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SENIOR HONORS STUDIO
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NYU CC

Introduction

This is a difficult time for artists and curators. They face not only the standard difficulties of cultural producers—the struggle to find a voice, the need to remake the world and push against the burden of their predecessors—nor just the ever-present pressures of economic well-being. They are also making work in a time of tremendous precarity for the world at large, threatened by specters of fascism and conflict, and the fact that their future horizon disappears daily as the global temperature rises. The group of undergraduate students involved in this catalogue are representative of a larger student body, all of whom are finding themselves in a process of negotiating their place in the world, both as artists and citizens.

One of the means artists have always used to forge their visions in times of crisis is collaboration. From medieval guilds to modernist movements, artists find strength and expressive capacity through alignment. The collaboration between NYU BFA Program in Studio Art and The Institute of Fine Arts is part of this history. The New York University Curatorial Collaborative began in 2014, initiated by both students and faculty and designed to bring graduate students in art history into contact with senior undergraduate students of the BFA Program. In so doing, they were not thinking in the standard terms of “networking,” but in the art historical vision of community-building.

The collaborative processes will be made public through several two-person exhibitions at BOWSE Gallery and one curated group exhibition organized in galleries of the Barney Building, home to the Studio Art Program. The students

chosen were selected by a combination of factors, including their commitment to work, their interest in the project, the diversity they manifest (diversity being a central component of coalition-building), and the contingent alignments between curatorial and artistic visions that make shows like this possible. Like all community-formations, these shows are both organic and artificial, both institutional and experimental. These tensions make the collaboration unique and full of the unexpected.

The works you will see in this catalogue are the result of research, trial and error, learning, feedback, and the enthusiasm of these students to realize their visions. As faculty, we embrace the multiplicity of backgrounds and approaches that these students represent. As the Director of the BFA Program, I am proud that the work showcased in the exhibition is a testament both to the efforts of these young artists, and to the extraordinary faculty that have guided them through their time here.

This catalogue marks a point in the students’ journey as artists. It is not the end of their journey, nor the ultimate expression of their vision for the world. It is a proposition for a conversation with you, the viewer. The catalogue is thus more a pause than a completion, a space to recognize and to honor the interests, ideas and efforts of our students and the curators who have engaged with and expanded their visions. We thank you for joining them in this journey as they confront the difficult times we live in, and help make possible a future full of the values seen herein, including community, creativity, engagement as well as resistance.

Shadi Harouni
BFA Program Director
Department of Art and Art Professions
New York University

Signs as Places

Olivia Chou and Marta Murray have long been preoccupied with the experiences of places, the issues around taste, and the commercial culture deeply embedded in the American life. Considering the Americana as a mixture of imagined history, fake memories and illusionary nostalgia manifested in a series of visual signs such as advertisements, billboards, sand castles, and blue highways, Chou and Murray continues their reflection by working collaboratively in this show, transforming the gallery space into a stage set by juxtaposing Murray's life size collage paintings with Chou's flattened free standing sculptures.

Interested in representing the lifestyle and taste of the American middle class, Murray draws inspiration extensively from her experience of the rural America, integrating blue highways, the deserts and billboards into her canvas to reflect on the making of places with signs. Integrating mass-produced commodities, neon signs, and dizzy street scenes into her pictorial planes, Murray offers an infinite space that reveals both personal memories and popular visual culture within the ever-changing social surroundings. The painted paper strides attached to the pictorial surface are arranged as sculptural elements protruding into the audience's space, which further animates Murray's paintings and transform them into a series of theatrical scene lively performed by the matrix of signs, forms and colors that recalls the artist's memory of the rural America as a vast stage.

Directly responding to Murray's paintings, Chou picks up graphic elements within Murray's pictorial planes and transform those two dimensional representations into free standing sculptures spreading around the gallery space. Holding a strong interest in theatre and stage design, Chou intentionally gives her sculptures a flattened look by cutting them out of thin boards, applying vivid colors on them to imitate the stage props. Chou's color scheme is specifically inspired by the Japanese Vaporwave aesthetics in the 1980s, which is rooted in cyberpunk culture. By applying bright and saturated purple, pink, and bluish colors, Chou creates a futuristic visual impression that registers the realm of the cyberspace, Japanese manga, and video games, bringing another dimension of theatricality that blurs the boundary between the reality and the virtual reality.

By exposing the audience to this playful stage set, Olivia Chou and Marta Murray create an ambiguous space within the tension between representation and performativity, providing an immersive environment with no clear instructions of the way the audience supposed to orient themselves. The sense of disorientation at the same time opens up multiple interpretations and makes the audience both the performer and the spectator within the show, whose presence has a decisive role for transforming the stage into an animated theater.



Marta Murray
Workhorse, 2017
Monoprint, gouache acrylic and oil on paper
9 x 3.5 ft



Olivia Chou
Artist Studio (Detail), 2017

8OWSE

Senior Honors Studio
February 7 — March 12, 2018

Gallery One
80 Washington Square East
New York, NY 10003

Senior Honors Studio 2017/18 chronicles a series of five, week-long exhibitions featuring pairs of BFA Studio Art majors from the New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development's Department of Art & Art Professions, working in close collaboration with a curatorial Masters / PhD candidate from New York University's Institute of Fine Arts. The exhibitions are conceived under the dual auspices of the student organized NYU Curatorial collaborative and the Senior Honors Studio Program.

Organizers

Tammy Lee Brown - Director, Planning & Communications
Priyanka Dasgupta - Senior Studio Faculty & Program Coordinator
Kathleen Joyce & Haley Pierce -
NYU Curatorial Collaborative Coordinator

Nicola Lees - Director, 8OWSE Gallery
Ben Hatcher - Exhibitions Coordinator, 8OWSE Gallery
Hugh O'Rourke - Gallery Manager, 8OWSE Gallery
Olivia Andrews - Exhibition Technician
Sasha Ballard, Byron Kim, Hannah Sage Murphy, David Stapleton,
Alston Watson, Kara Kendal - Exhibition Assistants

Jenny Noguchi - Publication Designer
Maral Babai - Copy Editor
Emily Ruth Olsen, Briana Zimmerman - Publication Assistant
Jason Varone - Web & Electronic Media Manager
Benjamin Lozovsky - Photographer

Cover image:
Marta Murray, *Workhorse*, 2017, Monoprint, gouache acrylic and oil on paper, 9 x 3.5 ft.

Advisors

Jesse Bransford, Clinical Associate Professor, Dept. Chair,
Art & Art Professions, Steinhardt
Shadi Harouni, Visiting Assistant Professor, BFA Director, Art & Art
Professions, Steinhardt
Edward Sullivan, Deputy Director, NYU Institute of Fine Arts and
College of Arts and Sciences

Artists

Lilli Biltucci, Olivia Chou, Daniel Evanko, Nathan Storey Freeman,
Catalina Granados, Monilola Ilupeju, Elexa Jefferson, Jackie Kong,
Jongho Lee, Marta Murray

Curators

Samuel Corey Allen, Phoebe Herland, Amelia Russo,
Jiajing Sun, Mengyao Wang

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Alejandro Flores, Kirby Gookin, Agustin Granados, Jimena
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Shadi Harouni, Lyle Ashton Harris, Ben Hatcher, Juliet Jacobson,
Rindon Johnson, Kathleen Joyce, Kara Kendall, Jonghyun Kim,
Okyu Kim, Sekwon Kong, Youngbin Kong, Mara Dawn Kravitz,
Rachel Lacoste, Nicola Lees, Felicia Leung, Benjamin Lozovsky,
Sara Magenheimer, Marlene McCarty, Billie Murray, Patrick Murray,
Terry Murray, Michelle Ng, Jenny Noguchi, Emily Ruth Olsen,
Hugh O'Rourke, Carla Herrera Pratts, Haley Pierce, Phoebe Potter,
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