

# Kelly Akashi

## *Bronze Candles*

François Ghebaly is proud to participate in an online presentation of bronze sculptures by Kelly Akashi on the San Francisco based online platform 8-Bridges, part of a month-long special exhibition celebrating Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. The online viewing room will concentrate on Kelly Akashi's recent bronze candle sculptures and is accompanied by a written conversation between Akashi and the artist Sharon Lockhart.

Candles have long served as an enduring emblem within Kelly Akashi's practice. Short lived and luminous, candles act as captivators and embodiments of human attention. This presentation of bronze sculptures focuses on a quiet series within Akashi's practice that sprung up in the tumult of 2020. For this series, Akashi burns paraffin candles to mark specific tragic events in the world as their ramifications are beginning to unfold—the murder of George Floyd (*May 25-27, 2020*), the explosion in Beirut (*August 4-6, 2020*), the murder of Asian women and others in Atlanta (*March 16, 2021*). She casts each candle's spent mass in bronze and titles it with the dates of its burning, transforming its timespan from the immediate to the eternal. These works commemorate the sorrow and rage of life under the pandemic in America, where information feels infinitely available, hurtling toward us at great speed while the clock itself seems suspended. Absorbing a tragedy, burning a candle, setting her attention to it, and then transforming that object of focus into bronze—through this process Akashi interweaves consciousness with material, life with fire, and memory with the trace of what remains.

For the month of May, 8-Bridges will celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month with a curated selection of historical, mid-career, and emerging artists from the Asian diaspora. Titled *Do We Dream Under the Same Sky*, the online presentation is curated by Kelly Huang of KCH Advisory and Aleesa Pitchamarn Alexander, Assistant Curator of American Art and Co-Director of the Asian American Art Initiative at Stanford University's Cantor Arts Center.

**Kelly Akashi** (born in 1983, Los Angeles) lives and works in Los Angeles. Trained as a photographer, Akashi approaches her sculptural practice with an eye toward the indexical, leading her to materials like wax, glass, and cast metal that can concretize a moment in time in hard materials. Her recent solo exhibitions include Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York (2020); ARCH, Athens (2019); François Ghebaly, Los Angeles (2019, 2016); and SculptureCenter, New York (2017). Selected group exhibitions include Simon Lee Gallery, New York (2018), Tanya Bonakdar, New York (2018); White Cube, London (2017); Gladstone Gallery, New York (2017); Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, Lyon (2017); Jewish Museum, New York (2016); and Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2016). Her works reside in the collections of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn; CC Foundation, Shanghai; X Museum, Beijing; and Sifang Museum, Nanjing.