

Now is the Time to Send Your Loved Ones Mail

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The Do List

Artists Foretell 'Other Futures' at CounterPulse

In conjunction with Southern Exposure's exhibition *Where do you want ghosts to reside?*, made up of artwork informed by forgotten Islamic myths, artists [Morehshin Allahyari](#) and [Shirin Fahimi](#) loose the bonds of the Mission District gallery to stage a one-night performance at CounterPulse. In *Breaching Towards Other Futures*, Allahyari and Fahimi channel a jinn from Middle Eastern mythology, Aisha Qandisha, known as the "opener," and use Ilm al-raml (a form of geomancy, or divination with sand) to both tell the future and open doors to other futures—particularly ones not dominated by white, colonial or patriarchal concerns.

The performance is part of Allahyari's ongoing project *She Who Sees the Unknown*, begun in 2016, which integrates research; storytelling; and 3D modeling, scanning and printing to revisit and honor monstrous female or queer figures of Middle Eastern origin. In this performance, she and Fahimi situate Aisha Qandisha in a new narrative, into "a new set of imagined possibilities of time and space." The transformational possibilities extend to the audience; we may all emerge from the theater into a different future, one informed by our exposure to this work. *—Sarah Hotchkiss*

The Do List



Have you been hoarding postcards? Time to send them! (*Sarah Hotchkiss/KQED*)

While we're growing accustomed to videoconferencing for work meetings, FaceTiming to chat with friends and sharing more memes than ever via WhatsApp, I would like to make a case for good, old fashioned, hold-it-in-your-hands mail. The United States Postal Service remains in operation under the Bay Area's new shelter-in-place orders, and if you have either a post office or a collection box in your vicinity, you can make use of their services.

I know what you're wondering: Can mail carry the coronavirus? A study published March 17 in the *New England Journal of Medicine* suggests the virus can only survive up to 24 hours on cardboard. So unless an infected mail carrier coughs or sneezes directly onto your mail as they deliver it, and you then put that mail directly into your mouth, this is a fairly low-risk way to communicate.

Chances are you usually only send postcards of the "wish you were here, look at my glorious vacation" variety. But I'm here to extoll the virtues of the everyday postcard. Sending a friend or family member a handwritten note (on the back of a strange or beautiful image) is a way of showing them, *Hey, I'm thinking of you*. (Extra points if you make your *own* postcards with your *own* drawings.)

And instead of going the easy, instantaneous route (a text message, a bitmoji), a postcard demonstrates you took the time to put that sentiment down on paper, in your own handwriting. Plus, getting *real* mail—as opposed to political mailers, pre-approved credit card offers or flimsy collections of coupons—is still one of the great joys in this world.

In a moment of rapidly breaking news, constant refreshes and truly alarming push alerts, the more temperate speed of sending and receiving mail can be a solace. Also, perhaps most importantly/selfishly, mail begets mail.

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