

Volume 7, 2020 - 2021

**SENIOR HONORS STUDIO**  
EST. 2014





## Introduction

The New York University Curatorial Collaborative began as a student initiative in 2014.

The program brings together artists, senior BFA students from the Studio Art Program, and curators, Masters and PhD candidates in art history from the Institute of Fine Arts, with tools and resources to organize a series of exhibitions and accompanying publications.

Each year, the thrust and significance of this collaboration is redefined by the participating artists and curators, and the team of faculty and staff that mentor and support them. In this sense, this year's Curatorial Collaborative is no exception; though it has been formed in exceptional circumstances. In the summer of 2020, when we began to consider the possibility of organizing these exhibitions, the world was engulfed in a fog of uncertainty, brought about by a global pandemic.

As it appeared nearly impossible to plan for such a collaborative effort in a moment of isolation and precarity, we found even greater significance in the act of planning itself. As we planned with uncertainty, we placed renewed value in the process of curatorial and artistic collaboration, in conversation, in mutual understanding and misunderstanding, and in the joyful and painful process of continuously shifting our fixed perspectives. This collaboration, the research, rigor, and challenge it embodies, is an expression of hope. It is, as with all meaningful artistic endeavors, an expression of the desire to reimagine the boundaries of individual and collective possibility.

**Shadi Harouni**  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Studio Art  
& Director of Undergraduate Studios,  
Art & Art Professions, Steinhardt

There are as many definitions of "curating" as there are websites about the subject. I have found one (coschedule.com) that seems to present a sensible, if incomplete, description of the job of curator as someone "in charge of a collection of exhibits in a museum or art gallery. Their job is to build up collections...work with colleagues in areas such as conservation, education, design and marketing." Many years ago, curators were often called "Keepers" (this is still often the case in the UK) indicating that they were principally tasked with the preservation of permanent collections in museums. Now, it often seems as if anything may be curated, from a brand of coffee or clothing to one's own shoe or hat collection. In my estimation curating should still refer specifically to the act of choosing works of art for display, working with the artist (if it is an exhibition of contemporary art), create a pathway (through wall texts, catalogues etc.) for the viewer to understand what they are seeing and organize events in which the works are discussed and debated. All of this needs collaboration and team work. The Steinhardt-IFA Curatorial Collaborative was formed several years ago to provide synergies between promising undergraduate artists and MA and PhD students in Art History. Artists and scholars are mutually nourished by this important experience that gives the art historians a special entrée into the creative process that they do not always get listening to lectures and researching in archives and libraries. The art students are equally inspired to create their best work for individual or group exhibitions held in the spring term. It is a proverbial "WIN-WIN" situation for everyone involved.

**Edward J. Sullivan**  
Deputy Director & Helen Gould Shepard  
Professor in the History of Art, Institute of  
Fine Arts

## UNWILLINGLY SAZONADO Y MORADO



Les-lie López  
*Luchando*, 2019  
Acrylic and glitter  
50 x 33 inches



Camila Rodriguez  
*Colombian Cumbia Skirts*, 2019  
Fabric  
220 x 35 inches (diameter x height)

Les-lie López and Camila Rodriguez Jimenez operate from a paradoxical position, as they find themselves both marginalized and thrust into the spotlight. Historically, the voices of the Mexican and Colombian communities to which they belong did not have priority in the United States. But due to shifting cultural values in recent years, interest in the experiences and perspectives of these groups is growing. As artists, Les-lie and Camila feel pressure to fulfill the role of spokesperson for their cultures. However, they do not desire to be pigeonholed by their backgrounds. 'Unwillingly Sazonado y Morado' explores the challenges of using art to bring under-represented peoples and issues onto the mainstage of culture, while fighting for recognition of one's own independent, artistic voice.

In *Luchando*, Les-lie creates an image of their parents as wrestlers. Wearing celebratory attire and luchador masks, an emblem of Mexican wrestling, they stand within one another's embrace as they look into the distance. These features convey a message about fighting for the future, as they are two people who agreed to support one another through life's ups and downs. Les-lie infuses the luchador mask with a unique message about love and willingness to fight for the future of the people and things one cares about. As a child of Mexican immigrants, Les-lie is aware of how their parents' life experiences impact the perception people have of them. Through this piece, they ask the viewer to recognize the role that parents play in predetermining their children's identity.

Camila cares deeply about social and environmental issues, and she uses *Colombian Cumbia Skirts* to emphasize the connectivity between these two things.

With her back to the camera, Camila sits in the middle of a multitiered skirt that flares out around her in a mass of vibrant color and texture. Traditional Colombian crafts, arts and costumes influence Camila, and that comes through in this artwork. Although the skirt is composed of various parts, the circular form reminds the viewer that everything is connected and equally important to the garment's functionality. If one section is removed, the piece will fall apart. This fragility speaks not only to society, but also to the tenuous balance between humans and the environment, and how if people continue to take carelessly from nature, they risk causing irreparable damage to the wider world.

Les-lie and Camila draw attention to the people who live between mainstream culture in America and the communities on its fringes. Through the fusion of the English and Spanish languages in the title, 'Unwillingly Sazonado y Morado,' Les-lie and Camila highlight the tension between needing to communicate with an English-speaking, American audience and wanting to use the Spanish language that is prevalent in their countries and cultures and that ties them to their native roots. Ultimately, these artists draw attention to political, environmental and identity issues, but the style and method in which they explore these subjects is highly personal and entirely their own.

# Senior Honors Studio

## February 10 - March 13, 2021

### Gallery One

80 Washington Square East  
New York, NY 10003

Senior Honors Studio 2020/21 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 curatorial Masters / PhD candidates 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:

Priyanka Dasgupta - Senior Studio Faculty & Program Coordinator  
Charlotte Kinberger, Katie Maher, Kaitlin Ann Johndrow  
& Lilia Kudelia - NYU Curatorial Collaborative Coordinators  
Tammy Lee Brown - Director, Planning and Communications  
Lucas Quigley - Manager, 80WSE Gallery  
Jon Huron - Exhibitions and Installation Administrator  
Aaron Kissman - Operations & Facilities Manager  
Olivia Andrews - Exhibitions Coordinator & Technician  
Caleb Williams - Senior Studio Assistant  
Jenny Noguchi - Publication Designer  
Paula Rondon - Digital Studios & Technology Manager  
Jason Varone - Web & Electronic Media Manager  
Omer Ben Zvi - Photographer

### Advisors:

Nancy Deihl, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department Chair,  
Art & Art Professions, Steinhardt  
Shadi Harouni, Clinical Assistant Professor of  
Studio Art & Director of Undergraduate Studies,  
Art & Art Professions, Steinhardt  
Edward Sullivan, Deputy Director;  
Helen Gould Shepard Professor in the History of Art;  
the Institute of Fine Arts and the College of Arts and Science

### Cover image:

Camila Rodriguez

### Cover photo:

Omer Ben Zvi

### Artists:

Oona Bebout, Yinan (Rebecca) Chen, Naava Guaraca,  
Les-lie López, Eleisha Faith McCorkle & Tonisha Hope  
McCorkle, Giovanna Pedrinola, Camila Rodriguez,  
Isabella Wang, Shane Weiss, Derek Koffi-Ziter

### Curators:

Chloë Courtney, Janelle Minitier, Madeleine Morris,  
Martina Lentino, Leigh Peterson

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Jessica Lee, Les-lie López, Kevin McCoy,  
Marlene McCarty, Vonetta Moses, Jenny Noguchi,  
Julia Louise Olson, Isabelle Perkins, Christine Poggi,  
Laurel Ptak, Lucas Quigley, Paula Rondon, Julia Seibolt,  
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Caleb Williams, Omer Ben Zvi, Vanessa Stone  
and Conley Lowrance.