

June 4 - August 21, 2021

Jamaica Flux: Workspaces & Windows

Curator: Danni Shen

Organized by: Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning, New York

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Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation.

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Directors’ Preface

An early draft of this essay opened with what can only be characterized as a grasping search for humor. “Hey, didja hear the one about the global pandemic?,” though, couldn’t make the final cut: the tone is too glib too soon; our world and our communities aren’t remotely

back to whatever we once called “normal,” or whatever “normal” in the future will be. The grasping wasn’t even about being funny, per se; after a period of so much tragedy and loss, sadness and despair, you might call it human nature to want to avoid writing something too ponderous or severe.

A second draft of this essay edged closer to the right tone, to something that made us smile. It related to what we have learned about ourselves in general, and about creativity in particular—that the mere act of imagining and planning and executing a site-specific, community-wide art show, especially in a moment of pandemic and such monumental social change, is to reaffirm our faith in the possibilities of our troubled and polarized America, and to witness what happens when America’s artists operate at their very finest.

For we need not tell you how often we feared never reaching this moment. There were so many times when COVID, fiscal terrors, community uncertainty and—well, that word “despair” again—made the idea almost laughable that the fifth iteration of *Jamaica Flux* would be delivered to our Southeast Queens community. Yet here we are and it did happen. It makes us smile even more broadly to learn as if for the first time and not the millionth that one must never, ever underestimate the galactic superpower of a group of dedicated artists and artist groups—in this case, 14 of them. Governed by unstinting integrity and driven by fidelity to the ideals of

Jamaica Flux, we are honored and humbled by their presence in this project.

We are further proud that this year’s *Jamaica Flux* artists received such stimulating, often thought-provoking support from Project Director and Curator Danni Shen and Project Advisor Heng-Gil Han.

And here in the administrative warrens of our modest institution, Naomi Kuo, our Visual Arts Program Associate, has proven again and again to be the indefatigable hero who saves the day. Surely it is because Naomi is an extraordinary solo artist in her own right that she could understand intimately the formidable challenges facing this year’s artists. Surely it is also because she discovered that mounting *Jamaica Flux* is something of an art unto itself—one that she practiced with effortless craft, patience, kindness, humor and grace.

We wish to offer a special thank you to the National Endowment for the Arts, the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, Resorts World New York, and the many individuals whose donations made *Jamaica Flux: Workspaces & Windows 2021* possible. We are immeasurably gratified by their support.

Leonard Jacobs,
Interim Executive Director

Courtney Ffrench,
Interim Artistic Director
June 22, 2021

“...a democratic society is one in which relations of conflict are sustained, not erased. Without antagonism there is only the imposed consensus of authoritarian order—a total suppression of debate and discussion, which is inimical to democracy. It is important to stress right away that the idea of antagonism is not...a pessimistic acceptance of political deadlock; antagonism does not signal “the expulsion of utopia from the field of the political.” On the contrary... without the concept of utopia there is no possibility of a radical imaginary. The task is to balance the tension between imaginary ideal and pragmatic management of a social positivity without lapsing into the totalitarian.”

— Claire Bishop¹

“...we would need to consider the possibility that our task may consist, in large part, of protecting utopia—seen as the necessary collusion of the past with what lies ahead—from its demise at the hands of the ideology of present time. This is, to be sure, an uncomfortable inheritance. At the end of the day, it involves the memory of failure and a necessary infatuation with the powers of history...And it may well be that contemporary art’s ethical imperative is to deal with the ambivalence of the experience of emancipation. If art has indeed become the sanctuary of revolutionary thought, it is because it deals with the memory of a number of ambiguous interruptions...”

— Cuauhtémoc Medina²

Curator’s Brief

Danni Shen

During times of global pandemic, art worlds everywhere have had to ask the question of: how do we engage in times of closed doors and borders, in the face of daunting and

often ungraspable futures? Turning to hybrid organizing, our relationships and communities at the more localized temporalities of everyday life, *Jamaica Flux* has kept with the spirit of “flux” to make space for work that is both shaped by and transforms through the limitations and demands of the times. I am thankful that we have been able to make it through with the continuous support of so many.

I want to first thank all of the incredible artists of this fifth edition of *Jamaica Flux* in 2021 for the important work that they have been undertaking through their practices: Damali Abrams, Heejung Cho, Indranil Choudhury, Cody + Julian: Cody Ann Herrmann and Julian Louis Phillips, Shereese Francis, Linda Ganjian, Hayoon Jay Lee, Le’Andra LeSeur, Reuben Lorch-Miller, Firoz Mahmud, Nadia Misir, Sari Nordman, Jessica Segall and Misra Walker. Each artist took on the year-long endeavor to create public, socially-engaged projects in collaboration with organizations and sites along Jamaica Avenue in Queens, NY. First conceived in 2002 to address the separation of art from everyday life, *Jamaica Flux* has since evolved with the community in every iteration to reflect the pressing issues of the times and to advocate for expanded collaboration through the arts. With the intent to build equity and cultural inclusion throughout Southeast Queens, *Jamaica Flux* strives to commission and present publicly accessible art projects, while also documenting the developments and contradictions that arise in the process. *Jamaica Flux 2021* continues to explore the interconnection of Jamaica’s rich history, present, economic development,

1
Claire Bishop, *Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics*, New York: CUNY Graduate Center, 2004.

2
Cuauhtémoc Medina, “Contemp(t)orary: Eleven Theses”, e-flux: journal #12, 2010, www.e-flux.com/journal/12/61335/contemp-t-orary-eleven-theses/

cultural heritage, and diversity in the conceptualization of each project. The artists conducted research to build on new and/or previous community relationships, both virtually and in-person. The project brings together artists, curators, scholars, local residents, community leaders, developers, politicians and stakeholders to build on the cultural legacy of Southeast Queens and to catalyze the transformative power of the arts, generating creative responses to the anxieties and tensions of our present moment. This catalogue is just one component of *Jamaica Flux 2021* which reflects the distinct, eclectic, as well as push-and-pull nature of the project and its situation within this moment in time.

Thank you to our partnering stakeholders, organizations, and sites for their continued support: JFK AirTrain/LIRR, NYC Parks Department, NYC Department of Transportation, Littoral Society in Jamaica Bay, Queens Central Public Library, Queens Memory Project, Resorts World, Rufus King Manor Museum, Sutphin BID, and the 165th Street Mall. I also want to further thank our original selection committee of New York art professionals and local community leaders. It was during the height of quarantine that we sat down together in a zoom call more than a year ago now in June 2020 to select these 14 projects from a pool of open call proposals. Thanks to the JCAL team for their support, and Naomi Kuo, JCAL Visual Art Program Associate, for being the true backbone of this project and institutional mediator. Without the collaborative efforts of all those involved, Jamaica Flux 2021 would not have been possible.



“Thank you so much to everyone who has been trusting me with their stories.

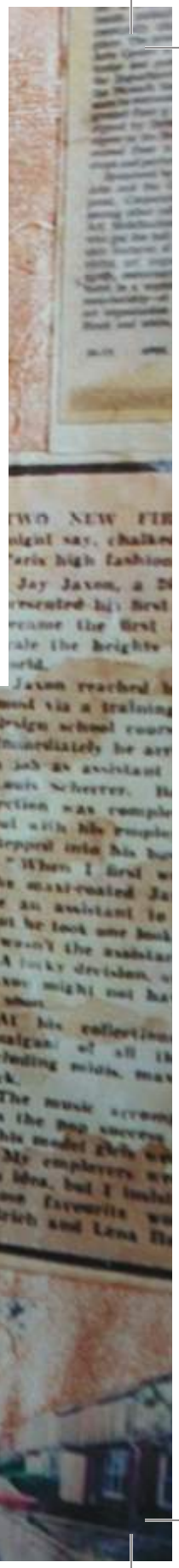
Thank you to Janet Henry for sharing her personal archives with me.”

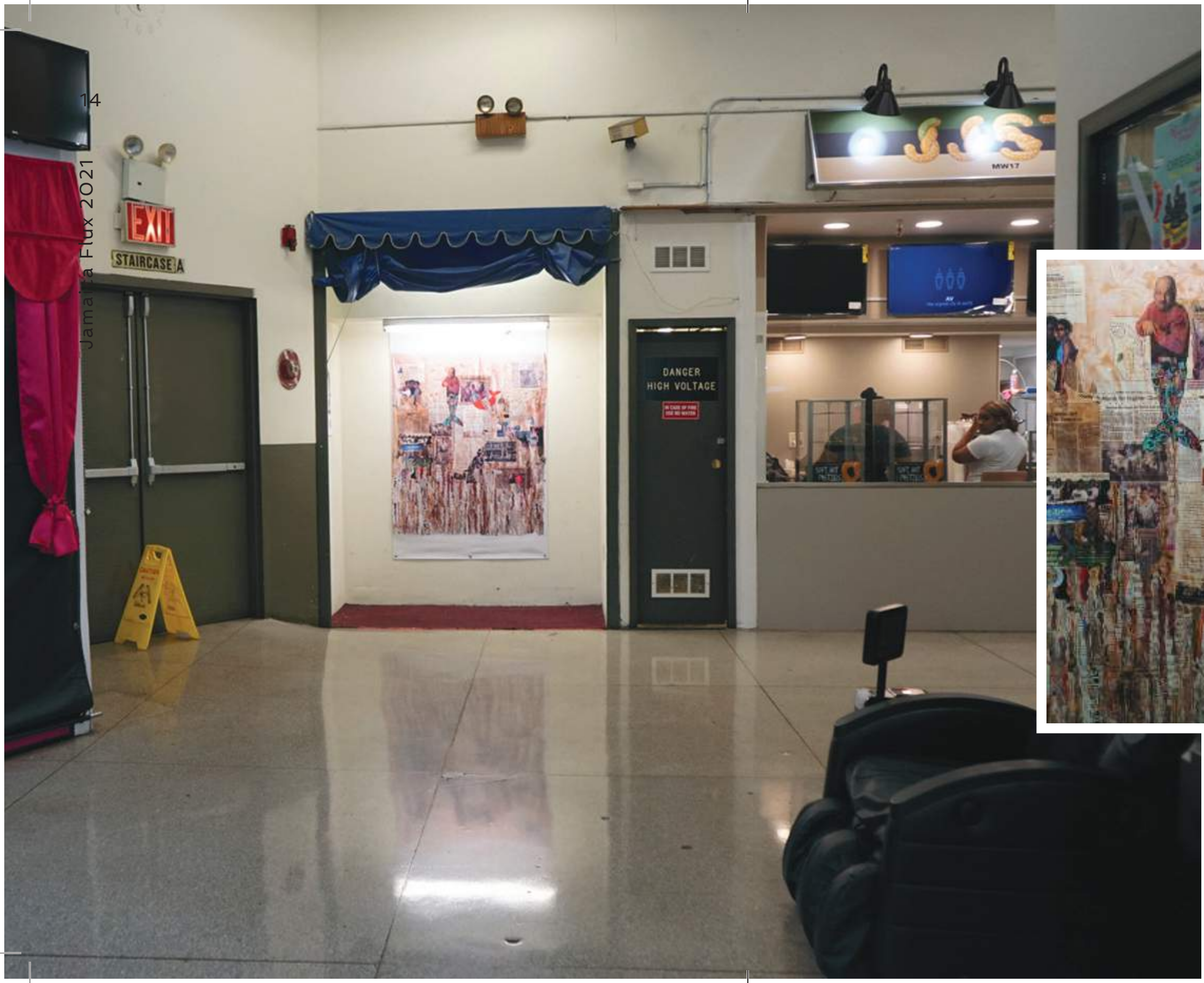


Damali Abrams

A WINDOW INTO ORAL HISTORIES OF JAMAICA ARTISTS focuses on culture-makers in Jamaica to create a large-scale collage based on recorded interviews with local artists and business owners.

The collage was exhibited inside the Colosseum Mall near the south entrance on 165th St.





Photos by Tyrel Hunt

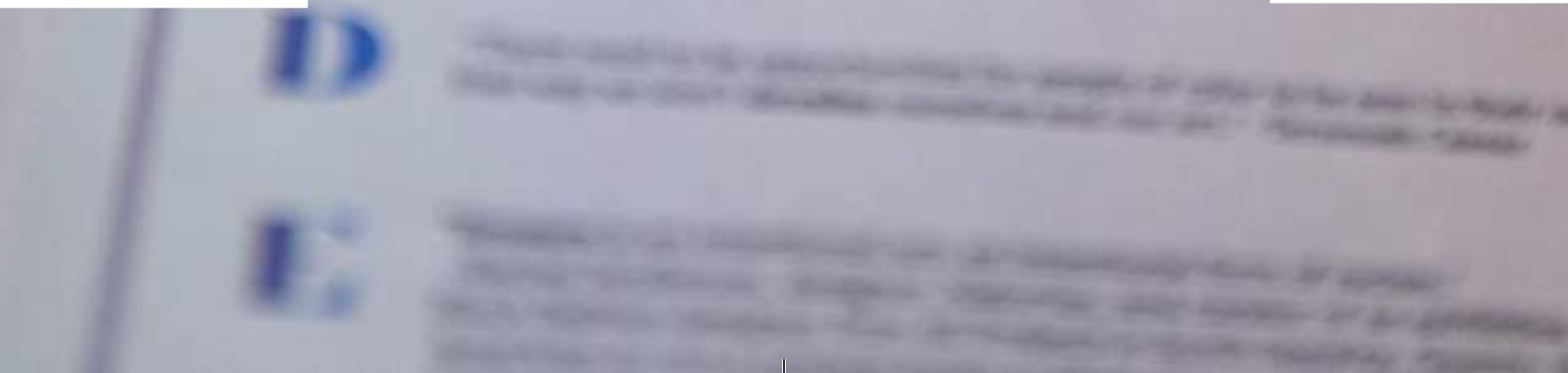


Photo by Karen Santiago



“This project researches the ways that the neighborhood of Jamaica, Queens has changed through pictures, drawings and interviews conducted with people in retail stores and on the street. I selected 25 pictures to create photo etching prints with Chine-collé (paper collage) and made 15 oil pastel drawings of people along Jamaica Avenue. Once a month from August 2020 to March 2021, I took documented encounters, interactions, daily exchanges within businesses, the nature of pandemic life and how things changed between the seasons. The simultaneous integration and friction between diverse communities, spaces and people is the essence of what I aim to capture in my art.

As part of this work, I participated in the Queens Memory Project at the Queens Library. Through this project, I was able to interview various artists who live and work in Southeast Queens, who also sent along photographs of their current homes as well as older photos capturing their personal histories. I used these images and architectures to further create prints and drawings, which center the buildings as monuments and individual portraits of the neighborhood.”

Photos by Karen Santiago



Heejung Cho

For Cho's project *INDIVIDUALITY AND LOCALITY*, the artist collaborated with the Queens Memory Project to interview residents of Jamaica and document the ways that the neighborhood has changed. She then created a series of photo etchings with Chine-collé, as well as oil pastel drawings guided by these conversations. For the site-specific component of the project, the artist adapted these images into stickers to place around the landscape and architecture over time in unexpected ways.



Photo by Karen Santiago



Photos by Karen Santiago





Photo by Karen Santiago

“As the research period began, I noticed how local political campaigns were adapting to the pandemic. Moumita Ahmed was a candidate for City Council from District 24 in a special election in early February 2021. From phone banking, to Zoom meetings for volunteers, her grassroots campaign had to adapt their strategy quickly. I interviewed her on Zoom, and she explained the stakes involved. If elected, she would become the first Bangladeshi woman in City Council.

She was the runner up in the special election. When she announced that she was running again, I got a chance to follow her campaign in person for the first time. Operating out of the basement of a barber shop on the corner of 169th Street and Hillside Avenue, her campaign gave me a window into the complex reality of the South Asian community in Jamaica. Moumita attracted a fierce group of community organizers, youth leaders and activists. I remember one moment fondly. After a frantic day organizing food and spreading the word, the campaign came together for an interfaith community Iftaar.

On The Way — A seated passenger’s view from inside a Long Island Rail Road train compartment. The top of a green and blue seat is slightly out of focus in the foreground. Towards the end of the compartment, two displays read ‘Jamaica’.



Indranil Choudhury

DISTRICT 24 is a two channel video installation. The film—following Moumita Ahmed, a candidate for City Council from District 24—observes the microculture of Hillside Avenue. The work was installed in the lower-level lobby of the Jamaica Performing Arts Center (JPAC).

Everyone was seated in a circle in Captain Tilly Park waiting to break fast together. Moumita stood in a corner with a bluetooth speaker in her hand, and couldn't decide whether to play a religious prayer or Bengali EDM."

Image courtesy of the artist



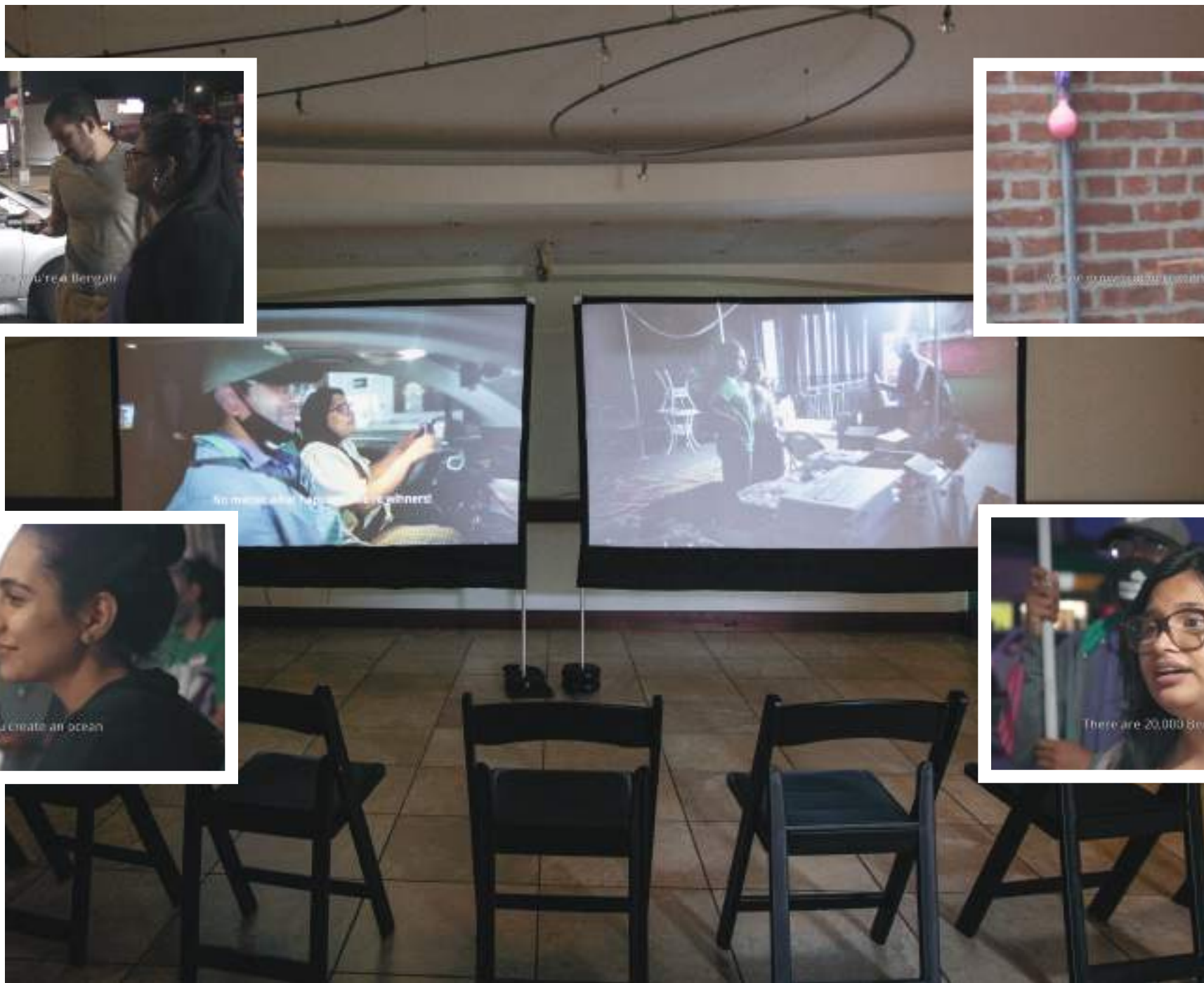
169th and Hillside — A pedestrian crossing with a telecom store on the corner, and a person in a pink headscarf crossing the street. Two green street signs read '169 St' and 'Ramesh D Kalicharran "Kali" Way'.

Iftar At Captain Tilly Park — A group of people seated on the ground in a park. Some are holding green cups, and there is food and drinks spread out on a picnic blanket. A young woman is addressing the gathering — she’s smiling as she speaks with her hand held up in an emphatic gesture. Another woman is taking a photograph on her phone, while others listen to the speaker.

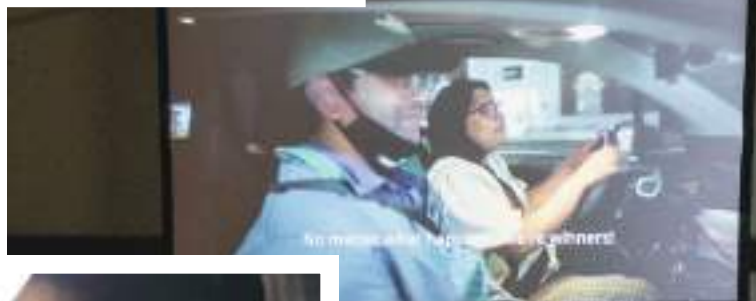


Food Distribution at Jamaica Muslim Center — A young woman wearing glasses, a white headscarf and a rust colored mask leans forward greeting two elderly men. The man on the left is wearing a white skull cap, glasses, a surgical mask and a navy jacket. The man on the right is wearing a white skull cap, a surgical mask and a white shirt. His hand is resting on the other man’s back wearing a blue surgical glove.





Photos by Karen Santiago





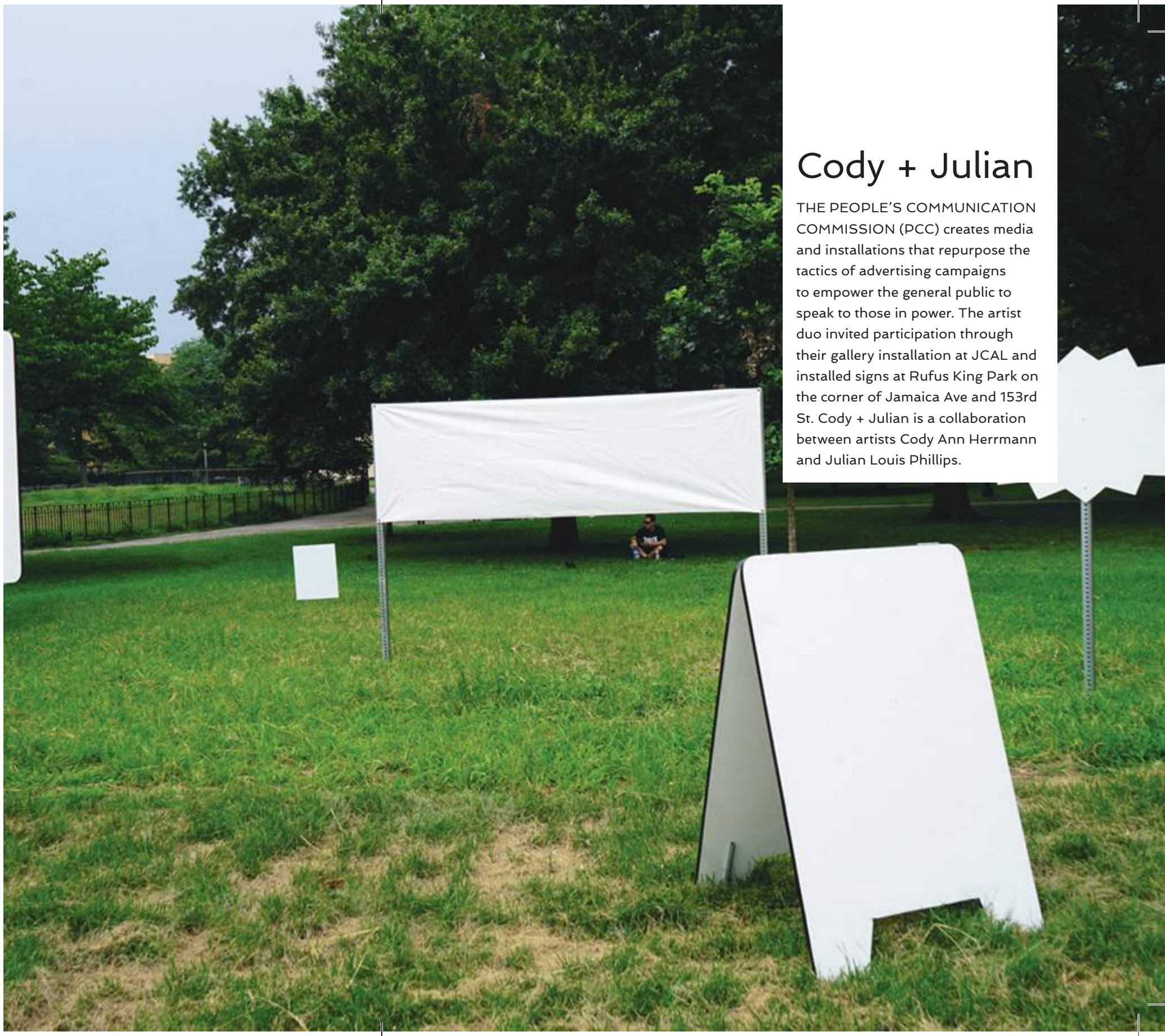
Photos by Karen Santiago



“As neighborhood-wide development plans and economic initiatives sweep through Jamaica, Queens, the *The Peoples Communication Commission* (PCC) wants to challenge the power relationship that advertising has in public space. As we witness the co-opting of protest slogans, guerilla advertising and their combined aesthetics, the connections that we create by speaking to one another are ever more important. With the understanding that Downtown Jamaica is a growing transportation hub, business center and an ecosystem of art and culture, we asked the question: where is the voice of the people who inhabit all of these spaces?

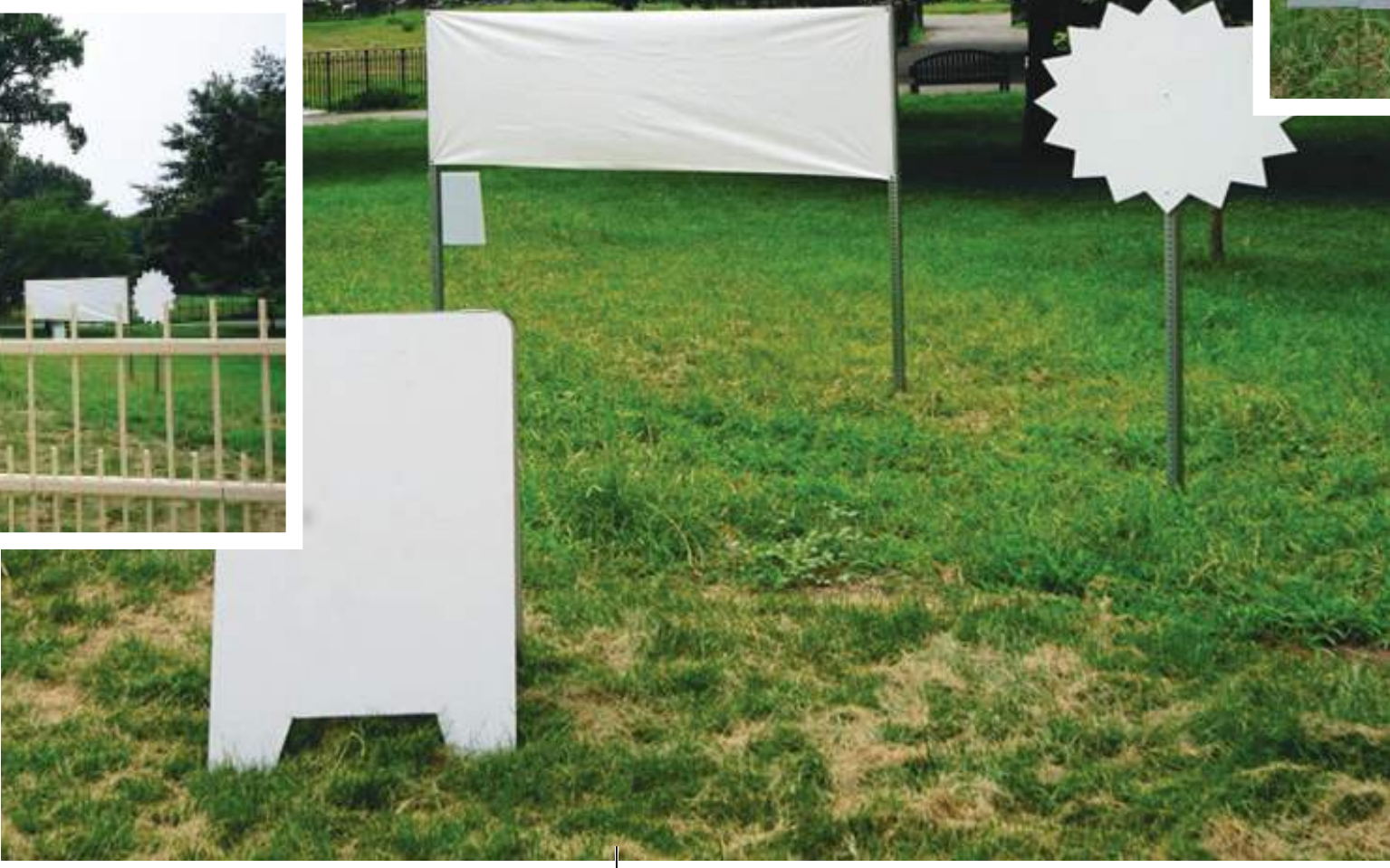
In a neighborhood where advertisements command the space, PCC highlights site-specific relationships between the visual landscape, local history and modern life while allowing individuals to acknowledge their own desires and agency, as well as the consequences of the desires and agency of institutions, corporations and municipalities.”

Photos by Tyrel Hunt



Cody + Julian

THE PEOPLE'S COMMUNICATION COMMISSION (PCC) creates media and installations that repurpose the tactics of advertising campaigns to empower the general public to speak to those in power. The artist duo invited participation through their gallery installation at JCAL and installed signs at Rufus King Park on the corner of Jamaica Ave and 153rd St. Cody + Julian is a collaboration between artists Cody Ann Herrmann and Julian Louis Phillips.



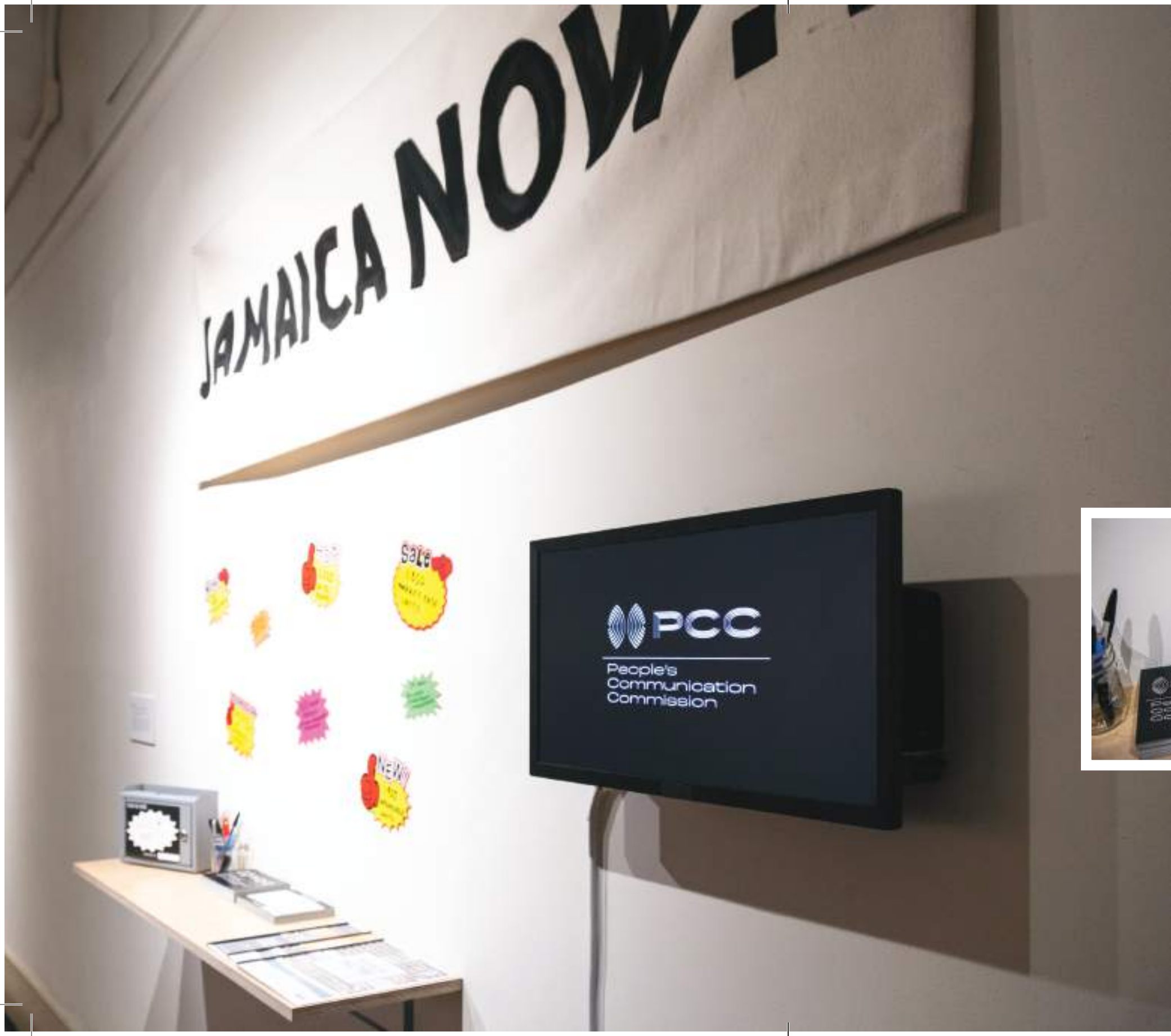


Photos by Iyrel Hunt



Photos by Karen Santiago





Photos by Karen Santiago

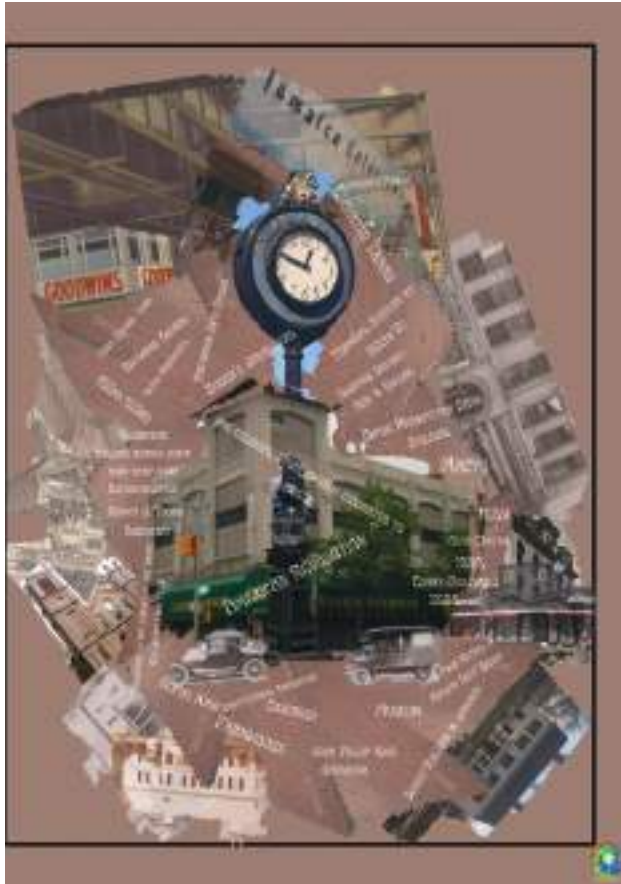


Sherese Francis

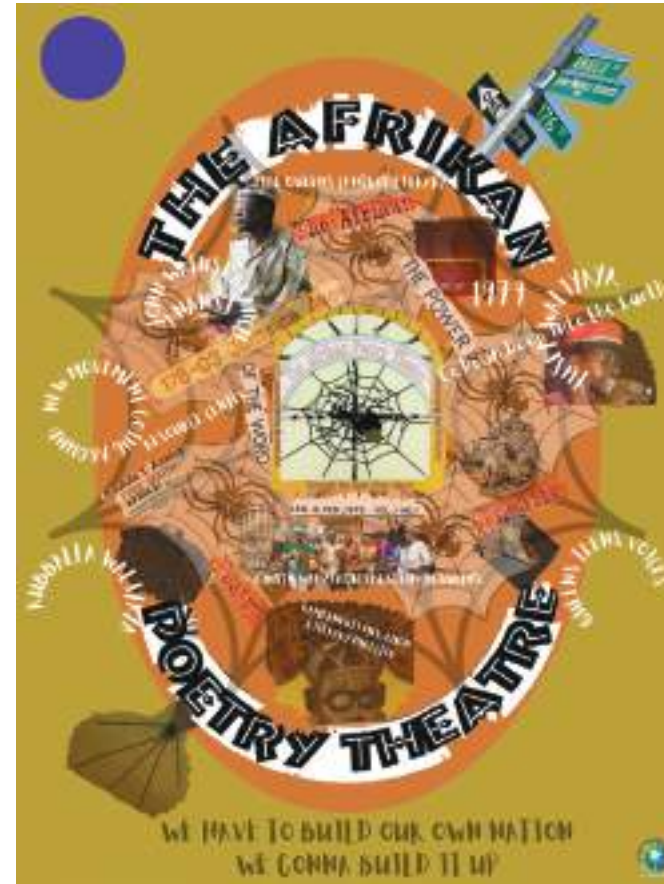
ART/I/FACT is a series of text, photography and other visual art collages (digital and physical) formed from archival research and workshops centered on Southeast Queens neighborhood spaces. These art pieces represent time capsule devices that residents can tap into to remember under-explored and neglected histories of Southeast Queens as the neighborhood changes due to redevelopment.

The work took the form of banners installed on the Jamaica Performing Art Center's (JPAC) fence on 153rd St.

“Community is a complex, relational, ever-changing process. I believe the word ‘community’ is overused and exploited in today’s world as this static, self-evident grouping of similar identities and entities, and I choose to see it as a verb, as a constant conversation and engagement with others around oneself. This constant process and conversation is how I view my work. My work is never done, but regularly evolving as I learn new information and meet new people/beings. It is a collaboration between the past, present and future. That is why I chose to do time capsule collages for my project because I believe both time capsules and collages represent conversations across time, space and bodies. I would like for Art/I/Fact to be an entry into community reflection about what living and/or working in this community means for those who view the project. Sometimes, we

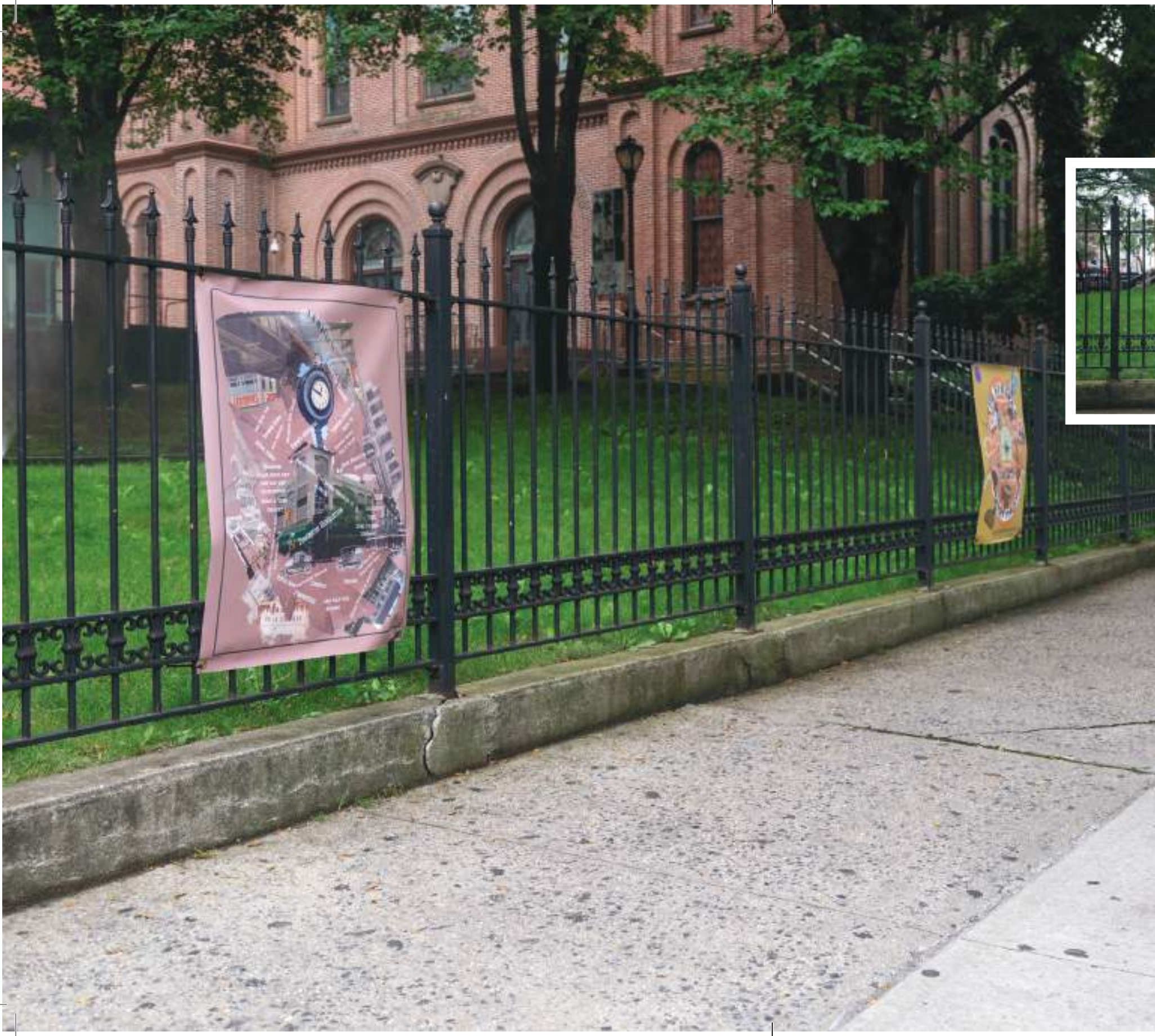


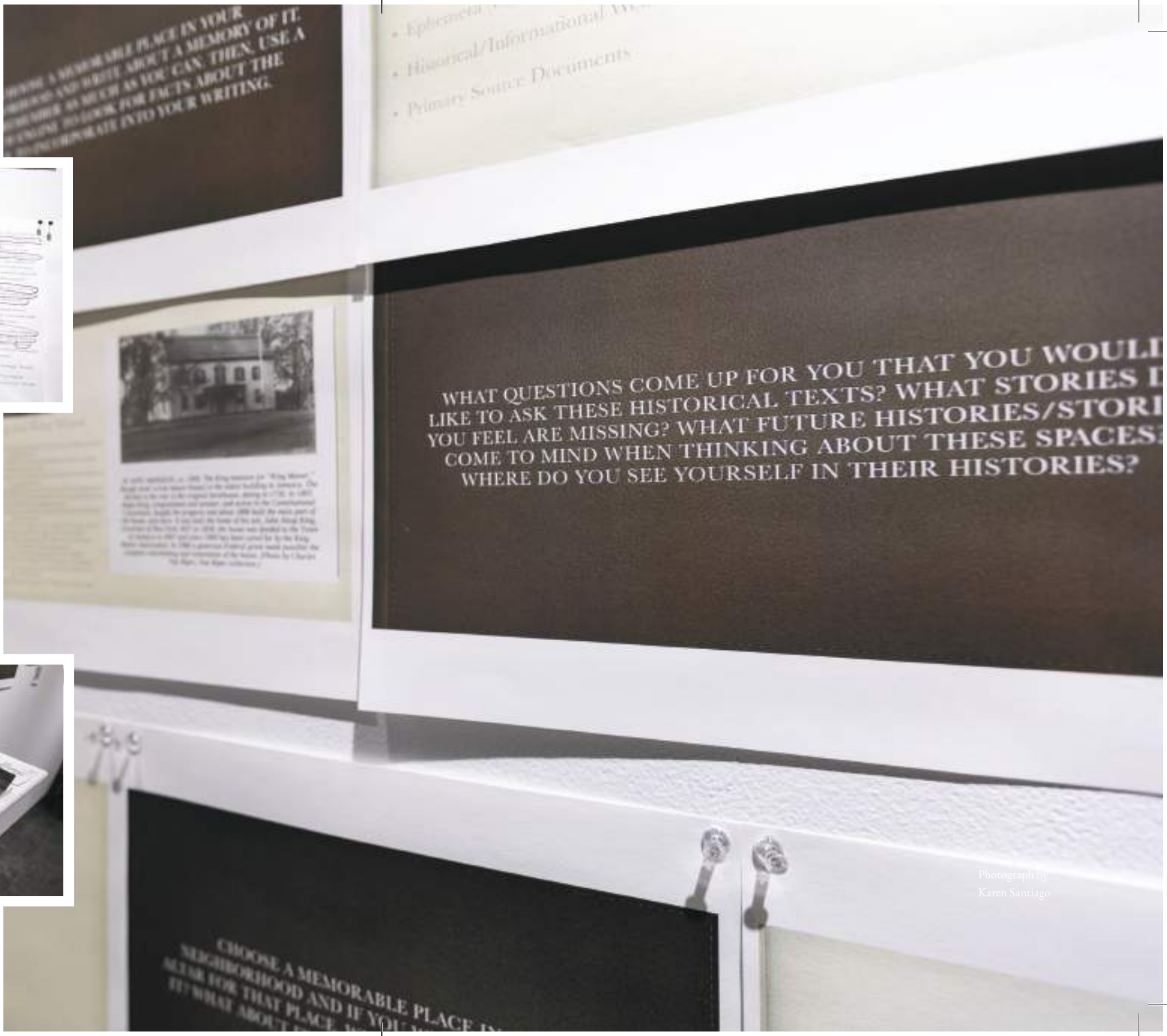
are so busy living life and going through the rush of daily work, that we don’t take the time to sit with the places we find ourselves in, and the people who travel through these spaces and their stories and histories. Taking time to be part of the larger conversation of a community makes a stronger and lasting community.”





Photos by Karen Santiago





Photograph by Karen Santiago

“Collecting oral history became a major aspect of my project. The pandemic limited my ability to have casual interactions on the street. Apart from one public event, where I was able to collect some information, most of my interviews were virtual (and one was already part of the Queens Memory Project archive). Through personal connections, I was able to find ten people who had deep ties to Jamaica and were willing to be interviewed in depth for the Queens Memory Project. As we were all quarantining, these meetings became an opportunity for personal connection, often with a stranger. I cherished accompanying my interviewees on their trips into the past, and got an intimate glimpse into the progression of their lives.

Afterwards, after reviewing the transcripts, I selected excerpts that related to specific locations that I had intended to draw. Some interviews, however, led me to surprising locales that I hadn’t considered including (such as an empty parking lot). In the text, I searched for both unique stories and shared sentiments about places. Choosing which memories to include in the postcards has been one of the biggest challenges. Like an editor, I am assembling fragments of individuals’ history to try to tell a collective



Linda Ganjian

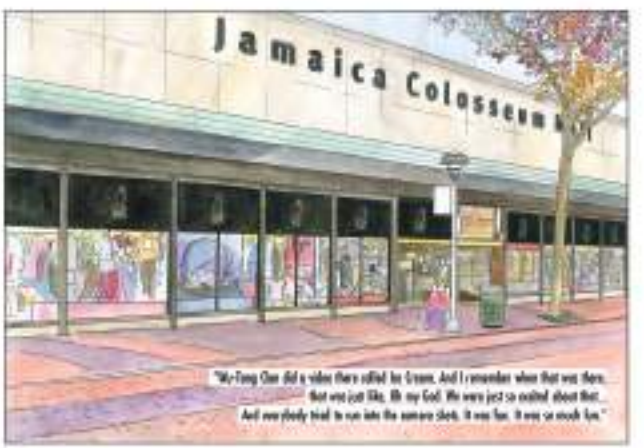
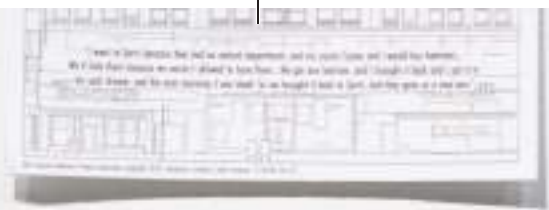
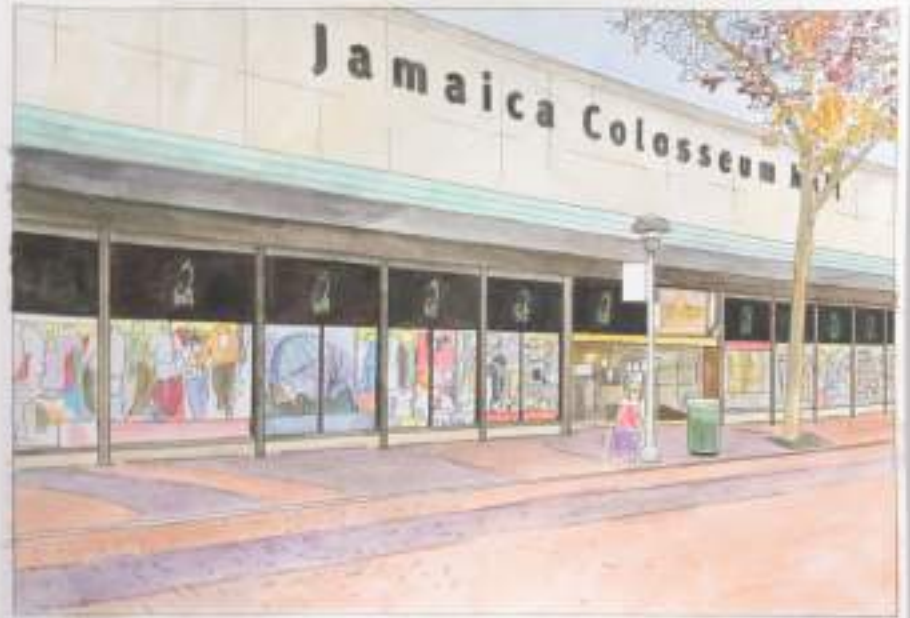
JAMAICA MEMORIES is also made possible in part by the Queens Council on the Arts with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

This series of postcards which combine quotes and personal histories from community interviews with drawings of significant neighborhood sites that are vulnerable to redevelopment in an era of massive rezoning and change. The postcards were made free and publicly available inside the King Manor Museum, JCAL, and the Queens Public Library - Central.



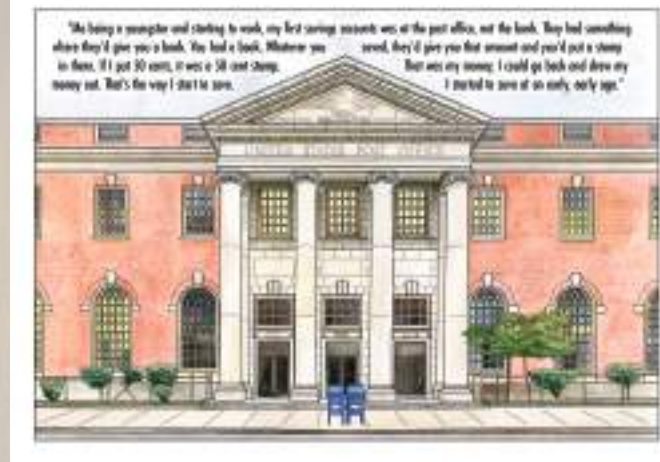
story. It feels like a huge responsibility, but I recognize that it is not meant to be a comprehensive survey. In the end, the history is filtered through me, with my sensibilities and perspectives as an outsider to Jamaica.”

Photograph by Karen Santiago



Colosseum Mall from Postcards from Jamaica Project, 5” x 7” postcard, 2021 text on back reads “This Queens Memory Project interview copyright 2020 Samantha Alethea Inniss, Linda Ganjian, CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0. For research and reproduction requests, contact queensmemory@queenslibrary.org”





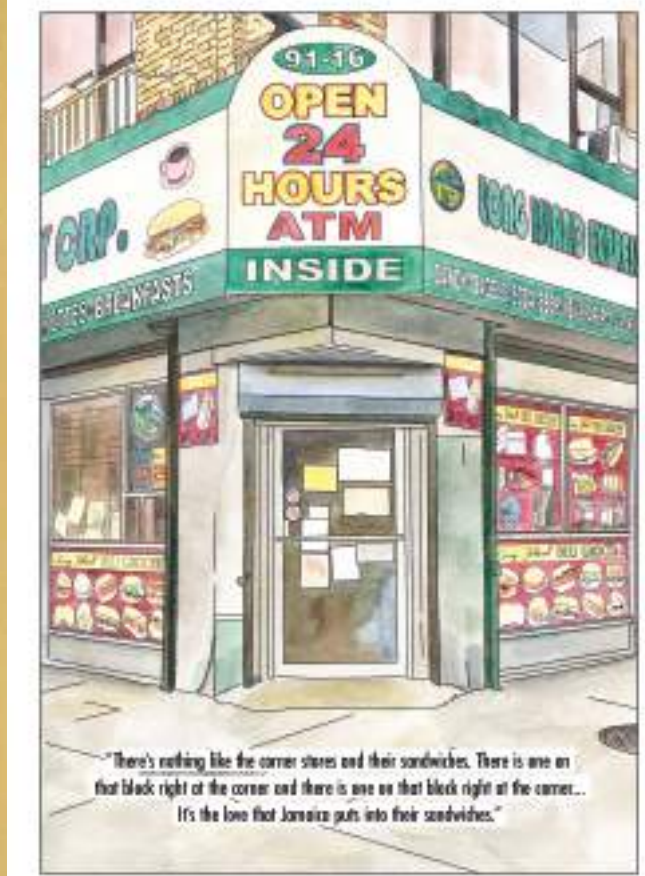
Post Office from Postcards from Jamaica Project, 5” x 7” postcard, 2021
text on back reads “This Queens Memory Project interview copyright 2013 Gladys Weaver, Barbara Deyoung-Ezell and Marguerite Luizzo, CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0. For research and reproduction requests, contact queensmemory@queenslibrary.org”



Merrick Theater from Postcards from Jamaica Project, 5” x 7” postcard, 2021
text on back reads “This Queens Memory Project interview copyright 2020 Claude Mangum, Linda Ganjian, CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0. For research and reproduction requests, contact queensmemory@queenslibrary.org”

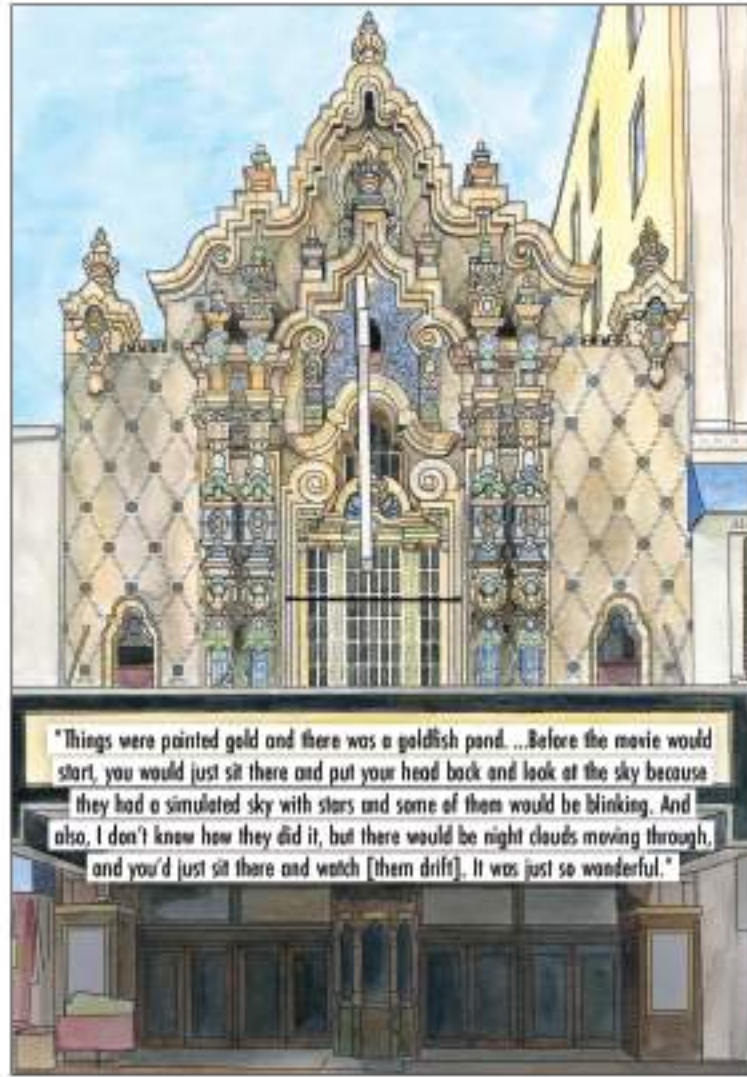
Photos by Tyrel Hunt

Installation view at the Queens Public Library - Central



Deli from Postcards from Jamaica Project, 5" x 7" postcard, 2021

Street interview with Nelson Sydney, 2020



Valencia Theater from Postcards from Jamaica Project, 5" x 7" postcard, 2021
 text on back reads "This Queens Memory Project interview copyright 2020
 Generose Lambert, Linda Ganjian, CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0. For research and
 reproduction requests, contact queensmemory@queenslibrary.org"





Hayoon Lee

Hayoon Jay Lee's project LET'S SHARE IN THE MOMENT: A DIALOGUE AROUND EATING collaborates with King Manor Museum, the South Queens Women's March (SQWM) team, as well as poet and educator Cheryl Moskowitz. The project is composed of five parts including a rice lab and capsule installation, a poetry installation, and a table dialogue and video documentation by videographer Hong PD (Chun-Gee Hong) that takes place inside both King Manor's kitchen and dining area. Lee's rice "lab" includes 108 6-ounce glass jars. According to Lee "In Buddhism, the number 108 has great spiritual significance; it connects us both to ourselves and to the world around us. I believe that rice (as a subset of food) is little short of miraculous: it nurtures, heals, and is present at sorrow, love, striving, and death" The juxtaposition of bones, rice capsules, with food related objects on the 19th century King Manor dining table, reflects on values of "being" as further affected by the pandemic.

The artist hosted a conversation with Kelsey Brow, Executive Director of King Manor Museum; poet and educator Cheryl Moskowitz; and members of the South Queens Women's March: Aminta Kilawan-Narine, Founder and Director; Tannuja Rozarion, Founding Board Member; and Nirmala Singh, Founding Board Member. The documented dialogue revolved around King Manor's history and youth educational efforts in the community around food, the ways in which food can be political in relation to community, the SQWM food pantry, as well as the pandemic's impact on food sovereignty and wellness.

“I see community as not only encompassing people from the same locale, who share a common history, culture, outlook, but also embracing differences and diversity. As an artist, I seek to create a dialogue through the arts with everyone, especially those who do not often have a voice in their culture. I have personally experienced the cathartic role that ART can play, when all the uncomfortable barriers separating people begin to dissolve.

Over the years, my art projects have involved studying the histories of a place, and then, collaborating directly with local people. However, in pandemic times, it has been challenging to engage directly with individuals and groups... The meaning of “community” has been altered by forces outside of my control, and as a result, my community project has shifted its focus.



Covid-19... Food Insecurity... Political Divisions... Domestic Violence... Upsurge of Racism ...

I find myself reflecting upon every single one of these griefs; they have been affecting us immensely, and especially in underprivileged communities... Food, which plays an essential role as currency, charity, and in terms of political and economic power, is at the forefront of my artistic inquiries with Rufus King Manor Museum as my community collaboration site. I hope that my final project at the Manor will bring some sense of understanding and appreciation of all the important things (including food) that bind us together.”

Title: Never Empty Again

Size: 48 x 75”

Medium: empty rice bags, writings on paper

Year: 2021

JAMAICA VILLAGE

QUEENS CO. L. I.
Scale 18 Rods to an inch.

HIGHLAND AVE.

AVE.

ST.

A. A. De Grauw

O. Bronson

BRONSON AVE.

J. Herriman Est.

E. A. Brucherhoff

JOHNSON AVE.

CLINTON AVE.

J. N. Brucherhoff

J. Pils

HILLSIDE AVE.

AVE.

MYRTLE AVE.

DEGRAUW AVE.

WILLETS ST.

Oliver Bronson

O. Bronson

W. S. ...

E. A. Brucherhoff

Chandler

W. S. ...

E. A. Brucherhoff

ST.

G. Sayre

G. Sayre

E. Achroyd

W. S. Fagwood

F. Maloy

G. W. &

J. T. Reeve

D. H. ...

J. M. ...

CANAL

SHELTON AVE.

AVE.

SHELTON AVE.

AVE.

• Rufus King (1755-1829) bought KM in 1805:

Hon. (1788-1869) A. King Est.

• John Alsop King (eldest son)
Inherited in 1829

J. A. K. Est.

Rufus King is buried

GROVE ST.

• Cornelia King, the youngest daughter of J. A. K., was the last family member to live in KM.
Mrs. J. A. King
→ King Manor Museum

• KM Association was formed in 1900.
An open house was held at KM in March 1948

J. A. K. Est.

GROVE ST.

ST.

GRACE CHURCH

CEMETERY

FLUSHING

HERRIMAN

UNION

JOHNSON

CLINTON

SMITH ST.

NORTH FIRST ST.

ST.

W. S. Fagwood

G. W. &

J. T. Reeve

D. H. ...

J. M. ...

EAST NEW YORK

JAMAICA

FULTON

RAIL

ST. ROAD

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JOHNSTON AVE.

CEMETERY

ST. J. N. ...

AVE.

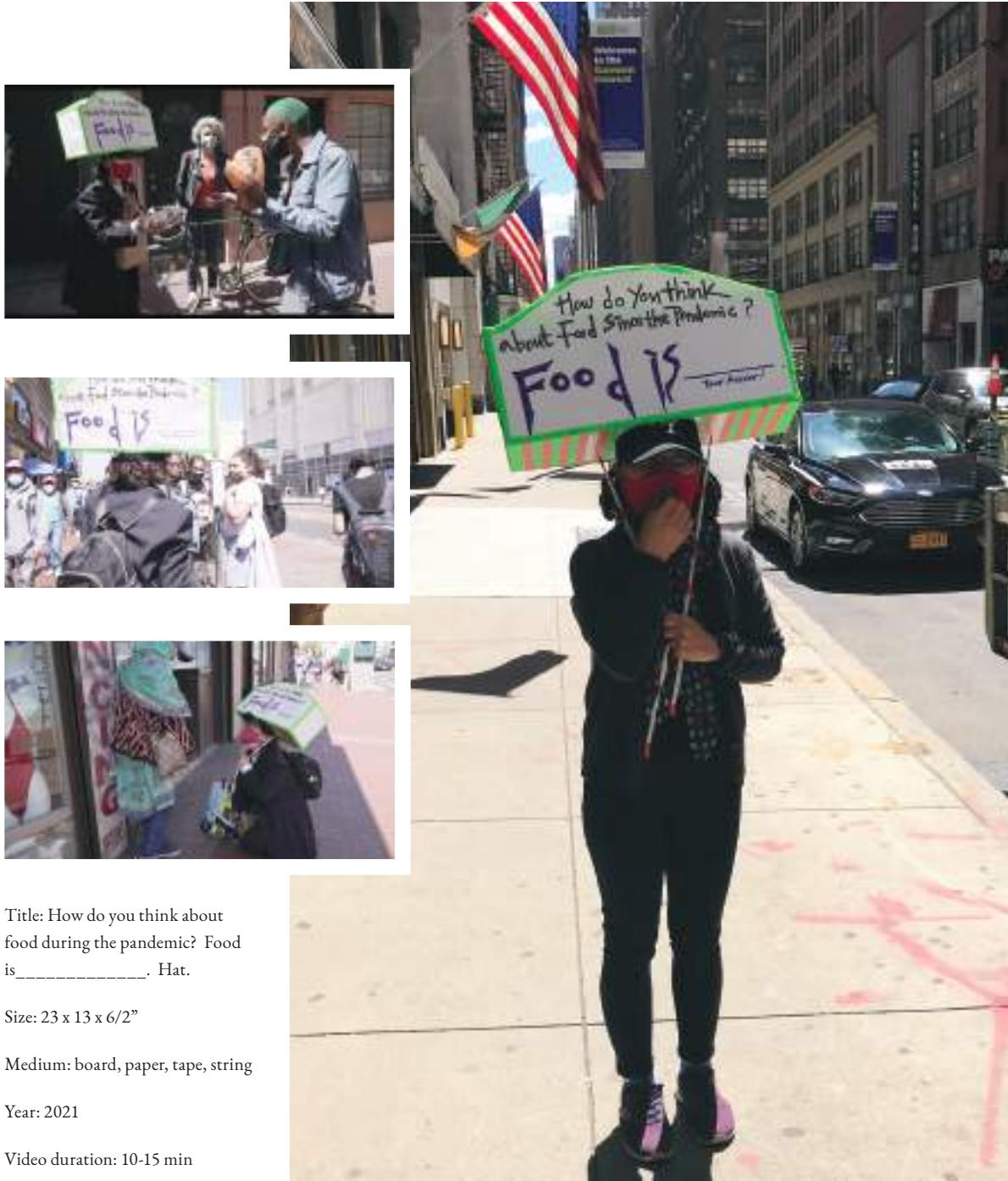
A. C. Henry

NTINE

AVE.

AVE.

Title: A copy of Jamaica 1873 Beers Map
Size: 21 x 16"
Medium: paper
Year: 2021



Title: How do you think about food during the pandemic? Food is _____ . Hat.

Size: 23 x 13 x 6/2"

Medium: board, paper, tape, string

Year: 2021

Video duration: 10-15 min



Photo by Karen Santiago



“Community for me is the backbone of us all. When I was younger, my mother had an image from an African proverb that read ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ and these words still resonate with me today. As a young girl, I didn’t believe art was accessible to me. I didn’t believe I had the skill set or know at all how to be an ‘artist’. But I was continuously inspired by my community. I was continuously uplifted by my community. My community affirmed me throughout the years and taught me to pursue the things I loved, no matter how impossible they felt. Because of that, I am the artist I am today. Through my work, I hope to honor that framework. I hope I can show people that their creative power is limitless and they have the power and the right to access that at any point in time in life.”

that come at the brink of wavering descent

Le’Andra LeSeur

THERE IS ONLY LANGUAGE BETWEEN US is a public sonic installation composed from street interviews along Jamaica Avenue and a community spoken-word, stream-of-consciousness writing workshop hosted by the artist. The final piece is heard and played from the balcony above JCAL’s entrance. This site-specific work by LeSeur concentrates on topics of care and a central question: “What do you need?”

The work could be heard at dawn and dusk outside the JCAL entrance, emanating from speakers installed on the balcony directly above.

And I'm trying to imagine the best



Image courtesy of the artist

76
"What and who I need
why is there always a rift between you?
It's so dangerous to cut that?
Why can't you cut yourselves out?
If not what a surprise?
difficult can that really be?"
-Edith Uzoni Obiye, 2016

I Need
buffer air, water, earth,
and land from people around me.
Need to show my passion, dreams
and moment with you all.

I need CARE
CARE = multiple forms I need
LOVE LOVE is multiple forms.
I need someone to LISTEN, I FEEL
OR I SPEAK I need someone to care

I
need
someone
to LOVE
me

I
who
I
AM

-Xo Delikwan

I/WE NEED SHELTER
PROTECTORIA NO DIVIA A LA
intempere I/we need
Affordable housing to be
affordable.



Photo by Karen Santiago

I need someone to Love Me

A who I AM

-Xie DeUnknown

I/WE NEED SHELTER
Protección para no vivir a la
intemperie. I/we need
Affordable housing to be
affordable.

What Do You Need

In the project, there is only language between us, I pose a question to community members passing by on the street of Jamaica Flux.

"What do you need?"

The question, though just five simple words, prompts a need to deeply evaluate the things that we have, the things that are sought after, and the things that we absolutely need in order to feel like we are progressing in life.

Although the answers were different in sentiment, some things that were common in connecting participants from the community were their recognition of the importance of resources, family, work, and a need to be acknowledged in words and actions to live a balanced whole life.

There is only language between us, it is not only a need to ask a question but a need to share how language can connect us with others and with ourselves.

Today, I am hoping you will respond to the question too. There is paper here for you to take away or you can write your responses down on the community board to share your experiences with others.

What do you need?

1. As you write your answer, allow yourself to speak freely on the things important in your daily life and the things you need.
2. When you're done, try reading your passage out loud.
3. As you read it aloud, really pay attention to the way your body responds to certain words. Do you feel a heightened sensation in your body while reading a certain word or group of words? Is there a tingling feeling that takes place in your body?
4. Whenever you feel something in your body after a word or group of words is read, underline them.
5. Now that you have your underlined words, read only those words out loud.
6. And do this reading again with only the six underlined words.

How does the language, and the way that you read these words out loud, change?

Do you notice a rhythm in what you are saying? How do these words, when posed together create phrases that express feelings? Are there any words on the community board that might? Do any other passages there connect with you too?

I hope that you will take this question with you if the future to connect with your inner self and others—with words and language we will always find the connecting thread.

Le/Vecla Lo/Sue

What do you need? In the project, there is only language between us, I pose a question to community members passing by on the street of Jamaica Flux.

"What do you need?" The question, though just five simple words, prompts a need to deeply evaluate the things that we have, the things that are sought after, and the things that we absolutely need in order to feel like we are progressing in life. Although the answers were different in sentiment, some things that were common in connecting participants from the community were their recognition of the importance of resources, family, work, and a need to be acknowledged in words and actions to live a balanced whole life.

“A flag acts as an instantaneous signifier, where meaning is subjective to the viewer’s recognition of and relationship to it. Flags are associative objects, often used in service of authority, liberation, division, unification, pride, protest and celebration. They can be simultaneously venerated and vilified. Reminders of home, both past and present, they identify ‘I am...’ They can also delineate who is ‘us’ and who is ‘them’. We’ve all seen flags. We know what they are. They are objects that live as ideas.

The flags produced through this project are artifacts of a process that, because of the pandemic, was reshaped in unpredictable ways over the last year.

I was interested in asking local collaborators to reflect on their neighborhoods through a visual language – to think symbolically, using the vocabulary of flags as a familiar container. I wanted to ask questions and then see what happened. How could our sense of who and where we are be represented visually? How could groups of individuals and collective identities be contained within a single design? Is community singular, strictly bounded and unchanging? And who gets to define it? What does this look like when translated into shape, symbol, color and composition? The answers often change depending on who you ask. Doing our best



Reuben Lorch Miller

SOUTHEAST QUEENS FLAGS is a participatory public art project initiated by artist Reuben Lorch-Miller. Taking on the role of artist-as-facilitator, Lorch-Miller collaborated with local residents to create a series of neighborhood flag designs for Southeast Queens. Originally proposed as a series of in-person workshops, the project had to adapt to the pandemic. It evolved into a website and online flag design survey where participants could contribute their ideas. This change of format allowed for the potential participation of all Southeast Queens residents. The final designs are amalgamations, derived from the collective data and feedback provided by community collaborators and ultimately to be flown. The project website, SEQFlags.com, continues as a repository and resource for community-based flag design and arts education.

The flags were installed on the street-level windows of JCAL.

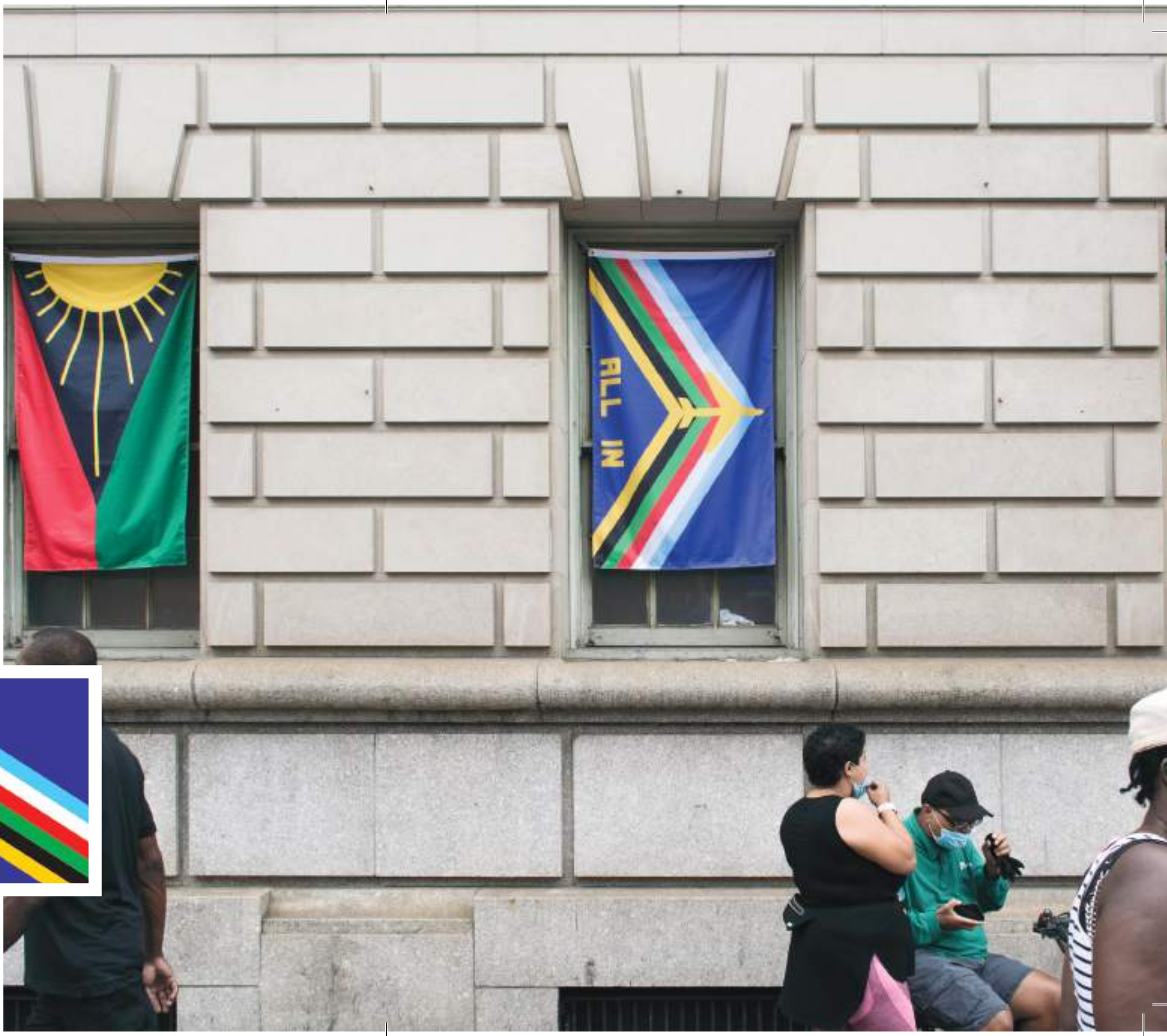
as creative people, we present some of these answers publicly as series of flags. The task may ultimately be un-resolvable, but the results rejoice in our curiosity about each other and in appreciation for the challenge.”

All In Flag

This flag contains stripes of many colors on a dark blue background. The stripes represent the many different people that live in Southeast Queens, their different cultures and origins, and multiple flag colors all moving in the same direction. The upward flying airplane references movement, action and Southeast Queens’ proximity and relationship to JFK Airport. The airport acts as a gateway for people from all over the world entering New York City. It is also a place that links NYC to the rest of the world. The phrase “ALL IN” emphasizes the inclusiveness and diversity of Southeast Queens.



Photo by Reuben Loch Miller



Photograph by Karen Santiago



Free Heart Flag

This flag shares the colors of red, white and blue that are found on many flags including the Haitian Flag. The heart represents the love, pride and connection of community while the word "FREE" represents concepts of liberation, self-determination, independence and openness.



Green, Black and Red Flag

Three of this flag's four colors, green, black and red, are based on what is known as the "Pan-African flag" designed by Marcus Garvey in 1920 to unify the global African diaspora. While originally the colors symbolized red for the blood of sacrifice and struggle, the green for the nature and fertility of Africa and black for the people, the flag has evolved into a broader symbol of African-American identity and Black liberation movements. Many national flags of post-colonial African nations have also adopted these colors such as Malawi, Kenya and Libya. In this form shown here, the flag is composed similarly to many other flags, with two horizontal stripes bisected by an acute triangle. While many flags have similar designs, the prominent triangles seen in the flag of Guyana served as inspiration. The addition of the gold sun in the black triangle not only references power, optimism and strength but also the light and warmth of many nations and Southeast Queens itself.





Sunrise Flag

This flag honors the natural beauty and environment found in Southeast Queens. By name, the area is oriented to the east and is geographically bounded on one side by Jamaica Bay. With many neighborhoods composed of low buildings and ample greenery, the dawning of a new day seen through a morning sunrise can be an opportunity for reflection and appreciation. The simple design of this flag represents this direct connection to nature and the peace and beauty of this area. Many flags, including the Bangladeshi flag, have the sun as a central symbolic element in their designs.

Photo by Karen Santiago



Robin Flag

Referencing the nature found in Southeast Queens, this flag centrally places the American Robin in a light blue circle on a gold background. The robin is a ubiquitous and iconic bird of the region. As a symbol of determination, with its distinctive red breast and joyful song, its presence is also often a sign of Spring, a season of renewal and growth. The light blue circle represents not only the clear blue sky but also the color of the robin's egg showing potential for new life. The blue circle is bounded by a green and black band which represent life and strength. The gold background places the symbol in a field of light, warmth and honor.



Unity Flag

This flag shows the richness, pride and togetherness found in Southeast Queens. The center square is purple, the royal color. Within the square, in gold, is the crown of Queens with the word "UNITY" directly underneath. Surrounding the crown and "UNITY" is a gold chain, representing the interconnected links of the community. The chain's strength is formed by the unification of all the separate links. None can stand alone, and it is this unified strength that holds the community together. This motif was partially inspired by the ring of wampum beads found on the official Queens Borough flag. The green and orange vertical stripes on either side of the flag represent love and power. Green and orange are found on many flags including the flags of Sri Lanka and Ivory Coast.

They gathered, and left. Dozens of migrants braved thousands of miles of sea to reach the U.S. Then they were sent home. - Los Angeles Times 6/14/21, 2:44 PM

The desperate trek

Florida (projects/ta-g-immigration-trck-america-florida/)

Florida Gap (projects/ta-g-immigration-trck-america-florida/)

Florida (projects/ta-g-immigration-trck-america-florida/)

Bangladesh (projects/ta-g-immigration-trck-america-bangladesh/)

Alabama (projects/ta-g-immigration-trck-america-alabama/)



On a chilly April night in the desert outside Phoenix, Rasel Ahmed, his wrists and ankles bound in cuffs, shuffled onto a bus at the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement airfield with a pit in his stomach.

From his home village in the rice fields of eastern Bangladesh, the 30-year-old restaurant worker had traveled through a dozen countries to reach the United States, nearly collapsing in relief when he saw the American flag flying over the border crossing at San Ysidro.

For 18 months he bounced among detention centers in San Diego, Alabama, praying for an immigration judge to let him support his family 8,000 miles away.

Photograph by Karen Santiago

They gathered, and left. Dozens of migrants...



Firoz Mahmud

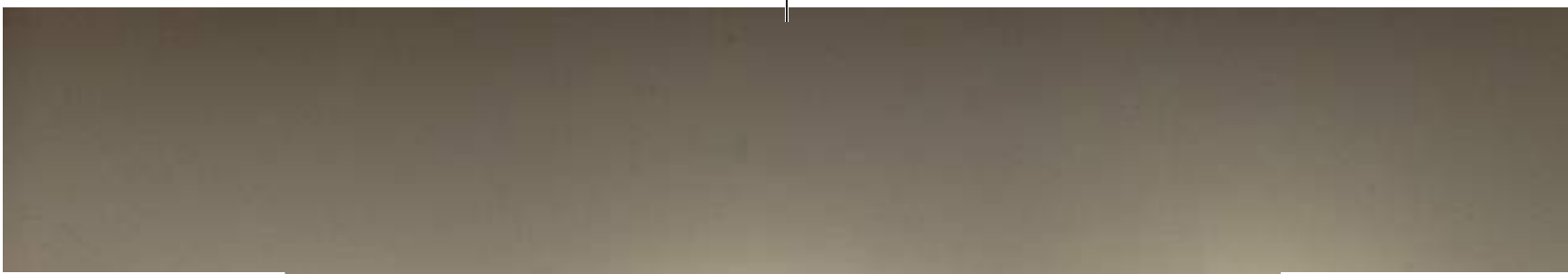
Firoz Mahmud's SOAKED DREAM project is an allegorical dream work on crossing borders, displacement, refugee families, immigrants, diasporas, exodus and arrival. The artist creates photo-sculptures of families across communities, as well as sets of metaphoric, sci-fi-like eyeglasses made from parts of devices, to create a series of photographs where each family is depicted envisioning their prospective, prosperous futures through emblematic green frames. These works address hope through personal encounters and stories, in which poetry and pragmatism meet in a rebirth of collective and intergenerational dreaming.

Special thanks to the Durjoy Bangladesh Foundation. Thank you to the AirTrain JFK, and to participants including Heng-Gil Han, Danni Shen, Naomi Kuo, Nikhil Meiser, Geraldine, Linda Ganjian

For this work, the artist collaborated with immigrant community members to create a series of multimedia works celebrating Bengali legacies, traditions and subcultures. His project was unrealized at its original scale at the Jamaica LIRR station, but was ultimately brought to the site in a collective guerilla performance.



Firoz Mahmud, EPLICA
[Migrational Influx], performance.



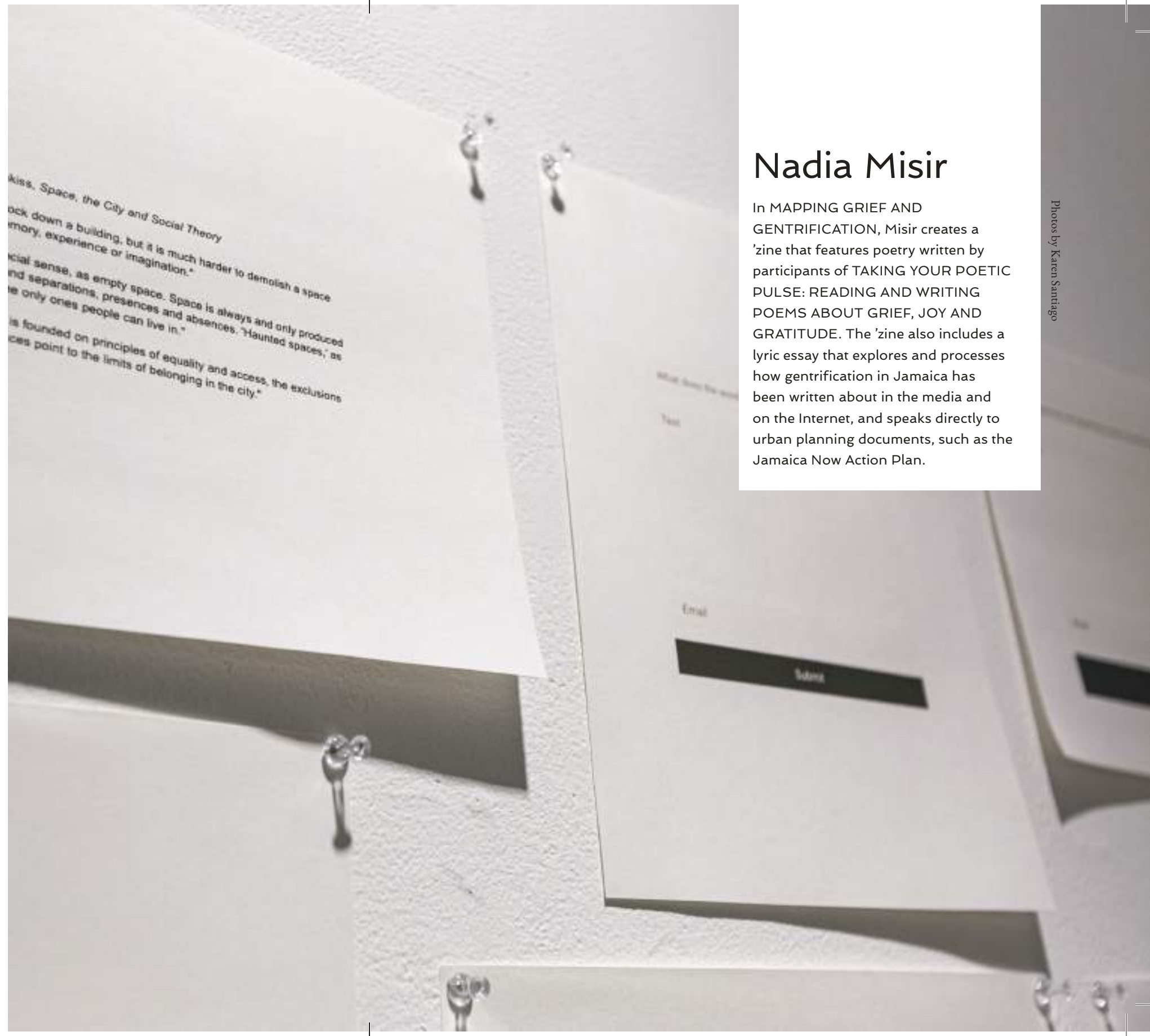
Special thanks to the Durjoy Bangladesh Foundation. Thank you to the AirTrain JFK, and to participants including Heng-Gil Han, Danni Shen, Naomi Kuo, Nikhil Meiser, Geraldine, Linda Ganjian





“Working and creating through a pandemic, through personal and collective grief has been difficult. More often than not it felt impossible. My project goals have felt like moving targets, and I could not seem to access the part of me that could step back and adjust what I originally set out to do. I realized that my original project proposal was too large in its scope. To create a zine that radically retells the history of Jamaica, Queens would require so much more care, more time to research, as well as much more collaboration with community members, artists, scholars, writers, etc. I think burn out, the constant news of deaths + crises in my family and the state violence we are all subject to on a daily basis also contributed to something more insidious and immobilizing than procrastination.

The most enjoyable part of the process has been collaborating with Queens Memory and Reimagine This Life to offer two free generative writing sessions to anyone interested in processing their grief. The sessions were held virtually on Zoom and participants gathered to read and discuss poems about grief, joy and gratitude. While I did plan to offer community writing sessions in my original project proposal, I wanted to focus on a specific kind of grief that accompanies gentrification. The small bursts of research I managed to do taught



Nadia Misir

In *MAPPING GRIEF AND GENTRIFICATION*, Misir creates a 'zine that features poetry written by participants of *TAKING YOUR POETIC PULSE: READING AND WRITING POEMS ABOUT GRIEF, JOY AND GRATITUDE*. The 'zine also includes a lyric essay that explores and processes how gentrification in Jamaica has been written about in the media and on the Internet, and speaks directly to urban planning documents, such as the Jamaica Now Action Plan.

me that gentrification happens differently in Jamaica and that I would need much more time to process what I was learning before I could write about it and develop a workshop around it.

Taking Your Poetic Pulse was inspired by how processing grief can be deeply personal and different for everyone. Grief can make its home in our bodies, in our hearts, in our minds, in the spaces loved ones once occupied. It can call out to us from objects, articles of clothing, food and street corners. Where does your grief live? How do you live with your grief? How can poetry become a space of communal grieving where we can lean on each other's words for comfort, clarity and empathy?"



Imagine moving your hand like a mouse over the spaces you move through, over the buildings you stop to gaze at, over the concrete underneath your feet of the place you call home. Imagine hovering your hand like a cursor over these haunted geographies + familiar places. What does it reveal to you?

Hover your cursor over the photos below to reveal the text I've been thinking about as I try to research the history of gentrification in Jamaica, Queens.

Feel free to connect with me via email at nad.misir@gmail.com. I would love to hear more about your responses to the questions below, your memories + experiences living in Jamaica, and how you feel about gentrification in this neighborhood.

Three Excerpts from Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory*

"It can be relatively easy to knock down a building, but it is much harder to demolish a space which is composed around memory, experience or imagination."

"There is no such thing, in a social sense, as empty space. Space is always and only produced as a complex of relationships and separations, presences and absences. 'Haunted spaces,' as de Certeau (1984) has it, are the only ones people can live in."

"While the idea of public space is founded on principles of equality and access, the exclusions which operate in real public spaces point to the limits of belonging in the city."

What memories and experiences come to mind when you walk through your neighborhood?

Text

Email

Submit

What does the word gentrification mean to you?

Text

Email

Submit

Write a letter or text to something, someone or some place that no longer physically exists in your neighborhood.

Text

Email

Submit





Sari Nordman

TOWER is an interdisciplinary installation work utilizing sculpture, video projection, archiving and community participation. The project reflects on climate change and the biblical story of The Tower of Babel - a story of greed and value of cultural differences. The four-meter-tall sculpture is constructed of steel cubes and each cube frames plastic waste. The design was made in collaboration with architect Robert Mencarini. The video features people of diverse backgrounds sharing their personal experiences with climate change. The interviews are recorded in the interviewees' native language to emphasize the global impact and responsibility in fighting climate change. The interviews are transcribed in English and available on a website. The presentation of environmental contemplation and anxieties is viewed through architecture, video and archival materials. Nordman hopes that through this work the viewers can hear the voices speaking of the concern for environmental changes and calling for action.

The work was installed at Rufus King Park by the King Manor Museum and was accompanied by video projection events on the sculpture.

Tower is additionally funded by the Finlandia Foundation and the Puffin Foundation.



A GLOBE HARBORING Across the Sea Since 1955

“I am grateful for the many interviewees who generously shared their experience with climate change. In the process I did not only learn how environments have changed around the world over time but I also learned about the interviewees’ cultural backgrounds. People care about nature around the world. People have noticed changes, big and small. Or they may anticipate a change or suspect that there has been a change due to climate change. They may feel helpless in protecting nature because they feel that they themselves are in a place of exploitation. They may feel frustrated for the lack of government policies in protecting nature. They may feel that they do not have a voice or their voice is not important. They may feel that their struggles and focus on survival take a greater precedent. And sometimes the survival struggle is connected to climate change. Some eloquent interviewees

Photo by Karen Santiago



spoke of the other people’s struggles like refugee crises due to drought, loss of agriculture and fishing, pollution, over-forestation.

I learned that nature is important. Nature can give us mental stability, make us feel alive and connected, make us see and experience beauty, the most sublime of beauty, create balance. It is a gift that we need to protect. Nature has a way of expressing and it expresses through us, no matter how conscious or unconscious we are of it. Is there something that we can give up, what comforts can we give up, how can we be more educated about this, how can we come together in this so that nature can heal and ultimately we can heal as well?”

Photo by Tyrel Hunt





Photos by Tyrel Hunt





Photos by Karen Santiago

THE GREAT CLIMATE MIGRATION

global with...

The collage features numerous photographs and text panels, all secured with red adhesive tape. The images include: a woman at a desk, a person in a field, a person in a tent, a person in a boat, a person in a car, a person in a house, a person in a field, a person in a boat, a person in a car, a person in a house, a person in a field, a person in a boat, a person in a car, a person in a house. The text panels are interspersed among the photos, with some containing the heading 'The Great Migration'.

Tower

Read: English transcribed climate change interviews

Watch: Climate change interview videos

This panel provides digital resources for the exhibit. It features two QR codes. The top one is labeled 'Read: English transcribed climate change interviews' and the bottom one is labeled 'Watch: Climate change interview videos'. The title 'Tower' is centered at the top.

“A few miles from Jamaica, Queens lies 9,000 acres of open bay and marsh that host hundreds of bird species. One of these birds is the osprey; a raptor that builds impressive nests weighing up to 300 pounds. Ospreys were once an endangered species. Due to a mix of policy change and habitat assistance, such as the banning of DDT, they are now listed as a “species of special concern.” One way humans can assist the resurgence of these birds is to install platforms for them to nest on, as their habitat shrinks from urban development. Nest is a project that forms a foundation for a home, as both a gesture to welcome wildlife, and a gesture on the need to house our most vulnerable. Through Nest I aim to build trust and knowledge of the other, as well as demonstrate that toxic legacies can be reversed.

The structure of the nest is a composite order column, sunk into the wetlands. This choice is a nod to the Jamaica Savings Bank, a 19th century Beaux Arts building on Jamaica Avenue adjacent to JCAL, and also to the history of Jamaica Avenue—known in the 1920s as “Financial Row.” Today, Jamaica Avenue is considered a banking desert: the lack of banks is considered a contributor to the area’s lack of equitable housing. Private ATMs, check-cashing and pawn shops far outnumber banking institutions that can provide loan assistance for home ownership



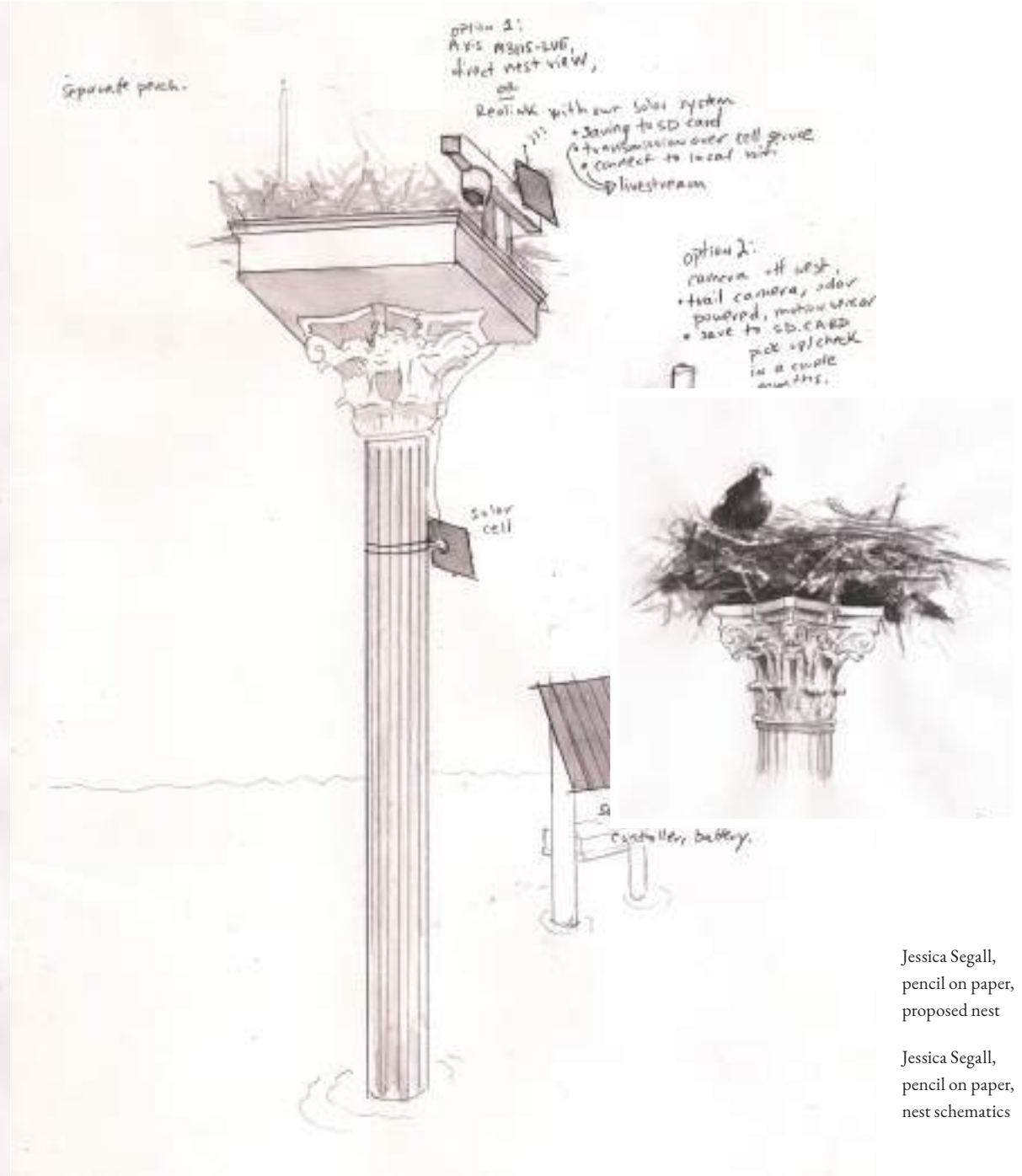
Jessica Segall

Jessica Segall’s NEST uses bureaucracy as a sculpting material, unpacking ideas of environmental conservation and belonging through her interspecies, site-specific practice. In collaboration with The New York Littoral Society, Segall installed an osprey platform on a Composite Order Column in The Jamaica Bay Wetlands. A trail camera was placed next to the nest to capture the osprey as they occupy the platform.

The artist partnered with the Littoral Society in Jamaica Bay and Don Riepe (a Jamaica Bay Guardian) to build a new sculptural platform for the osprey birds of the bay, as well as a public video feed to build on dialogue regarding the interrelationships between local housing, urban and ecological health. The video, which included a growing archive of footage from the camera, was on view in the JCAL lobby.

and building improvements. Jamaica, one of the hardest hit neighborhoods during the foreclosure crisis, is familiar with the predatory loans that led to the crisis, yet the lack of a financial support structure in the neighborhood contributes to redlining. For this project, I partnered with the Littoral Society in Jamaica Bay, and Don Riepe, a Jamaica Bay Guardian who has been building osprey nests for 30 years. The Littoral Society works through advocacy, conservation and education to help protect the coastlines. Don advised in the structure and placement of the nest, and their staff generously volunteered to install it in the wetlands. Thank you also to Not Just Handymen, Nest Footing and Research Assistant Corinne Semper.”

Jessica Segall, pencil on paper, Sketch of Jamaica Savings Bank



Jessica Segall, pencil on paper, proposed nest

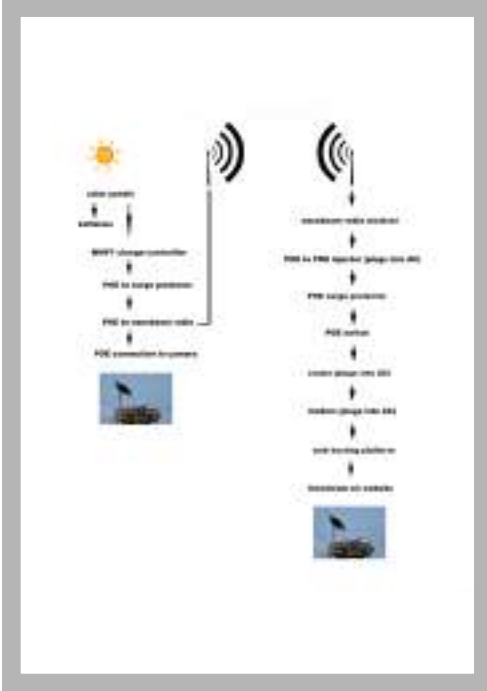
Jessica Segall, pencil on paper, nest schematics



Bringing the column sculpture to the Jamaica Bay Wetlands with Don Riepe, Alexandra Kanonik and Lisa Sheppke of the Littoral Society

Jessica Segall, installing the nest in Jamaica Bay Wetlands. Pictured: Don Riepe, Alexandra Kanonik and Lisa Sheppke of the Littoral Society

Photos by Karen Santiago





2020 HOW IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING THREATENED IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD? #NYchoosingthreats

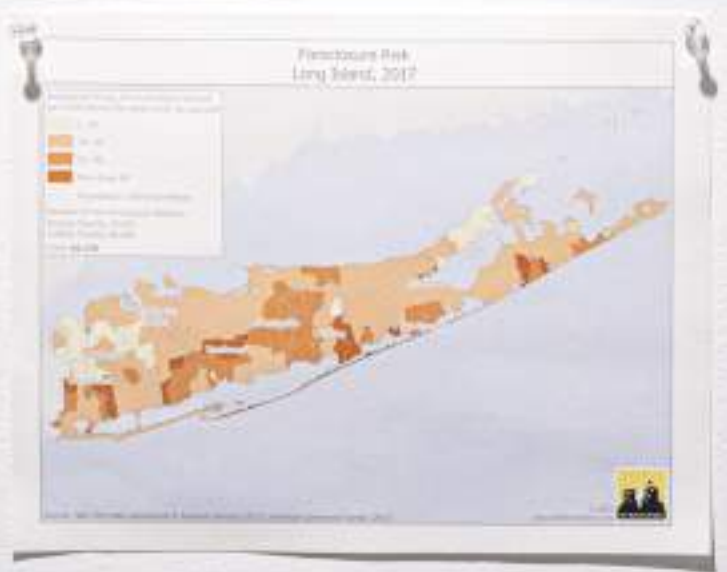
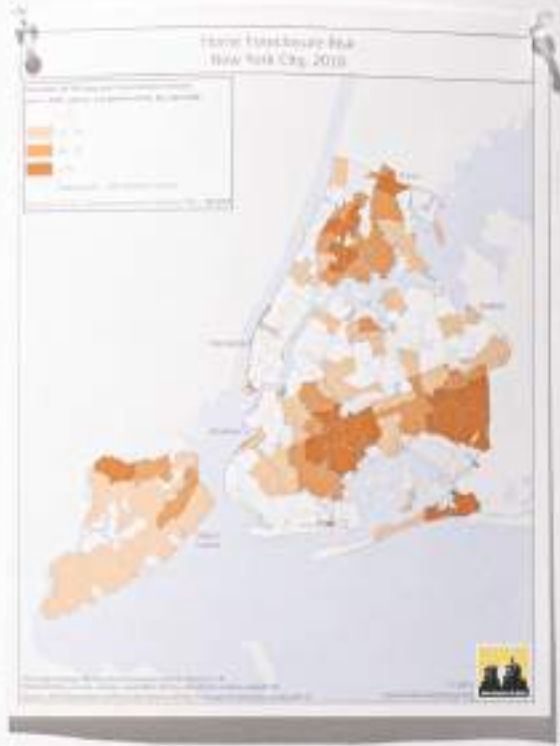
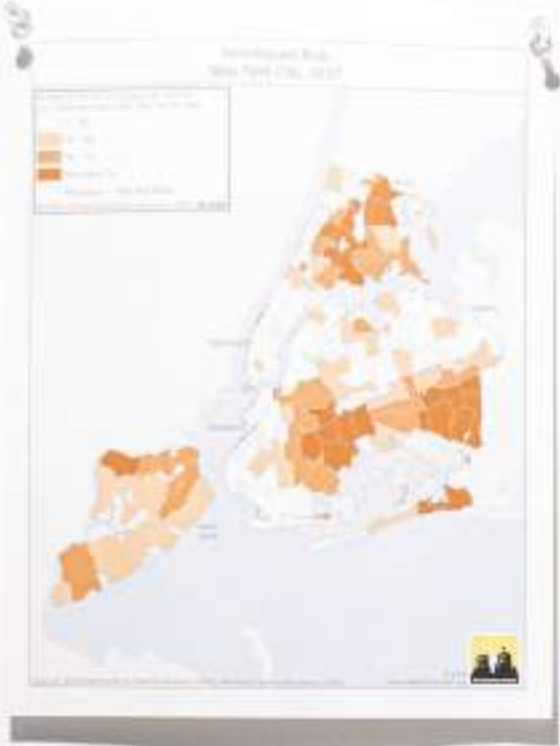
Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development

HOW TO READ THIS CHART: 1. Find your neighborhood. 2. Look across → read column what column says to you. 3. Look down → read row what row says to you. 4. Look at the color → see how your neighborhood compares to others.

KEY: 1. Neighborhood that is the most threatened. 2. Neighborhood that is the least threatened. 3. Neighborhood that is the most threatened. 4. Neighborhood that is the least threatened.

NOTES: 1. This chart is based on data from the 2019 Survey of Affordable Housing Needs in the five boroughs of New York City. 2. The survey was conducted by the Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development in partnership with the City of New York's Department of Housing Preservation and Development. 3. The survey asked residents about their housing needs, including the number of bedrooms they need, the amount of rent they can afford, and whether they are currently in need of affordable housing. 4. The chart shows the percentage of households in each neighborhood that are in need of affordable housing, broken down by the number of bedrooms they need and the amount of rent they can afford. 5. The chart also shows the percentage of households in each neighborhood that are currently in need of affordable housing.

NEIGHBORHOOD	1-2 BR	3-4 BR	5+ BR	RENT	HOUSING RISK
BRONX	27.4	21.4	14.3	14.3%	14.3%
MANHATTAN	27.4	21.4	14.3	14.3%	14.3%
QUEENS	27.4	21.4	14.3	14.3%	14.3%
RICHMOND	27.4	21.4	14.3	14.3%	14.3%
SUNNYVALE	27.4	21.4	14.3	14.3%	14.3%
STATEN ISLAND	27.4	21.4	14.3	14.3%	14.3%



Since 1492 the land has been stolen,
occupy and for sale by
colonial settlers

In the belly of the beast from The
Bronx to Jamaica Queens

Shiny luxury Developments displac-
ing black and brown working class
communities raising rents in crumble
housing conditions, with jobs that
pay low exploited wages,

While the growing police force, the
vicious guard dogs of the ruling class,
protects property

We need to Protect Public Housing
from privatization (NYCHA,
The Projects)

Solidarity From the Sankofa birds to
the Yamecah beavers

We demand Popular Control of
the land

Red for the blood of the people, black
for the people, green for the land

My work is for and made
possible from:

To the Algonquins natives of the land

To the vendors that sell \$1 mangos



Misra Walker

A PEOPLE'S LUDI investigates the social
and material conditions of Jamaica through
the language of local game culture, that is
further imbued with political symbolism.

Strategy: Solidarity from Hunts Point to
Jamaica Queens

The games we play from dominos to ludi
reflects the identity, migration, home and the
material conditions of the black and brown
working class.

Games is strategy, tactics, how to win

What does it mean to work towards to win
our liberation

Centrality of black and brown working
class struggle

What is our strategy to take back power

Picket lines (Sister) and picket signs (Sister)
Don't punish me (Sister) with
brutality (Sister)

Talk to me (Sister), so you can see (Sister)
Oh, what's going on (What's going on)

What's going on (What's going on)

Yeah, what's going on (What's going on)

Oh, what's going on

To the boyz that fill the streets with heavy
smoke of cuisines from the diaspora

To the artist Delroy the Roots man that
design game boards from home

To Patty Jamaican Cuisine that keeps
bellies fed

To the blocks that blast music

To the folks that have multiple tongues

To the brothas that pray to Chango

To the sistas that braid history into hair

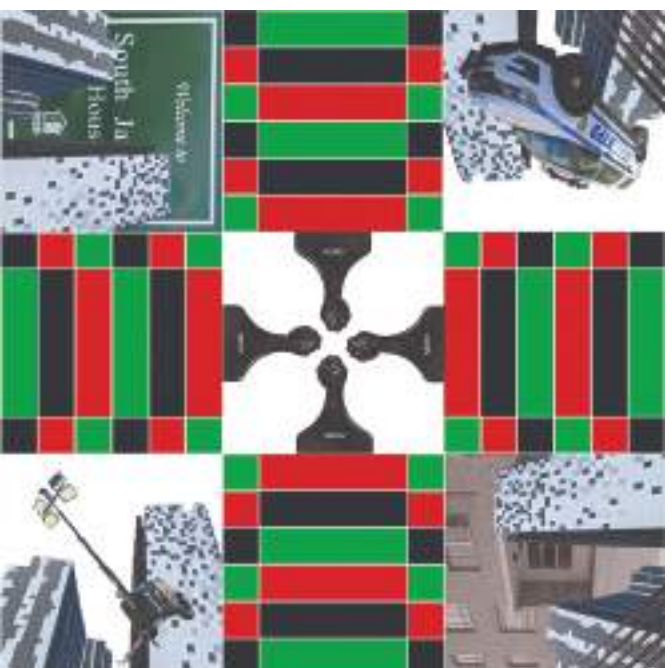
To the Habibis that Ziploc fresh Fronto leaves

To the mothers that protect communities

To the lands that inspire liberation

Jamaica Queens you lit ! love from The Bronx





Research images by the artist



By Agaccl & Son

Freehall



AL ORDERS
RINGS & PLATES TE



Repaired places, histories. An afternoon in Jamaica, Queens.

By Olga Kopenkina

In an interview for the catalog of *Jamaica Flux 2016*, Mary Jane Jacob, a pioneering curator of what has now become known as social practice art, explains site-specificity in art as a process “driven by desires to understand history, and to question whether art can make the past meaningful in our reality today.”¹ What gives art meaning, Jacob adds, is its site, which is marked by time and human presence. The notion of site-specificity, however, has been scrutinized by critics, such as Hal Foster and Miwon Kwon, who reprimanded its advocates for being too vague about what “site” really means, and for merging locations with “ethnographies” and identity politics. An uncritical focus on site-specificity, in their view, has depoliticized art turning artists into “ethnographers,” whose practices are limited by the technologies of institutionalized representations.² “Social practice art,” a field that emerged in the past twenty years and became ubiquitous, has dissolved the concept of site-specificity within the complexities of urban, architectural and environmental studies, and connected art to a framework of grassroots political organizing.³ This interdisciplinary approach stresses the “social” component in art: its collaborative, collective mode of thinking, or what critic Grant Kester describes as “dialogical”⁴ art. The latter, while realized within institutional frameworks, often aligns itself with community-based art and art activism.

Over the last two decades, social networks have proliferated tremendously within the art world, forged to the same, if not to a greater extent, virtually as they could in-situ. It seemed

¹ Kalia Brooks, “An Interview with Mary Jane Jacob,” in *Jamaica Flux: Workplaces and Windows, 2016*. Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning, 2016.

² Hal Foster, “The Artist as Ethnographer?” in *The Return of the Real*. Cambridge, MIT Press, 1996.

³ Gregory Sholette and Chloe Bass, the founders of Social Practice Queens (as a concentration of the MFA Queens College’s program) define social practice art as “emerging, interdisciplinary field of research and practice, [...] which embraces urban, environmental, or labor studies; public architecture; and political organizing, among others.” In: *Art as Social Action. An Introduction to the Principles and Practices of Teaching Social Practice art*, Allworth Press, New York. P. xiii. A similar definition is offered by Corcoran School of the Arts and Design: <https://corcoran.gwu.edu/social-practice>.

⁴ Grant Kester, “Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art.” California University Press, 2004.

that what took place online could be seen as a social act as much as it could offline, until the COVID-19 pandemic proved otherwise. It is therefore remarkable that the fifth iteration of *Jamaica Flux: Workspaces & Windows 2021*, which situates art projects in public spaces around Jamaica, Queens, takes place during the COVID-19 lockdown. The artists here, many who are based in Southeast Queens, are attempting to redefine the boundaries of the very category “social” and test the capacity of our society to survive by means of art. Granted that site-specificity remains a viable notion for this art project, some broader questions immediately arise: How does Jamaica’s specificity as a neighborhood, impacted by the pandemic and human loss, affect the exhibition? How do we evaluate the complexity of social relationships, which provide the very conditions for reciprocal relations that every site-specific project ultimately relies on?

On a crisp afternoon in March, I stopped by the Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning (JCAL) before walking around Jamaica Avenue, measuring the degrees of “social” from the position of a pandemic-impacted individual longing for social interaction. The lockdown restrictions had slowly been loosening up at this point, and the area was bustling with traffic, construction and shopping, despite the number of businesses that had closed because of the pandemic. Many building corners and streets were framed by Black Lives Matter signs and banners, as well as a noticeable abundance of NYPD vehicles. Since the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in May 2020, BLM protests and its symbolisms have become the center of COVID-era sociality across the country. Widespread civil disobedience movements have created new public places. In Jamaica, volunteers had come together in August to paint a Black Lives Matter mural

on Jamaica Avenue, between 150th and 153rd streets. That section of the road is co-named Black Lives Matter Avenue. Now a year later standing here, the feeling of unity is still strong.

Founded by Dutch in the 17th century, Jamaica has its origins as a colonial village centered around what is now Jamaica Avenue, an important shopping center that runs through the boroughs of Queens and Brooklyn. According to historical accounts, it developed on the site of the Pre-Columbian trail, where the north native tribes came to sell skin and furs. The English, who took control in 1664, eventually renamed the land Jamaica, derived from “Jameco” or *yamecab*, Algonquin for “beaver”, after the indigenous people who first lived north of Jamaica Bay.⁵ And Jamaica’s colonial legacy has endured, often highlighted in real estate ads that sell the “distinct charm” of a former colonial village.⁶ The neighborhood’s modern history was mainly shaped by the Great Migration era’s racialized segregation laws.⁷ Segregation continued to affect the neighborhood throughout the 20th century, as well as many other former Blue Collar industrial cities: practices of racialized redlining and defunding particularly hurt African American communities.⁸ Between the late 1970s and ‘90s, state neglect, the crack epidemic and rising crime rates significantly affected Jamaica’s Black and Latino communities.⁹ However, urban development of the last two decades brought a drastic change to the entire neighborhood. Today, Jamaica is one of the Queens’ busiest, middle-class immigrant neighborhoods, with a recent influx of young, mostly foreign-born populations. The enlargement of Jamaica Station LIRR and AirTrain to JFK Airport, followed by the construction of new apartment and luxury hotel buildings – some up to 28 stories – has triggered a significant jump in home prices and mortgages. From the 2010s onward, this further led to an increase of foreclosed properties, the further

⁵ www.nytimes.com/2014/07/06/nyregion/what-is-jamaica-queens-named-after.html

⁶ www.parkwayvillage.us/

⁷ Trevor Kollman, *The Impact of African American Migration on Housing in New York City Neighborhoods during the Great Depression* (University of Arizona, 2010; pdf).

⁸ www.brickunderground.com/blog/2015/10/history_of_redlining

⁹ www.nydailynews.com/new-york/crack-scourge-swept-new-york-city-article-1.813844

exodus of long-standing communities, and influx of higher-income, white-collar, labor forces.

The distinct, early 20th century architecture of Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning (JCAL) stands on Jamaica Avenue, punctuated with (increasing in number) chain stores, banks, fast-food restaurants and government buildings. If you step away from downtown center however, the neighborhood feels homier and has retained many of its suburban features. The NYC Department of City Planning permitted up-zoning of the area on the condition that developers leave low-rise houses and historical landmarks alone. My walk continued to King Manor Museum, a restored 18th century colonial farming house surrounded by a 11.5-acre park. This is the remaining estate of Rufus King (1755-1827), who was a prominent diplomat and one of the signers of the Constitution as well as the first New York senator. A man in his eighties greeted me at the museum doors. This is Roy Fox, the museum’s live-in caretaker and tour-guide with a thirty-year tenure. He took me for a walk outside the house, eager to talk about the site’s historical importance. Rufus King, he said, was known for his strong anti-slavery views. Indeed, when serving in Congress, King outlined a law, which barred the extension of slavery further to the west. At some point in his tour, Mr. Fox waved at the two buildings of Queens County’s Family Court, erected just across the street from King Manor’s Park in 2003. “One of the buildings honors Thurgood Marshall, the first African-American Supreme Court Judge,” he said. “Has anyone ever thought that without King, there would not have been Thurgood Marshall?!” In the era of Black Lives Matter and calls to decolonize museums and institutions as the citadels of white supremacy and colonialism, one can easily become

frustrated by the lack of acknowledgment around the fact that these legacies continue to dominate public spaces, including in neighborhoods as richly diverse as Queens. Yet what Fox uttered was, if subconsciously, also a fractured narrative of history, one that is desperately in need of repair. Under the conditions created by corporate gentrification and so-called urban re-development programs, the names of progressive leaders and historical figures are often used as token words to construct an official historical narrative, while suppressing actual histories. Places dense with capital, such as Times Square and Lower Manhattan, have enough anecdotes to sell from one generation to another to keep their histories alive and real estate prices high. Communities further out from the financial center, such as in Jamaica, whose histories are written by migrant workers of color moving in and out as industries come and go, are not granted these opportunities. The logic of urban gentrification makes it difficult to imprint one's memories, stories and histories in a frequently changing, gentrifying landscape.

One of the most pressing questions of previous and current *Jamaica Flux* projects has been: How do artists approach sites, and their multiple historical narratives, which are simultaneously a product of colonial history and modern development? In the present, perpetuated by a greater speed of transformation, are we equipped enough to challenge the destructive legacies of colonialism, racism and economic subjugation? How can artists and curators of public art projects provide cohesive strategies that bring together fragments of broken histories amidst the inherent violence of urban gentrification? French-Algerian artist Kader Attia has proposed using the concept of repair as a new approach to understanding modern history as shaped by systemic violence. Revealing the “inherently hybrid

nature of repair” – which itself is a “process that gathers together fragments of matter and meaning without erasing their differences”¹⁰ – Attia references indigenous cultural habits that accentuated body scars, injuries and cracks in their ritualistic objects, as opposed to, for example, the modern plastic surgery's selling of scar removal.¹¹ Repair, or work around a wound that is itself “the mark of time and history,”¹² instead of restoration, is a possible way to deal with political and social traumas. Using locality as a framework, *Jamaica Flux* artists have often repaired and reassembled pieces of histories to counter injuries caused by time and speed.

Sometimes food can repair history. After the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, artist Michael Rakowitz, one of the participants of 2004 *Jamaica Flux*, noticed that dates from Iraq have been sold on international markets despite the embargo, with their identities masked. The artist began to pack, ship and import dates using the logo of his Iraqi grandfather's company, which was reopened in Long Island in the 1940s, after his grandfather was exiled from Iraq. The goods, exhibited by Rakowitz in import company Davidson's and Co, recreated in a local storefront in Jamaica, revealed their real origins, which, along with his revived grandfather's company name, aimed to creatively reassemble, rather than restore the decimated Iraqi history. A place such as Iraq, which has undergone genocide and devastation, will always be mourned as a place of loss. But the hope that something will survive and give rise to a new historical development has its own healing qualities.

10

Theo Reeves-Evison, “Repair.” In: Reeves-Evison, *Ethics of Contemporary Art In the Shadow of Transgression*. Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020. P. 148.

11

“Injury and Repair: Kader Attia”, in conversation with Gabriele Sassone. Available at: <http://moussmagazine.it/injury-and-repair-kader-attia-2018/>

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“Injury and Repair: Kader Attia”, in conversation with Gabriele Sassone. Available at: <http://moussmagazine.it/injury-and-repair-kader-attia-2018/>

Looking through other *Jamaica Flux* archives, I was further moved by Aurora De Armendi's *PROJECTO LIBRO ABIERTO* of the previous *Jamaica Flux 2016*, in which the artist addressed the disappearance of Spanish-language bookstores from the neighborhood by inviting Spanish-speaking poets to respond to this disappearance with their own poems. She then published these conversations in a hand-made letterpress printed book. Reappropriating the manual book-binding process was, in a way, a "repair" of a hidden injury, caused by dispossession of local communities from their skills and aesthetics in the name of capitalist modernization and digital progress.

In our current history, old wounds have only been exacerbated by the pandemic, during which communities from Queens have suffered the most.¹³ The threat of social and human alienation caused by prolonged lockdown prompted us to recalibrate our approaches to the "social" and to revisit site-specificity, as the notion of 'site' became more palpable. But the success of locally situated and engaged art projects now depends on whether 'siting' goes beyond just seeing a site as a manifestation of its cultural relevance and ethnic diversity, whether we acknowledge the unstable connection between location and identity in our postcolonial, disaster-prone, extractive, capitalistic world. *Jamaica Flux* is a project that ultimately tests our capacity to see site-specific art as distinctive space-time relations, positioned in Jamaica, where instability, precarity and injury brought by the pandemic and systemic violence "infect" a "pure" myth of modernity with a more hybrid sensibilities that allow for the repair of our fractured everyday landscapes.

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/09/nyregion/coronavirus-queens-corona-jackson-heights-elmhurst.html>

Olga Kopenkina is a Belarus-born independent curator and art critic living in New York City. Her curatorial projects include *The Work of Love*, *The Queer of Labor* at Franklin Street Works, Stamford, CT, 2017; *Feminism is Politics!* At Pratt Manhattan Gallery, 2016; *Lenin: Icebreaker Revisited* at Austrian Cultural Forum, 2015, *Sounds of Silence: Art during Dictatorship* at EFA Project Space (2012) and others. Kopenkina

is a contributor to publications such as *Art Journal*, *Artforum*, *ArtMargins*, *Moscow Art Journal*, *Hyperallergic*, *Brooklyn Rail* and others. She teaches at the Department of Media, Culture and Communication, Steinhardt School at New York University, and Department of Communication and Media Studies, Fordham University.



Damali Abrams

Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess is an interdisciplinary artist and writer from Southeast Queens who attended the Whitney Independent Study Program and earned an MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts and a BA from New York University. Damali was a recent Creative-In-Residence at Brooklyn Public Library. She is a recipient of the Women's Studio Workshop Right Now! Production Grant and the Queens Council on the Arts New Works Grant. She has been a fellow at Culture Push, the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, A.I.R. Gallery and apexart in Seoul, South Korea. Damali has also been an Artist-in-Residence at Fresh Milk in Barbados, Groundation Grenada, The Center for Book Arts, Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning (JCAL) and LMCC on Governors Island.

Heejung Cho

Heejung Cho is a sculptor and printmaker born in Seoul, Korea. She currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Cho received her BFA in sculpture at the Seoul National University and an MFA in visual art at the Mason Gross School of the Arts. She has received residencies at Museum of Arts and Design, Newark Museum, AIM program of the Bronx Museum of Arts, the

Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts and the IAP program at the New York Foundation for the Arts, among others. For the last five years she has developed her prints in participation with the Keyholder Residency Program at the Lower East Side Printshop and the SIP Fellowship of Robert Blackburn Printmaking. She participated in the residency program at the Women's Studio Workshop in 2021. Her works have been exhibited in galleries and museums in the U.S. and Korea.

Indranil Choudhury

Indranil Choudhury is a media artist from India. He's a graduate of Hunter College's Integrated Media Arts program and teaches in the school's Department of Film & Media Studies.

Cody + Julian

Cody + Julian is a collaboration between artists Cody Ann Herrmann and Julian Louis Phillips. They have been working together since 2017, when they met attending Social Practice Queens at CUNY Queens College. Cody + Julian have presented work at Open Engagement, and have both individually received the Jerome Foundation Artist

in Residence Fellowship at Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning and the More Art Engaging Artists Fellowship.

The pair shares a common interest in creating art that prioritizes engagement and representation of communities vulnerable to economic and ecological displacement. The artists' practices are rooted in performance and participation. Together, Cody + Julian's work focuses on societal systems, environmental justice and media. The two artists create work that is accessible and shareable while communicating complex issues in direct and powerful ways.

Sherese Francis

Sherese Francis is a Queens, NY-based poet, interdisciplinary artist, workshop facilitator and literary curator of the mobile library project, J. Expressions. She has published work in journals and anthologies including Furious Flower, Obsidian Lit, Rootwork Journal, Spoken Black Girl, The Operating System, Cosmonauts Avenue, No Dear, Apex Magazine, Bone Bouquet, African Voices, Newtown Literary and Free Verse. Additionally, she has published three chapbooks, Lucy's Bone Scrolls, Variations on Sett/ling Seed/ling and Recycling a Why That Rules Over My Sacred Sight. Sherese

also has had artwork featured in exhibitions from The Lit Exhibit, NY Live Arts, Queens Public Library - Central, York College Fine Art Gallery, Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning and Baxter St Camera Club. To find out more about her work, visit futuristicallyancient.com.

Linda Ganjian

Linda Ganjian's work has been exhibited at Art in Buildings, NYC; Islip Art Museum, NY; Depo, Istanbul; Auxiliary Projects, Brooklyn; Artspace, New Haven, CT; National Academy of Design; Socrates Sculpture Park; Queens Museum; Storefront for Art and Architecture; Brooklyn Museum and Stedelijk museum de Lakenhal, Holland. Grants/fellowships include Queens Council on the Arts (2017, 2011); Pollack-Krasner Foundation (2005); Artslink (2001); MacDowell Colony (2006) and Millay Colony (2004). Public art commissions include NYC School Construction Authority in 2014 and the NYC MTA in 2016. In 2019, she was a QCA ArtPort resident at LaGuardia Airport.

Hayoon Jay Lee

Hayoon Jay Lee has participated in numerous residency programs both nationally and

internationally. She has exhibited widely, including at the Chinese American Art Council / Gallery 456 (NYC), Gwangju Museum of Art (Korea), 99 Museum (Beijing), The United Nations Gallery (NYC), The Clock Tower, No Longer Empty (NYC) and ArtWalk NY: Coalition for the Homeless (NYC). She currently lives and works in New York City.

Le'Andra LeSeur

Le'Andra LeSeur is an artist working primarily with video, installation, photography, painting and performance. Her work celebrates blackness, contemplates the experience of invisibility and seeks to dismantle stereotypes surrounding black female identity, among other subject matters. Awards include Leslie-Lohman Museum Artists Fellowship (2019), the Time-Based Medium Prize as well as the Juried Grand Prize at Artprize 10 (2018). LeSeur recently appeared in conversation with Marilyn Minter at the Brooklyn Museum, presented by the Tory Burch Foundation and has lectured at RISD Museum of Art, Providence, RI and SCAD Atlanta, among others. Her work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions at The Shed, NY, NY; Atlanta Contemporary, Atlanta, GA; A.I.R. Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; Assembly

Room, New York, NY; Microscope Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; Anacostia Art Center, Washington, DC; SITELAB, Grand Rapids, MI; Arnika Dawkins, Atlanta, GA and others. Residences include NARS Foundation, Marble House Project, and Mass MoCA. LeSeur is represented by Microscope Gallery.

Reuben Lorch-Miller

Reuben Lorch-Miller is a multidisciplinary artist and educator whose studio practice encompasses sculpture, collage, photography and artist books. His work has been exhibited at Frye Art Museum (Seattle, WA), MoMA/PS1 (New York, NY) and The Tacoma Art Museum (Tacoma, WA). He has been an artist-in-residence at Land and Sea (Oakland, CA), Rocksbox (Portland, OR), SIM (Reykjavik, Iceland), The Shandaken Project (Shandaken, NY), Headlands Center for the Arts (Sausalito, CA) and Bauernmark 9 (Vienna, Austria). Lorch-Miller has been a visiting artist and lecturer at Illinois State University (Normal, IL), Rhode Island School of Design, Stanford University, San Francisco Art Institute and Pratt Institute. He has also worked as an Arts Educator with The Guggenheim Museum, The Studio Museum in Harlem, Eckford Street Studio, Usdan Summer Camp for the Arts, Studio in a School and Center for Arts Education. His work can be seen at www.lorch-miller.com.

Firoz Mahmud

Mahmaud was the first Bangladeshi fellow artist at Rijksakademie Van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. He has exhibited at Bangkok Art Biennale, Lahore Biennial, Dhaka Art Summit, Aichi Triennial, Sharjah Biennale, Office of Contemporary Art, Oslo, MAXXI Museum of 21st Century Arts Rome, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan Contemporary Art at Asia House London, Hiroshima Museum of Contemporary Art, Mori Art Museum Tokyo; Metropolitan Mostings Hus Copenhagen, Sovereign Art Foundation, Exhibit320 in Delhi, National Museum and Bengal Gallery in Dhaka. Recently, he has exhibited at Asia Art Initiative, Twelve Gates Arts Philadelphia and Hunter College East Harlem Gallery in New York. In 2011, he was a recipient of Asian Cultural Council (ACC) Fellowship in New York and in 2009, he received Art project Ideas prize from Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art Japan.

Nadia Misir

Nadia Misir is an artist born and raised in South Ozone Park, Queens. Her practice reflects on relationships between diaspora, gentrification, grief, Guyanese identity and the way that histories of oppression reveal

themselves in unexpected and mundane moments. Misir's writing has been published in *Poetry*, *Kweli Journal*, *Papercuts*, *Open City Magazine*, *No*, *Dear Mag*, and *QC Voices*.

Sari Nordman

Sari Nordman, born and raised in Finland, is a New York -based, interdisciplinary artist working with dance, video and installation. She loves to travel to the isolated parts of the world to reflect on nature, history and female experience, the recurring themes in her works. Most recently she has exhibited at Art in Odd Places, The Immigrant Artist Biennial 2020, InSitu, SHIM Finland at Odetta Gallery, Performance Mix Festival and UnSpace Gallery in the US; TsakBam Festival in Greece, and Jaakola Statuary Park and Teatteri Avoimet Ovet in Finland. Her film *Assimilation* was an official selection for Women CineMakers 2018 Biennial Edition. Nordman has enjoyed residencies at Atlantic Center for the Arts, Bearnstow, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, Catwalk, Fantasy Generator at Hollins University and Tofte Lake Center in the US; at Eckerö Post and Customs House, Loimaan Taidetalo, Tohmajärvi and Zodiak Z-Free in Finland; and at Solo works@77 in Greece. Nordman has been awarded American Scandinavian Foundation, American Scandinavian

Society, Finlandia Foundation National and Finlandia Foundation New York Metropolitan Chapter grants. She worked as a dancer with Dean Moss on several of his productions in 2009-2018. She holds a M.F.A. from NYU/Tisch School of the Arts. She has taught dance to various ages, abilities and backgrounds of students and has worked as a teaching artist in New York City public schools since 2007.

Jessica Segall

Segall's work has been exhibited internationally, including at the Fries Museum, The Havana Bienal, The Queens Museum of Art, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, The National Museum of Jewish American History, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Vojvodina, The National Gallery of Indonesia, The Mongolian National Modern Art Gallery and The National Symposium for Electronic Art. Segall has received grants from The Pollock Krasner Foundation, The Rema Hort Mann Foundation, New York Foundation for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, The Harpo Foundation and Art Matters and attended residencies at The Van Eyck Academie, The MacDowell Colony and Skowhegan. Her work has been featured in Cabinet Magazine, The New

York Times, Sculpture Magazine, Mousse Magazine and Art in America.

Misra Walker

Misra Walker is a born, raised and Bronx-based interdisciplinary artist, educator, and community organizer. She/they are interested in using her/their art as a political education tool for their community and utilize local materials that reflect the material conditions to address struggle, solidarity and liberation among black and brown working-class communities. She/they work addresses themes of spirituality, colonizations and hood politics. Misra Walker graduated from Cooper Union in 2015.

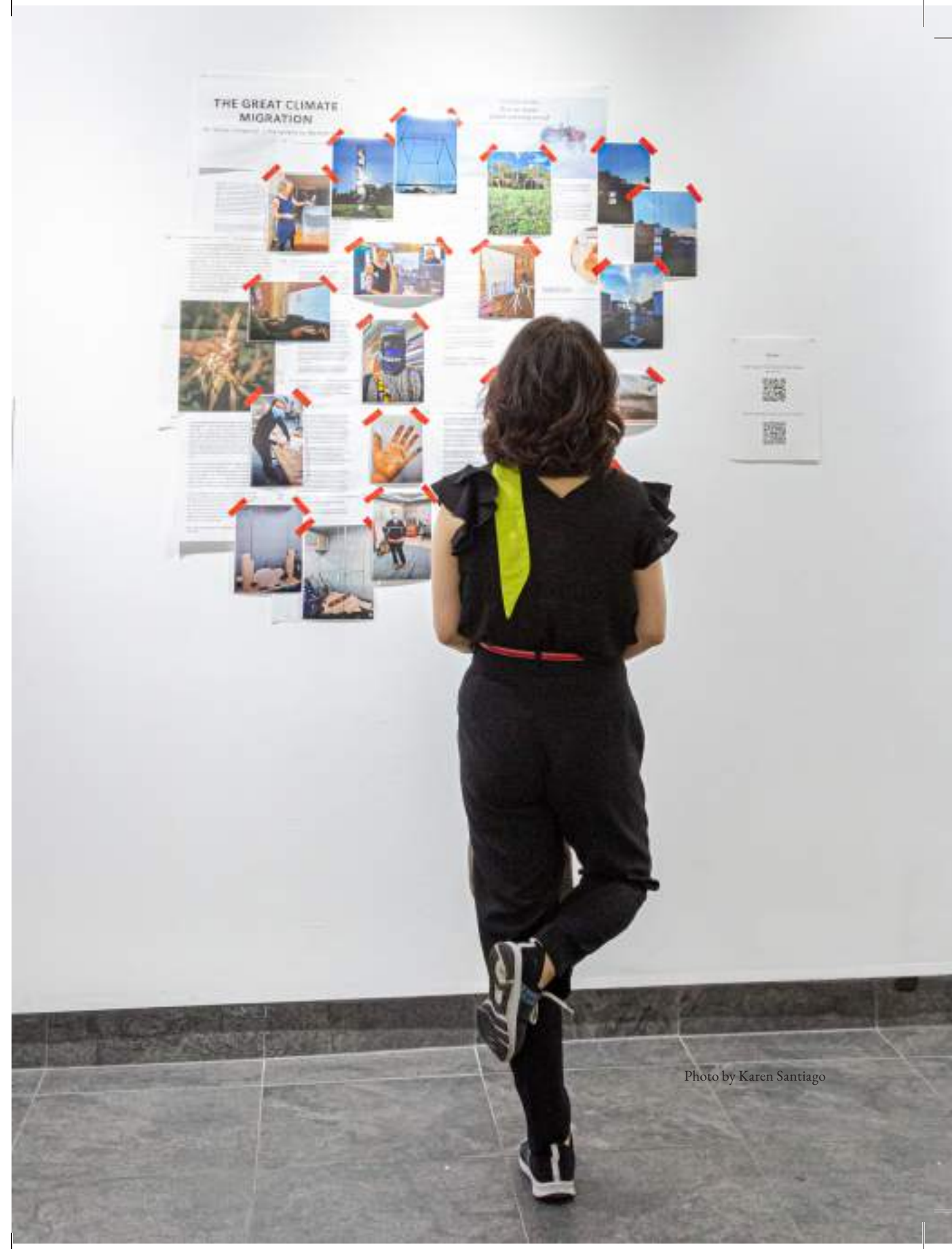


Photo by Karen Santiago



Photo by Karen Santiago

JAMAICA FLUX 2021 MAP

1 - SARI NORDMAN TOWER

Sculpture and video projection
@ Rufus King Park,
west side of King Manor Museum
On view through August 7

2 - LINDA GANJIAN JAMAICA MEMORIES

Digital print postcards
@ King Manor Museum (150-03 Jamaica Ave) &
JCAL (161-04 Jamaica Ave) lobby
Postcards are free and available to the public

3 - HAYOON JAY LEE LET'S SHARE IN THE MOMENT: A DIALOGUE AROUND EATING

@ King Manor Museum (150-03 Jamaica Ave),
dining room and kitchen - appointments via
kingmanor.org

108 Kinds of Hope and Empathy

Rice installation

Beyond Life & Death

Dining table mixed media installation

The Role of Food During the Pandemic

Video

4 - CODY ANN HERRMANN + JULIAN LOUIS PHILLIPS PEOPLES COMMUNICATION COMMISSION (PCC)

Lawn sign installation
@ Rufus King Park,
corner of Jamaica Ave and 153rd St.

5 - SHERESE FRANCIS ART//FACT JAMAICA MEMORIES

3 vinyl banners
@ JPAC (153-10 Jamaica Ave), fence on 153rd St.



JAMAICA FLUX 2021 MAP

9 - HEEJUNG CHO INDIVIDUALITY AND LOCALITY

Street sticker series
@ Various locations along Jamaica Avenue

10 - DAMALI ABRAMS A WINDOW INTO ORAL HISTORIES OF JAMAICA ARTISTS

Vinyl banner
@ Colosseum Mall (89-02 165th St),
booth inside south entrance on 165th St

11. JESSICA SEGALL NEST

Wooden osprey platform with security camera
@ Broad Channel Wetlands off the
Cross Bay Boulevard near 209 Cross Bay Blvd

6 - INDRANIL CHOUDHURY DISTRICT 24

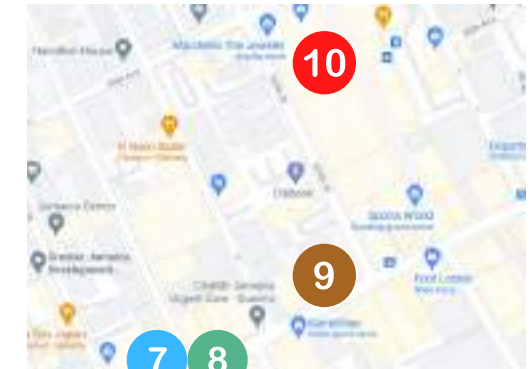
Two-channel video installation
@ JPAC (153-10 Jamaica Avenue), lower-level lobby
On view by appointment - email nkuo@jcal.org

7 - LE'ANDRA LESEUR THERE IS ONLY LANGUAGE BETWEEN US

Sound installation
@ JCAL (161-04 Jamaica Ave), outside entrance
7-9am & 7-9pm daily

8 - REUBEN LORCH-MILLER SOUTHEAST QUEENS FLAGS

6 polyester printed flags
@ JCAL (161-04 Jamaica Ave), street-level windows



JAMAICA FLUX: WORKSPACES AND WINDOWS 2021 IS A PROJECT ORGANIZED BY THE JAMAICA CENTER FOR ARTS & LEARNING. LEARN MORE AT JCAL.ORG/JAMAICA-FLUX.

Acknowledgements

Artists

Damali Abrams
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 Sherese Francis
 Linda Ganjian
 Hayoon Jay Lee
 Le'Andra LeSeur
 Reuben Lorch-Miller
 Firoz Mahmud
 Nadia Misir
 Sari Nordman
 Jessica Segall
 Misra Walker

Organizations

American Littoral Society:
 Jamaica Bay
 A Better Jamaica
 Greater Jamaica Development
 Corporation
 Jamaica Center Business
 Improvement District
 Jamaica Colosseum Mall
 Korea Art Forum
 NYC Department of Parks &
 Recreation
 King Manor Museum
 Queens Memory
 Queens Public Library
 - Central
 165th Street Mall

Individuals

Meral Agish	Mary Reda	Debra Simon
Hannes Bend	Elizabeth Masella	Thiago Szmrecsányi
Kelsey Brow	Greg Mays	James Vaccaro
Jennifer Furioli	Natalie Milbrodt	Margaret Rose Vendreys
Derek Irby	Blondel Pinnock	Gennady Yusim
Thomas Logan	Regine Dejan	Nayelli Valencia Turrent

Thank You!



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