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SENIOR HONORS STUDIO
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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

Lilli Biltucci
Monilola Ilupeju

Curated by:
Sam Allen

February 28 – March 3

Do you being where I end?



Monilola Ilupeju
Untitled 1 (Self Portrait Series), 2017
Oil on canvas
4 x 5 ft



Lilli Biltucci
Spinning oceans around (installation view), 2017
On map-making and the domination of space
and personhood through knowledge production

Does it signify something politically meaningful to cry over art? I'm not talking about that threadbare sentimentality of being overwhelmed by beauty but something altogether different, more modest perhaps: a feeling-with, mediated by an artwork, that draws you to the outer reaches of yourself and puts you in contact with another person. In "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," Audre Lorde is explicit about the political stakes of such empathic connections, writing, "The sharing of joy...forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference." This experience of commonality and difference-through-sameness clarifies the contours of relationships to the surrounding world. Occasionally it can infiltrate spectatorship, taking the form of feeling seen by, feeling in sync with an artwork. Stemming from a blend of gratitude for a brief moment of intersubjectivity and frustration that, despite it all, we can only understand one another to certain limits, to cry is to yearn (productively, if you choose) for such relationality to take root beyond the walls of the gallery space.

I begin here because the first time I felt in sync with the work of Monilola Ilupeju, as well as with that of Lilli Biltucci, there were tears. This experience clarified my sense of these two artists' projects. Ilupeju operates with so acute a directness—whether in monumental, meticulously painted self-portraits or confessional videos dexterously produced with insufficient digital tools—that one doesn't realize until it's too late how the work has radiated concentrically out from her own experience of dysmorphia and other physicalities to encompass the viewer within a space of shared experience. If these pieces encounter their audience with an embracing action, Biltucci's art operates more along the lines of a constellation. They hang shelves of soothing flowers and spices, gift hand-sewn jumpsuits to friends, redistribute the resources and platform that accrue to one who calls themselves an 'artist:' antimemorial acts generating vectors of transmission that aim to undo the reductive singularities of a world masterfully ordered by power—reducing objects to exchange-values, artists to self-sufficient actors, people to bounded and stable identities—minor acts of exchange that hope to map escape routes from the rigid binaries these pieties produce.

Issues of gender, sexuality, and race lie at the heart of both artists' practices, and in both cases we might speak of an aesthetics of vulnerability or radical honesty, of a turning outward of their interiority to turn it into a vehicle for building coalitions around the experience of living. *Do you begin where I end?* combines the enclosure of an embrace with the interlinking of a constellation to form a provisional space that privileges the intimacies and the exchanges (of ideas, memories, intentions, care) that accompany collectivity. By reframing the creative act as participatory, Ilupeju and Biltucci generate opportunities for affirmation and sustenance, for seeing and knowing others, and for understanding more clearly—through empathy—the contours of our contact with the world.

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

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

Advisors

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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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Okyu Kim, Sekwon Kong, Youngbin Kong, Mara Dawn Kravitz,
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