



LA BIENAL 2013: HERE IS WHERE WE JUMP!

JUMP HERE, JUMP NOW, or don't talk about it, be about it by Rocio Aranda-Alvarado

El Museo del Barrio is a museum of American art. As proof, we offer this year's Bienal 2013, which includes works from artists who were mostly born in the United States, including Puerto Rico. As part of organizing this exhibition, Raul Zamudio and I visited many, many studios throughout New York City, including some in Long Island and New Jersey. What has consistently been clear throughout the presentation of these biennial exhibitions of contemporary art by living artists is that there is both a variety and a wealth of ideas, of methods of working and production, of affinities and distinctions.

I would like to focus on the word HERE in the title of our exhibition and consider New York City as the location for the production of most of the works seen in the exhibition. It is worthwhile to reconsider the original text from which the title is taken, a fable by Aesop, titled The Braggart:

A man who practices the pentathlon, but who his fellow citizens continually reproached for his unmanliness, went off one day to foreign parts. After some time he returned, and he went around boasting of having accomplished many extraordinary feats in various countries, but above all of having made such a jump when he was in Rhodes that not even an athlete crowned at the Olympic Games could possibly equal it. And he added that he would produce as witnesses of his exploit people who had actually seen it, if ever they came to his country. Then one of the bystanders spoke out: "but if this is true, my friend, you have no need of witnesses. For here is Rhodes, right here-make the jump.[1]"

The location in which the feat can be reenacted and the challenge resolved—here—becomes the important factor in the challenge as does the subtext, in which the spectator reminds the protagonist that the act of doing is paramount...or, don't talk about it, be about it.

In asking the artists to offer their idea, the museum becomes the place where something is proposed, the first step in a conversation with the public, other artists and creators, colleagues and neighbors, scholars and students. The artist becomes, at once, the producer and the receiver and enacts over and over again the gesture of communication with a viewer. This exchange of idea, word, image, text, thought, and inspiration is at the heart of the process of organizing and presenting the bienal. The working process, the creation of the object, the idea at the core, the intensive research that motivates art, the journey through the history of art, all of these become the tools by which we are able to explore the works in depth.

I group the first set of artists under the broad category of works that address history, violence, politics and in most cases all three simultaneously. These artists explore historic political events and the rhetorical gestures that were their catalysts, the violence of military governments and hate groups, and the consequences of violence endured due to the randomness of political borders.



The installation by Christopher Rivera (b. 1982, San Juan, Puerto Rico), *Paradise is an Island and so is Hell/ El paraíso es una isla, y el infierno también* (2013) features site-specific works, a painting and also includes a performance aspect. During a speech given in 1901, Theodore Roosevelt first used the phrase “walk softly, and carry a big stick” in reference to foreign policy. This phrase, and its implied actions, was used often by the president throughout his tenure. It inspired an image in print from 1904 which features an image of Roosevelt with a club over his shoulder walking across the Caribbean barefooted and with his trousers rolled up. The image is a visual interpretation of his foreign policy, specifically towards this region. The artist’s painting in his installation features the image of Roosevelt that originated from this print. In addition, he has hand-colored the walls of the gallery with an abstracted pattern of crosses that reflects the logo of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party and echoing the evangelization of the Americas through the religious fervor of the Catholic Church. The use of the Nationalist Party’s logo is intended to act as a kind of critique of the group’s strategies, which appear to the artist to be mostly rhetorical. Recalling the presence of the indigenous populations, the artist has created a series of hand-made spears fashioned from painted resin. These are accompanied by groupings of coins that are deeply embedded in roundels of cement and clay, mimicking the forms of mortars or pie pans used in traditional desserts. Through this installation, the artist seeks to refer to the history of U.S. interventions throughout Latin America as well as the longer global history of empire and colonization.

In a similar vein, the Chilean painter Julia San Martín (b. 1967, Chillán, Chile) is represented in the exhibition with a grouping of small works that both reveal and obscure, *Untitled*, from the *Home* series, as well as her works subtitled *El Mirón*. Two of them feature a small figure that leans around the corner of the house to look—*el mirón*, one who is always observing. This act of looking while hidden layers the image with references to curiosity and voyeurism but also to fear and anxiety. Having survived the years of the military junta in Chile and the loss of her father and brother during this time, San Martín’s paintings evoke the darkness of the period through her creation of large-scale, solid, wall-like paintings in which strata of dark greys and blacks are layered on upstretched canvas. The broad brushstrokes and the heaviness of the colors on the canvas in the larger works are evoked in the sense of aloneness embodied by the solitary figure gazing around the corner in these small paintings. Other works that evoke the fragility of political systems and humanity are reflected in her *Untitled* from 2013, a tattered cardboard package with the hand-lettered phrase “HANDLE WITH CARE.” Finally, the image of a small house is one that frequently appears in the artist’s work, a kind of permanent and universal symbol of the longing for the home—*la casita*—as the site where the body is comforted, ensconced, safe. Describing her sense of herself, San Martín notes that coming of age in a country with few resources and forced to choose a single practice, she chose painting, perhaps influenced by a romantic idealism. Her doll house installation echoes this sensibility, as she places her miniature *doppelgänger* in various scenes set in her minute studio. From her origins in this tradition, the artist broadened her way of thinking about the ways of making art and the ideas she was trying to develop. She notes: “from then, I have considered myself like someone outside of her time. By the time I finished



studying, I was already aware that painting was something from the past. This was how I began to use the object itself, and always working from the limit or the border.”

This idea of the border, the limit, the politicization of an object and American history are all explored in the work of Ignacio González-Lang (b. 1975, San Juan, Puerto Rico). For the artist, research is the most important part of his process. As a testament to this, his *Khinatown* (2011) is fashioned from an authentic Nighthawk uniform that has been meticulously hand-embroidered. The black robe is generally worn by the Nighthawk position within the clan that provides security for the group. González-Lang commissioned this vestment from a seamstress who is a descendent of five generations of Klansmen. The embroidered surface of the garment was done in Queens by the hand of a Mexican immigrant who learned this art form from her grandmother. The hands of both women from seemingly opposite sides of an ideological barrier are forever joined in this singular object, which simultaneously conjures hate, fear, surprise and awe. The plights of the undocumented and African Americans are considered together through the history of the garment and the ways in which the artist has altered it. In the end, the object acts as a kind of vessel that contains hundreds of years of painful history while still drawing our attention to problems of social justice in the present.

The ideas of collective memory as a direct result of political engagement are at the center of the installation by Ramón Miranda Beltrán (b. 1982, San Juan, Puerto Rico). His “Benevolent Assimilation” (2013) is the result of extensive research into the course of empire. In particular, he has been interested in the history of the United States and its relationship to the Caribbean. The installation commemorates the significance of the year 1898 and the results of the Spanish-American War, in which Spain surrendered the Philippines and ceded Guam and Puerto Rico to the U.S. The work consists of two components, an image of the Monument to the U.S.S. Maine and a stack of cement blocks with photographic reproductions of a letter written by President William McKinley (1843-1902). The Maine Monument commemorates the death of 260 soldiers who perished in February 1898 when the ship exploded in the harbor of Havana and Cuba was still under Spanish dominion. Spain declared war on the U.S. in April but had surrendered by December, giving freedom to Cuba, but leaving Guam, Puerto Rico and the Philippines in a state of political abandon. McKinley’s letter, printed on the cement blocks, is written as an address to the people of the Philippines, assuring them that “It will be the duty of the commander of the forces of occupation to announce and proclaim in the most public manner that we come not as invaders or conquerors, but as friends, to protect the natives in their homes, in their employments, and in their personal and religious rights. All persons who, either by active aid or by honest submission, co-operate with the Government of the United States to give effect to these beneficent purposes will receive the reward of its support and protection.” The cast blocks allude to the building and layering of political rhetoric and how it even nineteenth century political acts, statements, and rhetoric continue to profoundly affect global relations in the post-colonial era.

Political maneuvering, submission and control are also the subject of the video work *Pacifico* (2010) by Jonathas de Andrade (b. 1982, Maceió, Brazil). *Pacifico* is a stop-motion animation film that explores the complex and problematic history of the 1879-84 War of the Pacific, in which Bolivia lost its coastline to Chile. The injustice of this historic misstep is explored through the video, which considers what might happen if



an earthquake were to separate Chile from the rest of South America. Bolivia's access to the Pacific Ocean would be re-established through this alternative view of history, an opportunity for the country to literally change the course of its history. The work is an example of how the artist explores socio-political issues through collective memory and the idea of "truth" as a political relativism.

Another category that is prevalent not only among the group of artists studied here but also generally in the production of art since at least the 1960s, when it became a veritable obsession, is the body. These artists explore the body as commodity, looking at the gaze in historic advertising. It is a vehicle for exploring the limits of physical endurance, or the product of ethnographic study. It becomes the source material for crafty (in the best sense of the word—both wily and handmade or, as one dictionary succinctly puts it "skillful" and "marked by deviousness or deception") sculptures inspired by pop art. It allows the artists to explore the landscape in an unexpected and surprisingly intimate way.

Throughout the exhibition, there are a number of direct and indirect references to the human body as a site for connections, nostalgia, political activism, historical reference or investigation. In Alex Nuñez's expansive works on paper, the artist combines a number of media in overlapping imagery that ultimately relies upon the body for interpretation. Her large-scale collage of a face is rendered in gold leaf and acrylic paint. The gold-covered face in this image is a portrait of the late ODB (Ol' Dirty Bastard, 1968-2004), one of the original members of the Staten Island rap group Wu Tang Clan. The artist plays with both the history of art and popular culture by first layering gold leaf on the image in the tradition of Byzantine icons. At the same time, she makes reference to the performance of wealth embraced by hip hop culture by covering ODB's entire face in gold. His gold fronts are now neon yellow while the gold becomes a mask in the tradition of royal Amerindian burials. Formally, the oversized, nearly featureless face evokes masking traditions from various parts of the world. Gold masks, in particular were key burial or ceremonial elements in Meso-America as well as among both the Inca and Aztecs. The neon colored teeth and eyes add to the effect of the mask as a separation between us and the subject below. Throughout the work, the artist's iconic inventory of lines, crosshatches, and seemingly random marks occupy the margins of the drawing, like an aura around the figure.

Nuñez's two smaller collages, *Untitled* and *Scotch and the Single Girl*, from 2012, juxtapose historic imagery and popular culture, where figures seen in advertisements or magazine imagery from the 1970s are vomiting wide swaths of glitter, which becomes its own form, threatening to take over the image. The roles of women are determined by the images and the act of regurgitation. The artist was inspired to make these works through her extensive research in old magazines, books and photos. Once she finds an image that is absorbing, she imagines them as snapshots of a moment that has been frozen not only for public consumption but also as a literal pause in time. The artist was particularly drawn to the gaze of the women in these two works, admiring their glamour, allure and reconsidering the significance of their gaze. She notes that she sought to "add a repulsive yet humanizing action to their frozen scenes."

This kind of social determination based on a photographic image is also the basis for an installation by Sean Paul Gallegos. Since the end of the nineteenth century, the



ethnographic portrait was used as a way to “document” non-Western and other indigenous people. Intended for consumption by Europeans and Americans, these photographs place their subjects firmly in the category of “exotic” other. Since at least the first half of the twentieth century, artists have been responding to this gesture, its questionable “documentary” nature, and fostering a critique of the genre. Working in this vein, Gallegos’s installation features his *Ethnoportrait* (2013) and *Reserved Ancestry* (2010) which considers the meaning of an object and its use/value. Using discarded sneakers, the artist is able to fashion a number of objects that reflect popular culture but also reference his mixed heritage that is partly Native American. *Reserved Ancestry* is a representation of a chieftain’s headdress made entirely from found sneakers, fur, and shirt collars. Fabricating it as a ready-made from recycled objects, the artist disrupts notions of authenticity, representation and the idea of a “real” object that carries this burden. The fetish is remade from materials that bear little or no reference to the original “meaningful” object, yet relate directly to his experiences as an urban dweller. Rescuing discarded sneakers from the streets of his Bronx neighborhood, he recirculates the significance of the objects, creating a new fetish from a commodified object that is also fetishized in contemporary popular culture.

A similar extraction of meaning is explored in the work *Permanent Record/Archivo permanente* (2013) by Kathleen Granados. Creating her works from wire armature and crocheted yarn, the artist uses unexpected materials to re-create oversized parts of the body. The delicacy of the knitted work evokes the vulnerability and fleeting nature of humanity. Using a material that is most often used to create protective objects for bodies of all ages, Granados’s work also touches on the history of fiber art and its extensive and meaningful use by women artists. Her *endless spine, Straightening Up/Ponerse derecho* (2010) unites floor and ceiling through a kind of “endless column” that evokes the legacy of Brancusi’s iconic work. Again, humanity is the clearly intended reference, the repetition of the vertebrae mimicking the spare, angular forms of modernism.

Post modernism and the body are both at the center of the performance video work *Wrap/Envolver* (2012) by the collaborative duo Sara Jimenez (b. 1984, London, Ontario) and Kaitlynn Redell (b. 1985, Santa Cruz, California). Through their performances and use of stretch fabrics, the artists address how personal history and location influence their understandings and expressions of their bodies. Starting from their own mixed heritage, they begin their working process understanding identity to be fluid and the body as changeable. In these works, the red fabric bodysuit allows them to literally and conceptually explore space/location as a major influence on the manifestation of the physical self. Filmed at Pelham Bay in the Bronx, the landscape acts as a counterpoint to the rounded, enigmatic forms they create with their carefully calculated movements.

This kind of morphing of the body is also notable in the work of Paula Garcia (b. 1975, São Paulo, Brazil). Her performance *#3* from the series *Noise Body-performance*/*#3 de la serie Cuerpo Ruido [Corpo Ruído]-performance* (2010) explores the limits of the body’s capacity to experience sensation and to endure. During the performance, a group of collaborators covers the artist’s body in a net of magnets and subsequently attaches industrial scraps of iron to her body via the magnets. This piling on of metals continues until, towards the end, large nails are thrown at her metal-laden figure. The



layer of metal continues to accumulate on the body, adding multiple narratives. The artist has developed this series in order to question the experiences of the body and how senses can distort our perception of this experience.

A final group of artists explores the meanings of spaces, sites, locations and the many associations we can make with these words. Site becomes the place where connections are made, emotions exposed, the self is found or excavated. The home becomes the location in which to explore the object housed specifically there. The specific place where a wild animal roams inspires a grouping of sculptures and drawings that refer to an invented place, a place of endless possibilities, conjoined objects, a surrealist linking of land and live beings.

A number of artists in La Bienal deal with various explorations of space, site or location. In her performance titled *Amaralli*, from 2012, Gabriela Scopazzi (b. 1990, Lima, Peru) explores the significance of location as a bearer of what we might call “aftermemory,” created by the artist’s own consideration or perhaps nostalgia about heritage and personal history. Born in Peru and adopted by an Italian American family from Long Island, Scopazzi became interested in mining the Peruvian past for her work. The llama is an important creature in the Andean region (including Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and parts of Chile and Colombia) and has been used as both a pack animal and for protein since the times of the Incan empire. In her enchanting work, the artist documents a performance in which she visited a llama farm in upstate New York. As she begins to sing “Amarilli Mia Bella”, an operatic solo written by the Baroque composer Giulio Caccini, the llamas slowly arrange themselves in rows much as an audience would be seated in a theater. This unexpected reaction forms and inflects the relationship between performer and audience, which the animals have established themselves. In terms of its exploration of location, the work insists on the possibilities for sameness of location and how this may depend upon the circumstances. The shelter in which the animals make their home becomes a make-shift theater in which a magical voice floats above and connects to an ancient animal burdened with signification.

This meaning of location is underscored also in the drawings of Manuel Vega (b. 1956, Bronx, New York). Works such as *Oshi Meji* (2007) juxtapose an iconic image of showgirls from the legendary Tropicana nightclub in Havana with an assortment of images that relate directly to the Nuyorican experience. Above the referenced black and white photograph that features a line of chorus girls, a majestic mermaid spreads her figure. At the bottom, a sewing machine, instruments of European and African origin, an African sculpture, and a rooster all commingle. Like his murals seen throughout East Harlem, in his drawings Vega also uses an inventory of signs and symbols that relate to his passions, including the African presence in Latino culture and religious practices. The objects represented not only reference the artist’s own interests but also underscore the relationship between cultures of Europe, the Caribbean, and West Africa. He describes the significance of the title and images seen in the work in terms of Oshun, the deity of the arts, love and fertility:

...This image...represents the vast realm of symbolism that is used throughout the world to represent this specific concept, starting with the portrayal of five women posing in front of a mirror, to “invoke” their powers, the mermaid from Brazilian



folklore, the sewing machine from my childhood, the five sunflowers, the Gelede mask from West Africa and the hen, who's egg is the ultimate symbol of fertility.

Inanimate objects are similarly laden in the photorealist paintings of Becky Franco (b. 1952, La Habana, Cuba). *Satisfaction/Satisfacción* and *Clarity/Claridad*, (2010) are both oil on canvas paintings that are based on the objects seen in Franco's own home. Serving as both homage to and critique of consumer culture, the paintings honor the decorative elements in the artist's home but also question of the need for these objects and explore the influence of consumerism. The lavish furnishings, the shiny surfaces of cut glass, beveled edges of mirrors, a partial view of a work by Andy Warhol all serve to highlight the affluence of the environment she portrays, but also to consider the idea of representation, reproduction and, ultimately, kitsch. In the absence of those who might inhabit the home, the items come to act as their proxies, substituting lavish surfaces and gilt edges for individual identities, reproduced image for reality. The artist's past as the first woman in New York City to work as a professional billboard painter has deeply marked her production, particularly the way in which objects are painted and in how American consumer culture is interpreted. Her re-presentation of objects becomes a rhetorical gesture by which she critiques and reifies the importance of surface, substance, and reality.

Paula Garcia, #3 from the series *Noise Body-performance*, 2012; Digital video documenting performance and photo, 30 x 20 in.; Courtesy of the artist.

Manuel Vega, *Oshe Meji*, 2007; Ink on paper; 84 x 75 in.; Courtesy of the artist

Becky Franco, *Satisfaction*, 2010; Oil on canvas, 58 x 40 in.; Courtesy of the artist

Miguel Cardenas, *In studio study for Senda del Jaguar*, 2013; Mixed media, 36 x 50 x 30 in.; Courtesy of the artist

Miguel Cardenas, *Hueso y pellejo*, 2013; Pencil on paper; 11 x 14 in.; Courtesy of the artist

Hector Arce-Espasas, *Welcome to Paradise*, 2011-2013; Mixed media; Dimensions variable; Courtesy of the artist

Matías Cuevas, *Image and Likeness*, 2013; Carpet, carpet trim, household paint and butane torch on panel; 84 x 60 in.; Courtesy of the artist

Lucas Arruda, *Untitled*, 2013; Oil on canvas; 16 x 16 in.; Courtesy THE EKARD COLLECTION

damali abrams, *Autobiography of a Year*, 2009-2013; Still from digital video; 2:54 min.; Courtesy of the artist
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Also focusing on the meaning of display are the drawings and sculptural objects created by Miguel Cárdenas (b. 1985, Bogotá, Colombia). A grouping of his small sculptures, *Senda del Jaguar/The Jaguar's Path* (2013), is reminiscent of works in



progress in his own studio, where he gathers objects collected from various places, including trips to the Amazon. He discusses the very particular arrangement of his strange and wonderful items:

This work was conceived as an arrangement similar to the pieces of a game. I think of it as a miniature system that represents the world as a strategic display between logic and chance. The characters presuppose a narrative: to the left, a screaming green ape rests behind a wondering jaguar, towards the center an animal hand holds the sphere...They are arrested in time, caught in their present alignment. The enigma of their past and of their future is left to ponder.[2]

Casting molds from real skulls and using insulation foam and a variety of paints and silica gels, the artist re-creates the effects of a study collection that might be encountered among the storage chambers of an early museum of natural history. The pencil drawings, *Hueso y Pellejo/Bone and Skin*, *The Tongue is Alive/La lengua esta viva*, *Summer's End/Fin del verano*, *Sphinx/Esfinge*, *The Mime/El mimo*, *The Prophet's Fate /El fin del profeta*, *A Night on Earth (Una noche sobre la tierra)*, *El origen de las cosas/The Origin of Things*, *The Discovery/El descubrimiento* (2013) evolved around the same time as the sculptures and present an eclectic mix of objects, animal limbs and otherworldly landscapes. They enact a kind of visual dialogue between the meaning of an object and its forms. He explores a world that is vaguely recognizable but not directly knowable, like the bottom of the ocean, where ancient creatures inhabit dark spaces and morph into new entities. As he began to arrange the objects and drawings together, they began to interact in curious ways, forming a fascinating and enigmatic narrative. For the artist, "they seem to conjure up archeological remains from an age that is past and future all at once; they bubbled out of a mixture of influences, times, styles, creeds and narratives." *El Museo del Barrio* presents *La Bial 2013: HERE IS WHERE WE JUMP*, the 7th edition of *El Museo's* biennial exhibition. *La Bial 2013* features work by 35 emerging Latino and Latin American artists, from newly-minted to mid-career, who live and work in New York City metropolitan area. Simultaneously, *El Museo* is launching *RADIANCE: After-Hours* at *El Museo* a free Wednesday night after-hours summer art and dance party featuring gallery talks, performances, programs, and a resident DJ. This installation of *La Bial* is curated by *El Museo* Curator Rocío Aranda-Alvarado and Raúl Zamudio, an independent New York-based curator.

Finally, the persistence of the landscape as an exploration of nationalist politics or as a reflection of external interpretation continues to express itself in the work of living artists. The landscape's endurance as a source for inspiration can be used to loosely group a few of the artists seen here. The movement of an object from one landscape to another and the subsequent shifting of its meaning is addressed. The sublime beauty of the land is explored, sometimes ironically, other times as a rhetorical statement about the nature of painting. The expression of life as an inhabited landscape seen through the memories of a journal is also the object of study.

Among the artists in the biennial, Hector Arce-Espasas (b. 1982, San Juan, Puerto Rico) has dedicated his installation work to dealing with the presence of the landscape, particularly as it has been marked and interpreted by the history of tourism. In his works, the objects of the landscape come to stand as markers for the notion of paradise and how it has been misread. In the exhibition, Arce has created a sculptural



installation that references the early life of the pineapple and its circulation as an object that signifies “tropics.” Along with these items is an illustration that depicts the King of England as his servant hands him the same regal fruit. This connection to power and the circulation of goods and services is explored through an oversized nineteenth century image whose surface is reminiscent of the Impressionists or of the work of the Venezuelan painter Armando Reverón. Arce’s critique of stereotyped representations of the Caribbean explores individual objects like the pineapple or the palm tree, which have historically been linked, in a variety of contexts such as furniture design and architecture, to the notion of a tropical paradise. They are also objects of global trade, closely associate with the market (and the marketing) of the islands.

In his unconventional approach to painting, Matias Cuevas (b. 1980, Mendoza, Argentina) explores unusual materials and guides us through the history of art. From the *Bottom of Time/Desde el fondo del tiempo* (2012) and *Image and Likeness/Imagen y semejanza*, 2013 are fashioned from carpet, carpet trim and acrylic. These are then manipulated through the use of paint thinners and the careful wielding of a butane torch on the surface of the carpet. Cuevas plays on the literal associations of carpets with “staining,” and with the industrial provisions of the home construction business. The ordinariness of the materials dialogues powerfully with the way the artist has applied paint to his carpet “canvas.” The artist carefully considers art historical precedents including mid-century American abstraction and the majestic forms of the New York skyline as imagined by architects like Phillip Johnson and Mies van der Rohe. Layers of color spread across the surface of the carpet, evoking various associations with the stain as an effect of modern life, but also as a symbol of the crisis in representation that formed the expression of much of the twentieth century in the U.S. and Europe. Cuevas addresses the legacy of modernism directly, but updates the lens through which it can be viewed by considering the tools and materials of the contemporary contractor.

The interest in the border between abstraction and figuration informs the work of Lucas Arruda (b. 1983, Espirito Santo Brazil). His paintings explore various aspects of both landscape and the act of painting itself. Working in two different styles, the artist has created a body of works that appear to be about the forms of the landscape but also about abstraction and its relationship to identifiable imagery. From his more closely defined works to moody landscapes that are reminiscent of Tonalism or like the contemporary descendants of Romanticism. His exploration of the horizon over the sea, in particular, is poetic, simultaneously evoking a sense of awe and loneliness. The location is undefined, making it a view from many possible shorelines.

This idea of the personal nature of a particular view is explored through the concept of life as a kind of visual and performed landscape. In her exploration of the self-portrait as a perspective on life, damali abrams offers her series of video works, *Autobiography of a Year*. These presentations are based on her readings from her illustrated diaries written during her years as a teenager and young adult and kept now for over 15 years. Rather than explore life chronologically, the artist chooses her readings based on recurring themes, such as the effects of hip hop and pop culture on the psyche of girls and women of color. The artist shares with audiences her varied reflections that are simultaneously mundane and enlightened, feminist and child-like. She invites viewers to identify with the contradictory feelings of loss, nostalgia,



anxiety, empowerment, love and elation. Containing a lifetime of advice and thoughts, these memories are the core of the hand-scribbled and quickly-drawn bits of remembrance and idea. Based on the voice gleaned from her own past, the artist has transformed her performance work and her readings into a weekly cable-access television program, Self-Help TV. Among the scenes here, she usurps traditional attitudes expected of women, takes a walk with Linda Montano to consider the significance of performance, or discussing the legacy of Michael Jackson.

In sharing their ideas through this exhibition, the artists use their location, HERE, New York, East Harlem as the place of possibility of communicating with the viewer, of creating a gesture that is visual, conceptual, rhetorical, and aspirational. Both producers and receivers, they help the institution to continue its efforts to communicate with visitors. The bringing together of these works by the museum is intended merely as a proposal, a first step in creating an expansive conversation that considers the exchanges possible through the works, thoughts, and ideas of artists living in our midst.

[1] It is important to note here that the end of this fable has been a favorite of a number of philosophers, including both Hegel and Marx, and various (mis)translations have been at the root of using the phrase Hic Rhodus, hic salta, in philosophical discourse. See Robert Silverberg, "Reflections: Hic Rhodus, Hic Salta," Asimov's Science Fiction [http://www.asimovs.com/_issue_0901/ref.shtml] accessed May 22, 2013.

[2] Correspondence with the author, May 2, 2013.