke bowl shop on every block in the Lower East Side (and very recently poke bowls have also arrived at Freiburg). The success of this food concept is based on the fact that it ties in nicely with the self-image and consumer needs of a hip, contemporary urban class: a meal that can be customized by a variety of toppings and sauces, can be quickly prepared and eaten, has a slightly exotic appeal, meets the current ideals of a healthy diet and allows for Instagram-ready images.

As a whole, the exhibition sketches a situation in which the progressive marketization of spaces for existing extends into the afterlife. In transferring the underground park from New York City to Freiburg, Lien & Camacho ask how these ideas might discourse with the desires of the ‘Green City’. Freiburg is globally well known as a center for green technology research but also for the lab-like implementation of sustainable urban development concepts in areas such as Vauban and Rieselfeld. At the same time, the growing lack of affordable housing is the city’s most pressing social problem. While working on the exhibition, Lien & Camacho spent six weeks in Freiburg. They met different agents of the ‘Green City’ and visited some of its key sites, such as the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy

Systems and the Rolf Disch Solar Architecture studio. Insights gathered from these meetings and visits have been integrated into the conceptualization of the exhibition.

Further connecting the artists’ concerns to a local context, a symposium organized by Bertold Albrecht, entitled *Right to the City*, will be held at the Kunstverein on September 28, 2018, at 6pm. Against the backdrop of Henri Lefebvre’s theories, it will discuss how cooperative forms of urban living and public participation could look like. The focus will be on housing policy and the lack of affordable housing in Freiburg. A specific impetus for the event is the imminent ‘reevaluation’ of the housing district around the old and new Wiehrebahnhof, against which the initiative Wiehre-für-alle has formed. The speakers at the symposium will be Bertold Albrecht (Initiative Wiehre-für-alle, Mobile Akademie), Heinrich Dietz (Kunstverein Freiburg), Stefan Rost (Mietshäusersyndikat), Frauke Stablo (Initiative Wiehre-für-alle), Klaus Theweleit (author) and Thomas Wald (urban analyst). The discussion will be moderated by Jürgen Reuß (author).

The transcontextualization and layering of references and discourses are important operations in the practice of Lien & Camacho. In their exhibition at the Kunstverein they use these operations to posit sustainability and development as competing claims on the future, examining how these notions are fueled by varied enactments of speculation and imagination, which often have life-or-death consequences.

This is Lien & Camacho’s first institutional solo exhibition in Germany. As part of the accompanying program they will have a public conversation with writer and curator Harry Burke on September 15, 2018, at 2pm.

Amy Lien (\* 1987, USA) and Enzo Camacho (\* 1985, Philippines) studied at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA and at the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Hamburg. Since 2009, they have been collaborating mainly between New York, Berlin and Southeast Asia.

Selected solo exhibitions (s) and group exhibitions (g):

2018: *Her split body is a crack in our community*, Hessel Museum of Art (Bard College), Annandale-on-Hudson, USA (s); *Mother Holding Taobao Child*, 47 Canal, New York (s); 2017: *Produktion. Made in Germany Drei*, Kestner Gesellschaft, Hanover (g); *Site Visit*, Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg (g); *The New Normal*, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (g); *People, Money, Ghosts (Movement as Metaphor)*, Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok (g); 2016: *Manananggal has appeared in Berlin*, various locations, Berlin (s); *Urban Aspiration*, The Physics Room, Christchurch, New Zealand (g); 2015: “ *RR ZZ* ”, Gluck50, Milan (g); *Whose Subject am I?*, Kunstverein Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf (g); 2014: *LEAK LIGHT TIME HEAT*, 47 Canal, New York (s); *Who do you love?*, Mathew Gallery, Berlin (s); *Lynda, Robert, Amy, Enzo und die Anderen*, Künstlerhaus Bremen, Bremen (G); 2012: *Queer Manila*, Manila Contemporary, Makati, Philippines (g); 2011: *Café by the Ruins*, 47 Canal, New York (s) 2009: *Teleology, Happy Ending (collaboration with Michael Sanchez)*, Green Papaya Art Projects, Quezon City, Philippines (s).



Stills from *Pom Poko*, directed by Isao Takahata and animated by Studio Ghibli, 1994



As they looked up at the moon,  
Buddha beckoned them to heaven.



All the raccoons perished  
on that journey of death.



We're no match  
for the humans after all.





A hunger strike staged in front of New York's City Hall by the tenants of 83-85 Bowery in June 2018, protesting the city government's failure to address their landlord Joseph Betesh's illegal attempts to evict them from their homes.

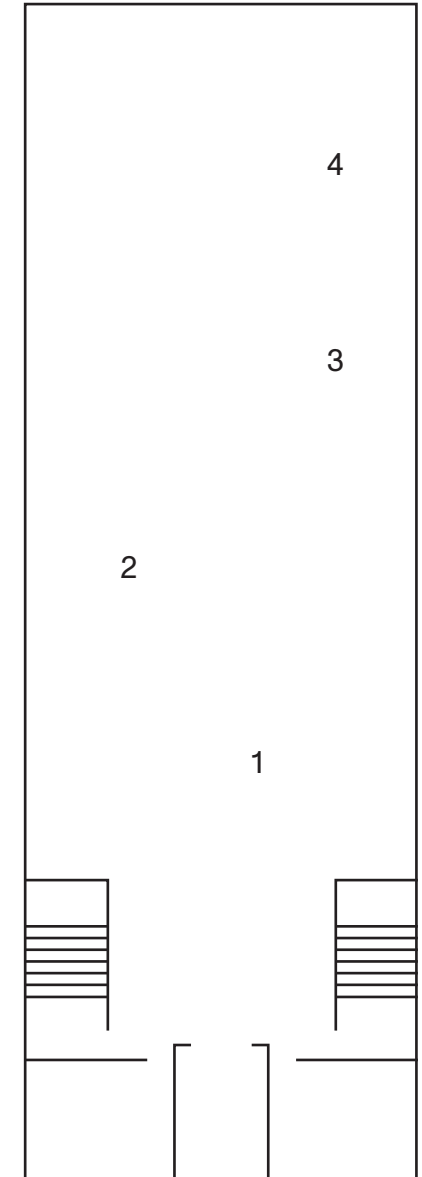
1  
*One Manhattan Square, NYC,*  
*NY 10002, 2018*  
Ceramic base, aluminum pole,  
foraged branches, string,  
glazed ceramic coins,  
foraged plant material  
and mixed media, bamboo and  
paper effigy  
400×290×290 cm

2  
*247 Cherry Street, NYC,*  
*NY 10002, 2018*  
Ceramic base, aluminum pole,  
foraged branches,  
string, glazed ceramic coins,  
foraged plant material  
and mixed media, bamboo and  
paper effigy  
400×290×290 cm

3  
*260 South Street, NYC,*  
*NY 10002, 2018*  
Ceramic bases, aluminum poles,  
foraged branches, string,  
glazed ceramic coins,  
foraged plant material  
and mixed media, bamboo and  
paper effigies  
400×290×290 cm

4  
*259 Clinton Street, NYC,*  
*NY 10002, 2018*  
Ceramic base, aluminum pole,  
foraged branches,  
string, glazed ceramic coins,  
foraged plant material  
and mixed media, bamboo and  
paper effigy  
400×290×290 cm

Exhibition Hall



1  
*One Manhattan Square, NYC, NY 10002*

A  
A woman in an evening gown looks west out of her penthouse apartment window over NYC's financial district and One World Trade while the sun sets.

B  
Solar powered heating of 62 East Broadway is hindered by high rise shadows.

C  
Assault on Pike Slip.

D  
Sunken Tranquility Garden relaxes class guilt.

2  
*247 Cherry Street, NYC, NY 10002*

E  
An elderly woman contemplates hurling a rock against the building's silky glass facade.

F  
Increased rush hour foot traffic disrupts morning Tai Chi routines.

G  
Golf simulator.

H  
Overcrowded classrooms.

3  
*260 South Street, NYC, NY 10002*

I  
A community disappears.

J  
Luxury cars get vandalized at night.

K  
Slum lords increase pressure on evicting rent stabilized tenants.

L  
Pet spa.

M  
Increased private security.

N  
Adult tree house.

O  
Overtaxed sewage system.

P  
Harassed tenants stage a hunger strike in front of City Hall.

4  
*259 Clinton Street, NYC, NY 10002*

Q  
The cheap Fujianese noodle shop closes.

R  
The new neighbors decorate their home with trendy art from nearby galleries.

S  
For the children growing up in Section 8 housing, it feels like there is nowhere to hang out without having to spend money.

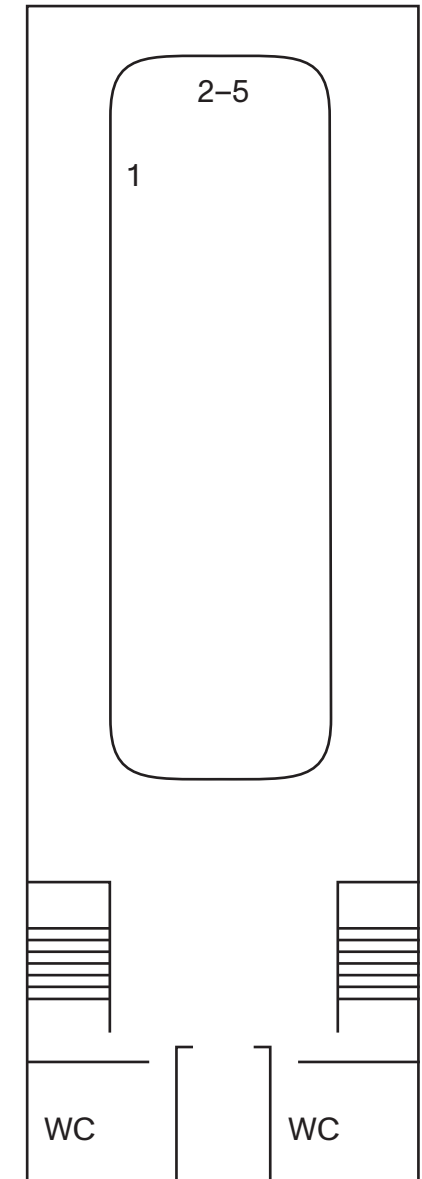
T  
From the sky-level loggia, the people below look like little black ticks.



- 1  
*Poke Bird Nest*, 2018  
Bird nest, watercolor on papier  
maché  
Ø 14 cm
- 2  
*Poke Basket I*, 2018  
Foraged plant material, rope,  
wiring, watercolor on papier maché  
Ø 25 cm
- 3  
*Poke Basket II*, 2018  
Foraged plant material, tubing,  
rope, watercolor on papier maché  
Ø 23 cm

- 4  
*Poke Basket III*, 2018  
Foraged plant material, rope,  
laundry line, caution tape,  
watercolor on papier maché  
Ø 25 cm
- 5  
*Poke Basket IV*, 2018  
Foraged plant material, tubing,  
watercolor on papier maché  
Ø 25 cm

## First Floor Gallery





Architectural renderings of proposed towers to be built along the Two Bridges waterfront. Far left tower, One Manhattan Square, is already being constructed.



Screenshot from One Manhattan Square website.

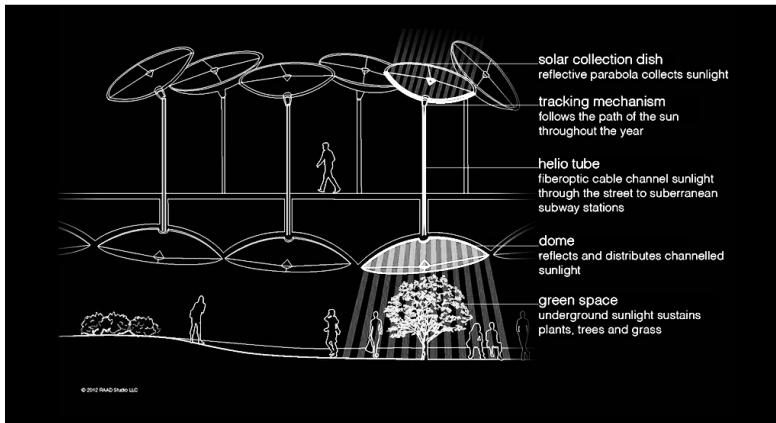


Diagram of The Lowline's solar technology.



Rendering of The Lowline.



Money Tree, Eastern Han dynasty, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, China. Excavated from Guanghan City, Sichuan, 1983.



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 3  
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Alysha Lewis-Coleman, Board Chair

Susan Stetzer, District Manager

#### Two Bridges Large Scale Residential Development (LSRD) – Proposal Factsheet

##### What is being proposed?

- Three residential buildings with four towers (one building will include two towers on a connected base)
  - o 1,008 foot tower; 80-stories – 247 Cherry Street – JDS Development Group
  - o 798 foot tower; 69-stories (connected base) – 260 South Street – Two Bridges Associates LP (joint venture of CIM Group and L&M Development Partners)
  - o 748 foot tower; 62-stories (connected base) – 260 South Street – Two Bridges Associates LP (joint venture of CIM Group and L&M Development Partners)
  - o 730 foot tower; 62-stories – 259 Clinton Street – Starrett Development
- The new buildings will include 2,775 residential units
  - o Approximately 700 units are expected to have some affordability requirement
  - o Approximately 2,075 units will be market-rate
- When fully occupied, they could add upwards of 7,000 residents to the area
- Other aspects of the projects include:
  - o New retail on Cherry Street, South Street, and Rutgers Slip
  - o New flood protections along Rutgers Slip
- Proposed mitigations of project impacts by developers:
  - o Public open space along Rutgers Slip
  - o New subway entrance, replacement of staircases, and installation of ADA-accessible elevators at the East Broadway F Train station
  - o Upgrades at Coleman Playground, Captain Jacob Joseph Playground, and Little Flower Playground

#### Two Bridges LSRD Site Plan



##### Where can I get more information?

- Visit <http://www.cb3manhattan.org> for:
  - o Project Land Use Applications
  - o Draft Environmental Impact Statement
  - o Developers' Mitigation Proposals

##### How can I get involved?

- Attend the Community Board 3 public hearing on **Tuesday, August 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm** at the MS 131 auditorium (100 Hester Street). All members of the public will have two minutes to speak as time allows.
  - o **CB 3's recommendations will be presented to the City Planning Commission before they vote on the project applications. CB 3 wants to hear from community members before making their recommendations on the tower proposals!**
- The City Planning Commission is holding a public hearing on Wednesday, October 17<sup>th</sup>

##### Where is this being proposed?

- Three lots between Pike Slip and Clinton Street, from Cherry Street to the FDR drive
- They are adjacent to:
  - o Extell building (One Manhattan Square)
  - o Two Bridges Houses (286 South Street)
  - o 80 Rutgers Slip
  - o Two Bridges Towers (82 Rutgers Slip)
  - o Land's End I (275 South Street)
  - o Land's End II (257 Clinton Street)
- They are across the street from:
  - o NYCHA Rutgers Houses
  - o NYCHA LaGuardia Houses
  - o NYCHA Two Bridges Houses (286 South Street)

#### Two Bridges – Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Census Tracts



Amy Lien & Enzo Camacho would like to thank Art Against Displacement in NYC (<https://www.aad.nyc>). They would also like to thank Bertold Albrecht, Johannes Beyerle, Tobias Bube, Hannes Fugmann and Marion Mangelsdorf for meeting them during their stay in Freiburg and helping them to conceptualize the show.

Their special thanks goes to Annette Merkenthaler for her generous support and expertise in the production of the ceramics.



## Opening Night

Fri, 14 Sep, 7 pm

Introduction: Heinrich Dietz, Director

## Opening Hours

Tue–Sun, 12–6 pm

Wed, 12–8 pm,

free admission

Closed on Mondays,

members free

## Programme

Sat, 15 Sep, 2 pm

Artist Talk with Harry Burke,

Amy Lien & Enzo Camacho

Thu, 20 Sep, 7 pm

Curator's Tour with Heinrich Dietz

Fri, 28 Sep, 6 pm

*Right to the City*

Symposium with Bertold Albrecht,

Heinrich Dietz, Jürgen Reuß,

Stefan Rost, Frauke Stablo,

Klaus Theweleit and Tomas Wald

Sun, 30 Sep, 2–4 pm

Children's Workshop

(registration required)

Thu, 18 Oct, 7 pm

Guided Tour with Ann-Kathrin Harr

The exhibition is supported by:

The Kunstverein Freiburg  
is sponsored by: