

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

Derek Koffi-Ziter and
Isabella Wang

Independent Research: Perceived Selves

How do others' perceptions influence the way we see ourselves? Through which channels do seemingly disparate thoughts connect, contributing to an inevitably multidimensional state of being? How does the practice of identity formation cope with constant self-reflection and self-criticism? In *Independent Research: Perceived Selves* artists Isabella Wang and Derek Koffi-Ziter think through these questions in multimedia works that act as explorations of their psyches and lived experiences. *Independent Research* functions as a snapshot of their respective practices, highlighting self-analysis, introspection, and pluralistic identity as shared conceptual underpinnings.

Isabella Wang's practice is a constant effort to make sense of overthinking and disorder; Through her practice she attempts to parse through spaces, relationships, associations, and perceptions that exist in seemingly disjointed but inextricably interlinked psychological space. In Wang's work as both a visual artist and a writer, she communicates honestly, centering her experience with mental illness and bipolar disorder. With a preference for saturated color, space, and content, Wang divulges in a maximalist fashion, taking the viewer on as a participant in making meaning of non-linearity and personal history. Her recent painting includes details that require close looking. *Ascension*, exemplifies these qualities. Expressing her state of mind in a moment of mania, Wang paints with uninhibited creativity and in large scale. In its pictorial elements, the painting is intriguing, disturbing, and absurd. In a highly pigmented, abstracted landscape, a female body with no head or arms sensually leans into the image. If she continues, however, she may fall into the screaming, disembodied face that appears

Curator
Martina Lentino

out of incomprehensible space. Around the main action, tiny figures engage in different activities, making one question the already impossible image in its scale. Though physical space may be limiting, the depths of the mind are endless; psychological space and ideas do not hold back.

Derek Koffi-Ziter similarly makes to understand their psychological state. Their multimedia oeuvre unfolds over time as an introspective analysis of constructed identity, and as a practice in continued reflection of their self and their life in critical stages. Koffi-Ziter's work focuses on the experience of having many marginalized identities, and a desire to assert these identities in the creation of agency and self-discovery. For many years, they have photographed others' manifestations of their identities. In the recent past, however, Koffi-Ziter's practice has become an introspective exploration of their interiority and their body in space. Their video/performance, *Seeking Solace* (2020), emphasizes a desire to create without barriers, and to embrace discomfort for the sake of mental and spiritual transformation. Though taking distance from formal religion, the artist's naked body in nature, and in water, can be read as a self-baptism— as an initiation into new personal understandings, capacities for communication, and individual spiritualities. They invite us to view this intimate moment of subconscious exploration and patient vulnerability.

Independent Research: Perceived Selves places two very formally distinct oeuvres in conversation, aiming to explore what it might mean to research, share, and comprehend oneself.

March 3 - March 6



Isabella Wang
Ascension, 2020
Acrylic paint on canvas
30 x 40 inches



Derek Koffi-Ziter
Seeking Solace, 2020
Digital video
4 mins

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:

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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 Minter, Madeleine Morris,
Martina Lentino, Leigh Peterson

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Laurel Ptak, Lucas Quigley, Paula Rondon, Julia Seibolt,
Linda Sormin, Jamie Sterns, Edward Sullivan,
Hiroshi Sunairi, Rhiannon Thomas, Bella Wang,
Caleb Williams, Omer Ben Zvi, Vanessa Stone
and Conley Lowrance.