2013-2015
Studio Program Exhibition
Mar 22
Jun 28
2015
2013-2015
Studio Program
Exhibition

Mar 22
Jun 28
2015

As part of its 2013 expansion, the Queens Museum added eight artist’s studios to its North Wing. One of the only US studio programs housed within a major museum, these highly subsidized spaces are available for one year with a possible extension to a second. Artists are selected through a juried open call and are encouraged to avail themselves of all resources at the Museum and the surrounding neighborhoods. In a partnership with the Queens College MFA Program, students in Social Practice Queens share a collaborative studio space in the Queens Museum’s studio wing. This is the first exhibition at the Queens Museum of the work of the Studio Program and of SPQ.

Nobutaka Aozaki
Juan Betancurth
Onyedika Chuke
Mike Kenney
Caitlin Keogh
Galería Perdida
Jewyo Rhii with Jiyhun Jung
Bunny Rogers and Filip Olszewski
Caroline Woolard and Lika Volkova
Brian Zegeer

Sol Aramendi and Barrie Cline
Seth Aylmer, Scott Braun, and Gina Minielli
Nicole Mourino

Cover: Nobutaka Aozaki, Fortune Cookie Dictionary, 2013. Alphabetized collection of fortune cookie fortunes with word definitions, 2 ¾" x ¾" x ¾." Courtesy the artist.

Nobutaka Aozaki

For the past 3 years, I have been collecting the slips of paper found inside fortune cookies, which are typically served as dessert in Chinese restaurants in the United States (although they originated in nineteenth-century Japan). These pieces of paper are printed with words of wisdom or a vague prophecy. There is also a phrase or a vocabulary word in Chinese, with an accompanying English translation. I have been collecting these and sorting them into English alphabetical order in order to make them function as a mini Chinese-English dictionary. I documented an attempt to use this dictionary in Flushing, Queens, in March 2015.

Nobutaka Aozaki looks twice at the insignificant objects of our daily existence. Although he intervenes with a light hand, when he’s done, his clocks, soda cans, or fortune cookie fortunes have unexpected, often comic, new life. Born in Kagoshima, Japan in 1977, Aozaki’s upcoming exhibitions include Where Do We Migrate To?, curated by Niels Van Tomme at the Varmlands Museum, Karlstad, Sweden.

Juan Betancurth

For this site-specific installation I am recreating a childhood scenario in which I was locked in a room with my four teenage sisters while they played at being housewives, waiting for their imaginary lovers to arrive. They would make themselves busy mocking the duties of a housewife—I was the child/toy navigating between punishment and reward. Once their men arrived, they ran into different corners of the room kissing and humping walls, pillows and furniture. I was the delighted viewer.

Juan Betancurth uses found objects to make human-scale sculptures that ask to be used, most often to reveal human sexual potential; he also makes videos of people, often strangers, actually using them. Born in Manizales, Colombia in 1972, Betancurth’s upcoming exhibitions include L’exposition portative, Dazibao, Montreal; and When You Cut Into the Present the Future Leaks Out, curated by Regine Basha for No Longer Empty, Old Courthouse, Bronx.
Onyedika Chuke

My work is currently based on the creation of an archive termed “The Forever Museum” a collection of objects and images based on primary research and Internet-sourced documents (on, the ancient and contemporary) that report/redistribute images and theories pertaining to civilizations, political rebellions, riots and warfare. I compose installations influenced by museum vocabulary in an attempt to organize and present this archive, which I began composing in Libya in 2011.

Onyedika Chuke alters and casts materials from nature and industry to make contemporary classical forms. In this exhibition, guns and planes signal something about what may be humankind’s permanent state. Born in Oneisha, Nigeria, Chuke will be exhibiting excerpts from his ongoing project “The Forever Museum” at The Drawing Center and The American Academy in Rome in 2015.

Mike Kenney

Four pulsing corners of this quincunx switch off and on in signature intervals and warn of dangerous terrain. The beams are intercepted by their antidote at center, nested within an exterior that deceives rather than hides. Disparate fragments within three singular typologies repeat. Unlimited encounters with this incomplete information are regenerated in as many versions. Lobes fit otherwise uniform components into place and stop their spinning. They continue to regress around poles ad infinitum. These parts grow and proliferate. When they collide they interact or pass through. The rules of this drawing are similarly poles around which to tether. Its bounds complete the encounter, circumscribe and knotted. The encounter is partial when moving. The whole is constant. Transfer in this case connotes the residue of thoughts: a movie at once, a faceted stone. A single act of becoming reveals this form rubbed from absence.

Mike Kenney was born in Pennsylvania and currently lives and works in New Jersey near the Raritan Bay.
Caitlin Keogh

Of two paintings in this show, one combines the image of a sculpture by the Surrealist and Queens native Joseph Cornell with Roland Barthes’ working title for A Lovers Discourse: Fragments. Cornell and Barthes have been long-standing imaginary studio-guests for me in the form of their books and catalogs; this painting is a ‘collage’ of the resource material I keep on hand at all times, a direct allusion to the studio work space. The drawings in this show are sketches used in the process of making the large paintings.

Stylistically, my work in general is influenced by my experience as a technical illustrator for fashion designers. I have found that the pose of ‘Illustrator’ has functioned in two ways in my artistic practice. First as a form of dress-up, as a means to escape external expectations of self-expression and identity. And second as a means to communicate clearly and directly. This seeming contradiction of distancing and clarity provides access for me to subject matter that is personal and self-reflexive, as well as potentially social and metaphorical.

Caitlin Keogh’s paintings repurpose the look of popular Surrealism and magazine illustration. Often they take the female form, and its making and unmaking, as their subject. Born in 1982 in Spenard, AK, Keogh is the subject of a solo show at Mary Boone Gallery in March 2015, and has an upcoming teaching fellowship at University of Tennessee at Knoxville in Fall 2015.

Galería Perdida

A pun is never quite not intended. It is in fact an utterance that contains the flexibility of syntax, massaging the phrase away from direct representation yet still alluding to its original content. Creating a brief moment of unease, it leaves one at that proverbial fork in the road. Not necessarily a distressing place to be, this is an opening that allows us to move away from an impassable doubt.

In their sculptures and films, Galería Perdida attempts to “defuse” language systems while channeling cultural signals from humor, the Internet, and craft. The collective was established in Chichota, Michoacán, Mexico in 2005; upcoming exhibitions include Head Above Water, Michoacán, Mexico and Routine Pleasures, MAK Center Los Angeles.
**Jewyo Rhii with Jihyun Jung**

Dear Jihyun,

Thanks for the help with repairing my lecture machine the other day. I’ve used it well in the artist talk on my exhibition Commonly Newcomer....I’ve thought of you in an incident of the afternoon, wondering what it would have been in your eyes when you first saw my lecture machine in my studio. I’d felt like a certain light from your eyes, piercing it. I’ve come to imagine that your thought was intensely following the assortment of mundane materials that composed the body of structure. 2 days ago, I had a chance to see your writing machine and I was amazed by it as it wrote in the air. It moved slowly with attached searchlights blinking as writing words and images registered in the device. What was written in the night sky only manifested as a result of the long-exposure photography. Since then, I’ve been truly dwelling on a single thought in my head: What would it be like if you made a lecture machine otherwise a talking machine? What would it become if yours and mine start to perform together to talk to people in very different ways? I am so excited just by thinking of it. Please, create a machine that makes you to be able to talk on matters that are difficult to be said.

—Jewyo

Jewyo Rhii used her Queens Museum studio to stage her recent exhibition Commonly Newcomer at the museum. A vision from the windows of the 7 train from the point of view of someone forever on the move, it was accompanied by Rhii’s Lecture Machine, a hand-turned drum which assists the artist in telling inevitably fragmented stories. Jihyun Jung’s writing machine, on the other hand, is remote-controlled and, through movement, lights, and long-exposure photography, writes messages legible only after the fact. On June 28, the two artists will perform together with both machines. Born in Seoul, Korea in 1971, Rhii’s upcoming exhibitions include Boom She Boom, MMK, Frankfurt, Germany and Dear My Anti-capitalist, GALERIE URSULA WALBRÖL, Dusseldorf, Germany. Born in 1986 in Suwon, Korea, Jihyun Jung’s upcoming exhibitions include JUNG JIHYUN, Doosan Gallery, New York.

---

**Bunny Rogers and Filip Olszewski**

The 1963 novel Is-Slottet (The Ice Palace) by Norwegian author Tarjei Vesaas has been a recurring influence in our collaborative work for its unique sensitivity in depicting the lifetime of subjective loss. Our multifaceted installation piece Sister Unn’s (2011-2012) converted a vacant Forest Hills storefront into a public site of mourning. Illuminated by an industrial freezer preserving the life of a single ice-encased rose, the space presented a hundred clay vases and their wilted bouquets of flowers. Our latest sculpture On the Way to Unn’s (2015) is a stepping-stone in a long-term plan to visualize Vesaas’ personal impact.

Bunny Rogers and Filip Olszewski make artwork together and separately. Working together, they crystallize the intense feelings of late girlhood into objects or situations. Their shared pursuit is an ongoing homage to a singular novel about a pair of eleven-year-old girls in wintry rural Norway by one of that country’s best-known writers. Bunny Rogers was born in Houston, TX in 1990. Filip Olszewski was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1984.
Caroline Woolard and Lika Volkova

Caroline Woolard and Lika Volkova make work separately and together. The works they have produced while at the Queens Museum—a ceramic object for “a clitoral art history” and jackets repurposed from paintings discarded by their makers—are paired as design objects and possible prototypes for circulation in an alternative economy.

We make no distinction between need and desire. Do not ask us about function. Ask us about revelation, about social imagination, about a religion of labor. As my lover says, “Art is a way to make meaning of the labor we claim for ourselves.” Art is a practice of failed pleasure and pleasurable failure. A way of getting curious. Look at that! Can I do something with it? I cast a queer object. Where is our art history of clitoral art? I want works that fumble toward ecstasy, laughing in curiosity, not only vaginal vessels for blood, babies, and illicit materials. Imagine this against your body.

After co-founding and co-directing solidarity economy platforms OurGoods.org and TradeSchool.coop from 2008-2014, Caroline Woolard is now focused on BFAMFAPhD.com, an initiative to raise awareness about the impact of debt, rent, and precarity on culture. Born in Providence, 1984, her upcoming exhibitions/projects include a documentary with Art 21 for New York Close Up and an Art and Social Justice Fellowship at the Judson Church.

Artists disappointed with their own paintings have the opportunity to turn them into garments by participating in a currently non-existent cooperative. As part of this imagined organization, painters and other interested citizens can cut and sew, potentially getting pleasure in some way from their own disappointment and failure. However bad the paintings may be as paintings, the new surfaces and colors that result from their cutting and recombinating—at a minimum, poignant evidence of human effort—become an appealing feature of the new jackets and vests.

Working in the legacy of critical design and collective production, Lika Volkova brings a dark humor forged in a childhood spent collecting cigarette butts in the USSR to a lingering hope for communitarian subjectivity. Since 2008, she has produced functional sculptures for SANS, a line that incorporates free pattern distribution and system design. Volkova was born in Odessa, Ukraine in 1978.

Brian Zegeer

The Book of Khalid the Movie is a series of mixed-media animations interpreting passages from Ameen Rihani’s 1911 novel. As a first-generation Lebanese-American immigrant, Rihani’s protagonist explores the performative nature of cultural identity, cycling through the roles of street pedlar, mystic, anarchist, lawyer, politician, naturalist, etc., continually betraying the expectations of American and Lebanese acquaintances alike. His refusal to assume acceptable societal roles constantly acts to Khalid’s detriment; sometimes humorously, but becomes increasingly isolating and, ultimately maddening.

Brian Zegeer is concerned with those moments of religious, paranoiac, or psychedelic inspiration that break down our social programming and put us in touch with a newly strange and frightening world. Born in Lexington, KY in 1977, Zegeer’s upcoming exhibitions include the 2015 AIM Biennial.
Social Practice Queens

Social Practice Queens is part of the Queens College MFA program. As part of the partnership between the MFA and the Queens Museum, students in the program share a studio at QM. Two significant collaborations and a public event on artists’ residencies arose out of the current class of students. The results are presented parallel to the Studio Program exhibition.

A crew of natural builders and participants in Social Practice Queens have collaborated to create a non-denominational, communally-occupied sacred space in the “small triangle area” of the Queens Museum. Using principles of sacred geometry and social practice, this space is a unifying sanctuary for people from all beliefs. It was constructed using locally-harvested maple wood from the Hudson Valley and is accompanied by a series of projected photographs representing cross-cultural religious symbols.

Seth Aylmer, Scott Braun, and Gina Minielli are students in SPQ (Social Practice Queens MFA) whose Sacred Space—Triangle is a first-time collaboration. With Aylmer, a video artist, painter, and sculptor; Braun, a multimedia sculptor; and Minielli, an established photographer, each participant has a separate practice which contributes to the larger work.

Wage theft occurs when employers do not pay workers according to the law. It is at epidemic levels for Immigrant day laborers who are among the most economically vulnerable, as they are mostly undocumented with wages below the poverty level. Their high visibility while searching for work often places them on the frontline of anti-immigrant backlash and corresponding law enforcement, as well as a target for wage theft. According to a recent Department of Labor study, there are currently over 300,000 wage theft violations in New York State monthly.

Artists Sol Aramendi of Project Luz and Barrie Cline of the Workers Art Coalition continue their long-term collaboration at the intersection of workers’ rights, immigrants’ rights, and art. At the Queens Museum they have placed a digital counter at the entrance of the museum to record the number of ongoing wage theft violations in the New York State area that occur during the entire timeframe of the exhibition. The installation will be accompanied by a tabloid publication and public programs in collaboration with day laborers—those affected in disproportionate numbers by wage theft.

2013-2015 Studio Program Exhibition Events

Juan Betancurth
Saturday March 21
Sunday June 28
Performance

Jewyo Rhii and Jihyun Jung
Sunday June 28
Double Lecture: *Night Falls Dawn Breaks*

Social Practice Queens Events

Sol Aramendi & Barrie Cline
March 21
Film screening by Setare S. Arashloo in collaboration with Workers Art Coalition

Sunday May 3
Day Laborers Public Assembly/Asamblea Publica de Jornaleros

Wage Theft Exchange
Date TBD
Greater Astoria Historical Society 35-20 Broadway, 4th Floor, L.I.C., 11106

Seth Aylmer, Scott Braun, Gina Minielli
Saturday, April 25
Sacred Space Symposium

Nicole Mourino
Saturday, June 27
Real World: A round-table discussion on the role and direction of artist residencies

Artist Services at the Queens Museum are made possible in part by a generous grant from The Scherman Foundation’s Katharine S. and Axel G. Rosin Fund. Additional support provided by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

This exhibition was organized by Larissa Harris, Curator and Nung-Hsin Hu, Manager, New New Yorkers Program and Coordinator, Studio Program. Special thanks to Su-Jung Kim.