

Volume 3, 2016-2017

SHS

SENIOR HONORS STUDIO
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NYU CC

Introduction

In the academic arena it's very popular to throw around the word interdisciplinary. I know. I just visited 14 colleges this past year with my daughter. It's a trending buzz-word so overused it has become meaningless. Flying in the face of this, the Senior Honors Studio of the NYU Steinhardt BFA Program (SHS) serves as nexus for a vibrant, successful and very real inter-disciplinary project bringing together two NYU schools, the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development and the venerable Institute of Fine Arts – producer of many of the world's leading art historians, museum directors, and curators. At this intersection, several programs come into the mix: the outstanding BFA program and the acclaimed 80WSE Gallery – both thriving in the Department of Art and Art Professions – as well as the Institute of Fine Arts PhD and Masters programs harboring a range of focus from contemporary to historical art. All these participants coalesce together as the *New York University Curatorial Collaboration* known as NYUCC.

Grown out of the desire to bridge the gap between theory and practice – a shared sentiment between the aspiring curators and young artists both – the NYUCC's formation created a rare platform for students to engage in close discourse across degree levels. Over the past three years uncommon opportunities have evolved for the students involved: Curators become privy to the inception and production of new art, while art students gain experience working with a curator, something not feasibly taught in school. The fruits of their labors are then showcased in the renowned 80WSE Gallery. The practitioners exhibit their artwork, and the theoreticians organize the shows and write texts to accompany them. It is rare that a BFA student leave

their undergraduate studies with a text written on their work by a curator, and equally rare for a graduate student to be published while still in school. This thriving interdisciplinary project between SHS and NYUCC is undoubtedly THE characteristic that sets the Steinhardt BFA experience apart from the vast array of other American schools of art and reflects the benefit of a university setting, as opposed to a conventional art school.

As director of the BFA program I would like to thank all seniors for their work over the last four years. Our program is ambitious, and it's exhilarating to see students evolve over their tenure. I am also extremely proud of how vocal and opinionated seniors are. As a direct result of their comments the NYUCC engagement has expanded to include more opportunity for more students. As of this year, all seniors now engage with IFA students by way of intensive one-on-one meetings in the context of their thesis exhibitions. Walking a curator through a show is another professional exercise that is critical for artists to experience, yet nearly impossible to offer in an academic setting.

This vital interdisciplinary work would not be possible without the vision and undying enthusiasm of our Department Chair, Jesse Bransford, and Senior Studio Program Coordinator, Ian Cooper, as well as NYUCC Coordinators, Ksenia Soboleva and Madeline Turner. For the continued support of 80WSE many thanks to Director and Curator, Nicola Lees and her team. Special thanks to our home team: Tammy Lee Brown, Ken Castronuovo, Lonnie Woods III, and to the numerous others who have given time and energy to this project, thank you.

Marlene McCarty
Clinical Associate Professor
BFA Program Director
Department of Art and Art Professions
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Terrace House

Before even attempting thematic cohesiveness, Emily Wang and Iiana Bilor-Wesly works share a domesticity, feminine rage, and secrecy; A sort of hiding in plain sight. For these artists, creating is a function of seeking to connect and relate, of extending oneself out to the world. However, these manifestations are secretive and perhaps not without deception. This is all ultimately done in pursuit of a creating a safe space, a domestic sphere, a dream house imbued with nostalgia.



Iiana Bilor-Wesly
A592 Penrith July 2016, 2016
Digital Photograph
Dimensions Variable



a lo-res drawing by the artist Emily Wang

Wang's sculptures are an assemblage of mostly found objects: unsuspecting materials fabricated into a volume that appears familiar but is ambiguous to the viewer. The clothes hanger made of glass resembles an object we know to serve a purpose, but its crudeness interrupts your assumptions of its ability to function. Likewise, stacks of jugs of soybean oil, used up but now repurposed as a sort of totem, provoke ruminations on location and place. Where are these from, what are they now?

Bilor-Wesly's paintings are a meditation on what appear to be projections of a photographic memory. The combinations of identifiable yet unfamiliar objects prompt the viewer into a sort of equation. What does this collection of things mean, have I been to this place before? Are they merely distractions? Bilor-Wesly's interrogation of knowing, conducted through a personal vernacular of items, is unsuspecting, quiet and cozy. It is less a language of homesickness and more a simultaneous deterioration and reconstruction of the objects contained in the paintings themselves.

Art historian and literary critic Mary Ann Caws wrote in her essay *Rage Beings at Home*: "With rage, I am much at home. It is however quiet, however unexpressed, a part of me. It plays its own undeniable role in what I choose to speak and write about, playing the largest part in whatever passion that has."

Rage is not necessarily loud or violent or obvious – it churns, and brews, and motivates. There is a vibration of rage underpinning these works that is not altogether hostile. Considered together, Wang's and Bilor-Wesly's work feels complete, like a well-furnished living space. Their works exist outside themselves as a means of accessing themselves; they are a stand-in for the voice of "otherness" of their experience, a taking up of space they have previously been denied. But it is not the viewer's space, and Wang and Bilor-Wesly have created the rules.

80WSE

Senior Honors Studio
February 7 — March 11, 2017

Gallery One
80 Washington Square East
New York, NY 10003

Senior Honors Studio 2016/17 chronicles a series of five, week-long exhibitions specifically conceived of by pairs of BFA candidate Studio Art majors from the New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development's Department of Art & Art Professions working closely with a curatorial Masters/PhD candidate from New York University's Institute of Fine Arts under the dual auspices of the student-organized NYU Curatorial Collaborative and the Senior Honors Studio program.

Organizers

Tammy Lee Brown - Director, Planning & Communications
Ian Cooper - Senior Studio Program Coordinator
Ksenia M. Soboleva & Madeline Murphy Turner -
NYU Curatorial Collaborative Coordinator

Nicola Lees - Director, 80WSE Gallery
Ben Hatcher - Exhibitions Coordinator, 80WSE Gallery
Hugh O'Rourke - Gallery Manager, 80WSE Gallery
Pete Valenti - Exhibition Technician
Lilli Rose Biltucci, Olivia Chou, Catalina Granados,
Anika Larsen, Jongho Lee - Exhibition Assistants

Jenny Noguchi - Publication Designer
Maral Babai - Copy Editor
Jason Varone - Web & Electronic Media Manager

Artists

Olivia Andrews, Iiana Bilor-Wesly, Jóa, Ila Krishnamoorthy, Anna Marchisello, Daniel Mock, Phoebe Louise Randall, Dylan Riley, Kiyomi Taylor, Emily Wang

Curators

Julia Bozer, Megan DiNoia, Regina Harsanyi, Eva Jensen, Haley Pierce

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