

## ***Fellow Travelers***

organized by **Katherine Rochester**

**September 7 - October 21, 2017**

**291 Church Street, NYC**

Opening reception:

**Wednesday, September 6, 6-8 pm**

Featuring work by:

Halil Altindere

Lou Cantor

Amen Feizabadi

Azin Feizabadi

Soda\_Jerk

Sun Ra

Ionel Talpazan



Soda\_Jerk, *Astro Black: We are the Robots*, 2010 (video still)

A musician from Saturn. A Syrian Cosmonaut. A Romanian refugee who experienced the supernatural and spent the rest of his life diagraming the event. These are some of the real-life characters in *Fellow Travelers*, an exhibition that initiates an encounter between people displaced by the deterioration of neo-liberal policies around the world. At their most optimistic, these policies generated a vision of scientific progress symbolized by the race for space. While both NASA and the Soviet Space Program considered space a terrain ripe for ideological expansion, artists such as musician-prophet Sun Ra re-imagined these paradigms to create utopian solutions for oppressed communities.

Sun Ra developed his free-wheeling philosophy (later associated with Afrofuturism) while traveling from Louisiana to Chicago during the Great Migration in 1947. Now, in another moment of mass migration, artists have once again turned to outer space in order to mitigate earthly catastrophes. Some projects posit travel as a gesture of resistance. Others explore the refusal to leave as a form of protest. Even in the act of imagining space as an outsider's utopia, most betray bitter cynicism about ever finding a sense of belonging on earth. Which small gestures can destabilize the system? Can space stand-in for a home that might be lost forever? From Afronauts to cosmonauts, *Fellow Travelers* affirms that art is a tool for testing limits, crossing boundaries, and providing a platform for voices of dissent.

*Fellow Travelers* was selected through apexart's Unsolicited Exhibition Program along with *Rendered Cities* (January 2018) and *Light in Wartime* (June 2018).

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**Katherine Rochester** is an art historian and curator with a specialization in modern and contemporary art and film. She is a Ph.D. candidate in History of Art at Bryn Mawr College and holds an M.A. from Bryn Mawr College and a B.A. from Grinnell College. Katherine has worked at the Walker Art Center, The Soap Factory, and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia. She has participated in the CCL/Mellon Foundation Seminar in Curatorial Practice and her research has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin, and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

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**#FellowTravelers**

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