

# **The Immigrant Artist Biennial 2020: Here, Together!**

Curated by Katya Grokhovsky

September 9 – October 24, 2020

**efa** The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts

# Table of Contents

Introduction by Katya Grokhovsky	5
Essay by Mary Annunziata	6
Essay by Eva Mayhabal Davis	10
Virtual Spring Programs Recap	14
Exhibition installation images	16
<i>TIAB 2020 Here, Together!</i>	24
Blanka Amezkua	
Esperanza Cortés	
Bahareh Khoshooee	
Daniela Kostova	
Cole Lu	
Ana Mendieta	
Levan Mindiashvili	
Qinza Najm	
Anna Parisi	
daàPò réo	
Yali Romagoza	
Performance: Yali Romagoza	46
Performance: Anna Parisi	48
Performance: Levan Mindiashvili	50
Performance: Bahareh Khoshooee, Sareh Imani	52
Contributors	54
Acknowledgments	64
<i>TIAB 2020 Here, Together!</i> Programming	66

## Curator's Introduction



Installation view: daàPò réo, *Why Should We Be Deported? This is Very, Very Hard for a Family*, 2020; Levan Mindiashvili, *Levani's Room: AMERICA*. 2020. Photograph by Walter Włodarczyk.

Established in 2019, TIAB seeks to facilitate a platform of support for projects by often overlooked and silenced voices. The premier edition of *The Immigrant Artist Biennial (TIAB) 2020: Here, Together!* is conceptualized around the theme of otherness and separation and exhibits immigrant artists, based in US, who work in a variety of mediums. TIAB is based on the premise of equal gender and race presentation, highlighting the inequality and bias which is still prevalent in the art world today.

*The Immigrant Artist Biennial 2020: Here, Together!* at EFA Project space is a central group exhibition of the biennial, featuring multidisciplinary works by eleven NY-based Immigrant artists. Initially postponed by the COVID crisis, *Here, Together!* explores displacement, alienation, and the steady erosion of American Empire.

Confronting a national rhetoric of exclusion, nationalism, and discrimination, *Here, Together!* calls for urgent unity, visibility, and criticality, by facilitating a necessary platform of cultural exchange. The exhibition reverberates within our present moment, as a global pandemic ravages a divided country on the eve of a fraught election in which immigration and the (mis)treatment of “othered” bodies will figure as key concerns.

These artists call forth the power dynamics and hierarchies of a late-stage struggling capitalist society in dire need of compassion and humanity. Their work grapples with issues of identity, the meaning of home and place, and the consistent, looming threats of erasure, removal, and cultural whitewashing.

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Katya Grokhovskiy

*Artist, Curator, Founding Director and  
Chief Curator of The Immigrant Artist Biennial*

## *Together, Apart*

In a darkened room on the fourth floor of the Brooklyn Museum, a performer moved sinuously through the crowd. She wound a silver filament around audience members, looping fingers and ankles, bisecting coats and backpacks, until a pulsing metallic web filled the space.

A hush fell across the gallery, where viewers had gathered to celebrate the inaugural version of The Immigrant Artist Biennial (TIAB during the Museum's popular First Saturday event, featuring performances by Hanae Utamura and Christopher Unpezverde Núñez. In Manhattan, preparations were underway for the Biennial's central exhibition, *Here, Together!*, slated to open in late March at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (EFA) Project Space.

"Unity in separation, the separation in unity," Utamura intoned solemnly during the performance, *Letter from Future Past*. Her words were prophetic – strangers sat shoulder to shoulder, braided together through performer Tina Wang's intimate dance. Within weeks, the rapid spread of COVID-19 would reshape society, casting us apart as social distancing, isolation, and lockdown measures became the norm.

TIAB itself emerged from the liminality of unity and exclusion, as Founding Director and Chief Curator Katya Grokhovsky sought to remedy a desiring yet inhospitable artworld that culturally and racially ostracized artists. The concept for the project was forged from Grokhovsky's own experience as a "double" immigrant (from Ukraine first to Australia, and then the U.S., and over nine years in New York as an artist, curator, and organizer.

Over the past year and a half the Biennial has come to life, illumined by Grokhovsky's indomitable spirit and the volunteer efforts of an all-female team. Following initial fundraiser auctions and a successful campaign at Kickstarter, the Biennial was poised to explode across New York in Spring 2020 with programming in four boroughs. Although COVID-19 altered those plans, Grokhovsky and her collaborators have risen to the occasion, postponing the central exhibition as well as outdoor programming at Green-Wood Cemetery to the Fall, and shifting satellite exhibitions online.

Amidst a global health crisis, a largely shuttered artworld, and draconian immigration restrictions (including newly proposed regulations that threaten to eliminate asylum protections), The Immigrant Artist Biennial's debut is a testament to the power of community solidarity and grassroots action. Bravely facing limited funding opportunities and tenuous immigration circumstances for Biennial staff and participating artists, TIAB has consistently reflected a light on these and other pressing issues. Programming has included a Visual Artists' Immigration Clinic, co-hosted with the Center for Art Law and EFA Project Space, designed to guide emerging visual artists through the process of obtaining a U.S. visa, as well as a roundtable discussion where artists responded to anti-Asian racism and xenophobia during COVID-19.

TIAB exhibiting artists hail from a multiplicity of nations and experiences. Many are based in New York; still others, including those curated through the Biennial's Open Call (opening virtually in October), range from across the U.S., from Charlottesville, Virginia to Boise, Idaho. Whether physically or virtually, TIAB unites them and their audience. Visitors to EFA Project Space are welcomed to the exhibition as though they are entering an "imagined country" – the show opens with Nigerian-born artist daàPò reo's participatory threshold, *Why Should We Be Deported? This is Very, Very Hard for a Family*, composed of a fluttering American flag ringed with barbed wire, a perceptive metaphor for America's promise and pitfalls.

Glimmering just beyond reo's work is Georgian-born Levan Mindiashvili's neon installation, *Levani's Room: AMERICA*, honoring James Baldwin and Cuban-born Felix Gonzalez-Torres as American catalysts for social change. Mindiashvili cites distinctive elements from their seminal works that question race, sexuality, and identity in Western society, and physically reframes them within a darkened gallery window overlooking a rapidly changing city. In acknowledging the struggles of his artistic forebears (and fellow immigrants), Mindiashvili emphasizes a collective reading of our past in order to spur progress for the future.

Folded within these and other works is a lesser-known video piece by

## *Together, Apart*

Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta. *Parachute* captures Mendieta's interdisciplinary practice as an artist and educator as her students collaborate to form a billowing fabric structure that connects and envelops them. Its inclusion within the exhibition is both a subtle nod to the historic contributions of immigrant artists, and a critical valorization of experiential pedagogy.

*Parachute's* undulating movement, enlivened by the motion of many hands, is a participatory action that is intrinsically hopeful. Like Utamura's performance, it invites intimacy and communion. During an era that threatens to rend our nation, and a time in which Americans of all backgrounds are forced to confront their own precarity, The Immigrant Artist Biennial's presentation of these and other works demands a closer inspection of our social fabric. Mirrored in the exhibitions are the arduous, uncertain, and rewarding experiences of dozens of artists who have dared to imagine a brighter future by choosing America as their home. As we endure this collective separation and look to the next chapter in our history, we might well begin by listening to their stories.

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*Mary Annunziata*



Installation view: daàPò réo, *Why Should We Be Deported? This is Very, Very Hard for a Family*, 2020. Photograph by Walter Włodarczyk.

## Live and In Person

It is a great privilege to be able to step inside one of the physical installations of the The Immigrant Artist Biennial (TIAB) for the year 2020. I am immersed into the busy midtown intersections of New York City with an eeriness that only thrives in the folks working about in the midst of a global pandemic. It serves as a reminder of the resilience and the tenacity with which we the people prevail. An intrinsic experience that contextualizes the platform for The Immigrant Artist Biennial and the exhibition *Here, Together!* hosted at the EFA Project Space on West 39th Street.

When approaching the exhibition, staged here by eleven artists, the curator Katya Grokhovsky carefully considers a selection of colors that guide the eye from the entrance throughout. Matte green, red, gray and pink are used as accent colors that invite and frame the viewer in order to absorb and stay. This is a mode of aesthetic resourcefulness that visually embraces us and probes us to consider the messages and open eyes and ears to each work. As life under the constraints of a global pandemic and unpredictable politics demonstrates there is a need for an embrace, home, stillness. A mirror on the experience of centuries of human immigration. Before the current settler colonial empire of the United States of America, Indigenous populations roamed and lived on these lands. The trade, exchange, and im(migration) across the American continent is well recorded. In recognizing the past and present caretakers of the land of the Lenni Lenape peoples on *Lenapehoking* and Mannahatta, we bear the responsibility of understanding the past and present intentions for im(migration). When creativity emerges from violent, consequential and at other times aspirational movement, the voices and experiences of a migratory life can teach us about us. In The Immigrant Artist Biennial artists gather as canaries in a cave that echo fears and hopes in the experience of im(migration).

There are three central connections that appear throughout the works, presence and absence of the physical body, movement both physical and spiritual, and important personal and precious effects. These connections hold contradictions and uphold transient narratives that travel and keep deep memory.

The body carries a deep memory that is ancestral and developed for our survival – it grows unaware of borders and binaries. The body grows with what it both nurtures it and what it endures. A principal piece, by Levan Mindiashvili hangs by the window, an homage to James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* (1956) is scripted on *Levani's Room: AMERICA*, it quickly gives a sense of precarity for the body. The piece reflects on the chiffon, at a window and our own body becomes weightless and translucent in the glow of the black lights. In the painting by Qianza Najm, *Her World, Her View*, the body contorts. The strains are also soft and take after the carpeted surface where the body pulls from and sinks into an identity. The dissociation with the body moves beyond any notion of gender or identity features but rather focuses on their superfluity. In the installation, *The Proof*, by Cole Lu, the sculptures are portals of a body form into an ethereal body that simply exists. Following this feature, in the work by Blanka Amezkua, *US : WE*, a figure emerges from a pattern of symmetrical florals that although abstracted clearly outlines a being like a cell at birth multiplying and growing.

From body to movement there are transitions that reflect an action or identify a pattern that is unique to every experience. In a small, black and white film, *Parachute*, by Ana Mendieta, one is captivated by breaths. She instructs her students to engage in movement together creating breathing gestures that inflate and deflate a nylon tarp. With this she employs a simple yet universal experience, as such in the work *Why Should We Be Deported? This is Very, Very Hard for a Family*, by daàPò réo where his fence sculpture both invites and blocks. In this work, the gesture is to cross through the gap in the middle, lifting a scared and collaged American flag. Our movement is sacred in this way, mandating our values and the place that we hold. This is reflected in the documentary, *Body Without Organs: Bulgarian Bar* by Daniela Kostova where the connection thrives on the respite and refuge found in the culture of Gypsy-Punk music at Bulgarian Bar and ultimately dance. Finally, movement is not just physical but also digital and through these means easily fragmented and manipulated as Bahareh Khoshooee explores in the entrapment of data, facts and fiction in the work *#EverChangingFacade*.

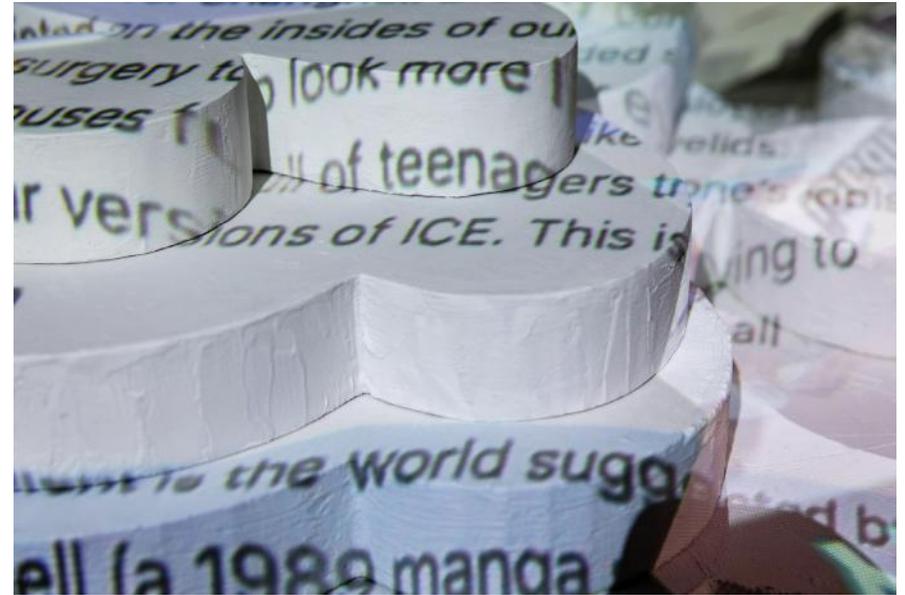
## Live and In Person

The fragility of information informs our memory and creates attachments to personal effects and their preciousness. Anna Parisi presents a delicate collage of a figure, veiled and poised with a venomous sting ray. In *Hail Potamotrygon Leopoldi*, she balances a delicate presence and material. This delicacy is also present in the work, *EMERALD TEARS* by Esperanza Cortés. Her cabinet brings together a bejeweled set of artifacts that contemplate history and memory of love, pain, myths, and the settler extraction that has plagued the American continent. Meanwhile, in the performances captured inside the suitcase vessels in *The Mistress of Loneliness: Chapter 1: The Departure*, by Yali Romagoza, the memory of survival is both a lonely and humorous chronicle.

The prowess in each work is the stage that is set up for storytelling. As the pieces urge to unpack the fear, pride, and contradictions of a situation. In reflecting with friend, Michael Younker, a patron of the arts and immigration lawyer we discussed these important details. The legal system in the United States is set up to obstruct, challenge and set precedent according to the constitutional relevance as determined by the courts of the land. At which point, in theory, the civilians that present their stories have a chance to be part of a changing and adopting value system. It is here that storytelling is empirical.

Storytelling connects individuals to the whole and connects present to past, action and consequence including systemic actions and situations. Each story being told will face the injustice and justice of the United States but ultimately serve as a reminder of the valor with which humans im(migrate). Storytelling becomes overwhelmingly more powerful in masses as stories emerge and stands parallel, often contradicting a main and oppressive narrative. This is the current situation in the socio-political schema of the United States. It is the right moment for The Immigrant Artist Biennial to begin.

— Eva Mayhabal Davis



Installation view: Bahareh Khoshooee, *#EverChangingFacade*, 2020.  
Photograph by Walter Włodarczyk.

## TIAB Spring 2020 Virtual Programs Recap

While stories of individual heroes abound, by and large the pandemic has revealed the worst aspects of our nation – staggering inequality, sub-standard healthcare for Indigenous, Black, brown, and poor people, anti-immigrant sentiment coupled with a global rhetoric of exclusion, nationalism, and discrimination, all wrapped up in a package of “American exceptionalism.” This is a surprise to few who deal with the effects of unequal treatment under the law, structural racism, and economic inequality, but the extent to which the COVID-19 crisis affected poor and immigrant communities who make up a majority of essential and front-line workers in this city has shaken our understanding of who we are as a city and as a people. As such, we are deeply moved to be presenting The Immigrant Artist Biennial EFA Project Space as our fall opener, and we are actively planning for a variety of scenarios to enable our public to visit this radical, timely, and thought-provoking exhibition safely. As we wrote in the initial press release: “Here, Together!” calls for urgent unity, visibility, and criticality, by facilitating a necessary platform of cultural exchange. We would add that we are also activating the TIAB platform as a means to critically examine and restructure our role as an Institution that is supported by communities of artists, curators, and the public.

Over the spring, we hosted a series of online studio visits with the Biennial’s participating artists, facilitated by TIAB curator Katya Grokhovsky. This has allowed us the incredible opportunity to have a more in-depth view of their studio practice and how this current time in history has affected and informed the context of their work. These videos are now archived and (re-)viewable on the TIAB website.

Encouraged by artists in the biennial to gather virtually to process the early days of the pandemic and the lockdown, we organized three Zoom-based online discussions which are now also archived on TIAB’s website. The first was a roundtable discussion co-moderated by curator Katya Grokhovsky, myself, and EFA Project Space Program Manager Judy Giera. The discussion featured artists exhibiting in the Biennial who spoke candidly about what it meant to be an immigrant in a foreign land during a pandemic. The artists shared thoughts and work which touch on issues of identity, the meaning of home and place, and the

doubly precarious position of living as immigrant cultural workers within a pandemic that transcends borders.

A follow-up zoom meeting consisted of a two-hour dinner party, allowing people to come together and share a meal (virtually) during difficult times. During these precarious times where it is all too easy to feel isolated, the evening promoted a closeness between distant actors, as participants share different recipes from many different cultural backgrounds.

The third zoom meeting was a wonderful roundtable discussion moderated by curator Katya Grokhovsky and EFA Operations Coordinator HC Huynh, with participating artists discussing their experiences facing anti-Asian racism, xenophobia, and immigrant-bashing. Notably, during this time, the increase of tragic and violent acts of anti-Asian and anti-immigrant racism carried out in near-empty streets and given voice in online spaces shocked many. Set against the toxic backdrop of a recent and prolonged rise in anti-immigrant sentiment and an undercurrent of anti-Asian racism that has always permeated American society, our participating artists shared means for coping with and combatting institutional and everyday racism in their daily lives through their practices.

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*Dylan Gauthier*

*Director, EFA Project Space Program*





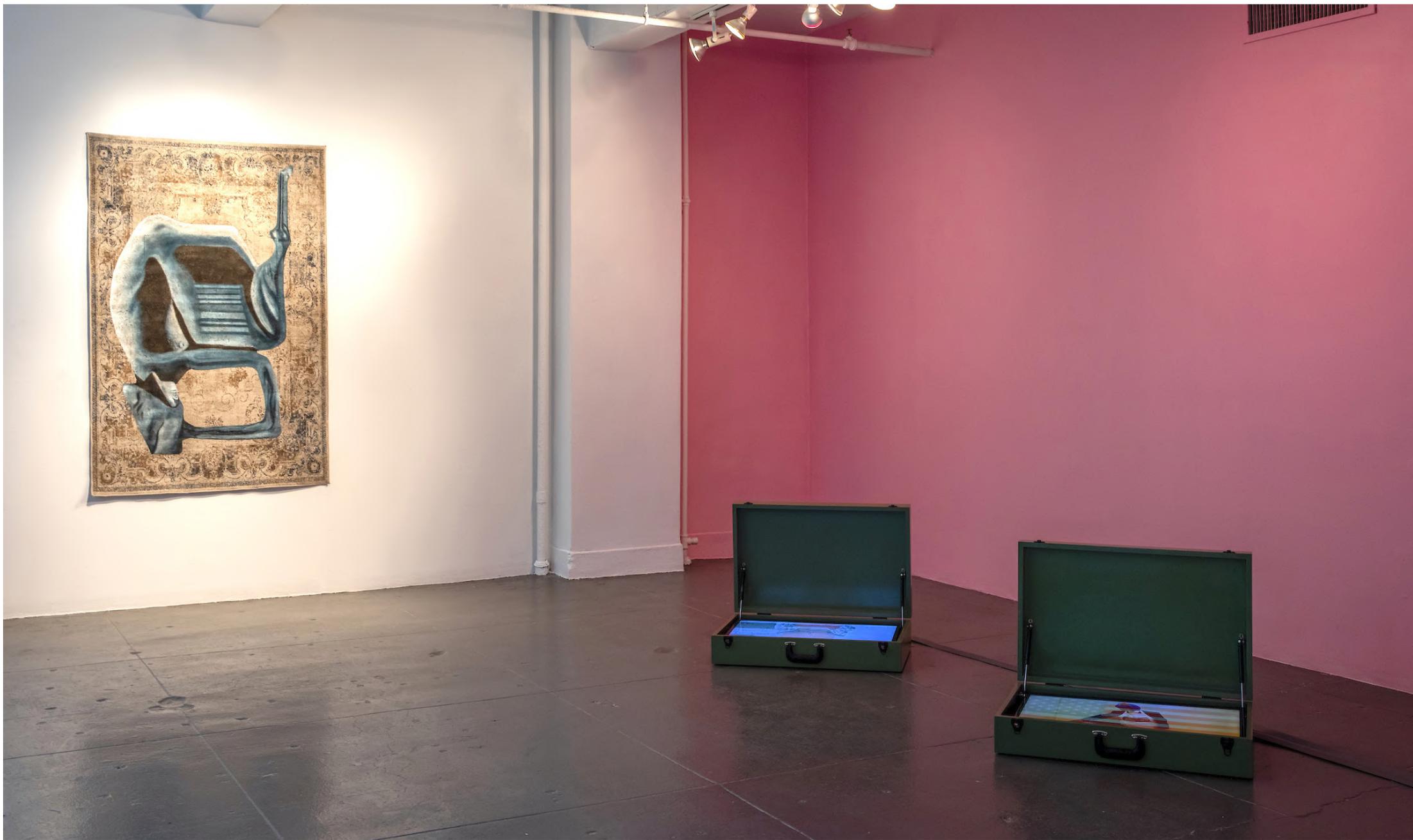
Installation view: Cole Lu, *First Reversal, They've Come By Mistake to a Lake That is Sure to Reverse Any Lering Leaf (come to think of it, I don't want to tell you about that incident)*, 2019; *Thoroughbred (No Caster of Weather Foretold)*; *The Proof*; daàPò réo, *Why Should We Be Deported? This is Very, Very Hard for a Family*, 2020; Blanka Amezkua, *US : WE*, 2020.  
Photograph by Walter Włodarczyk.



Installation view: daàPò réo, *Why Should We Be Deported? This is Very, Very Hard for a Family*, 2020; Levan Mindiashvili, *Levani's Room: AMERICA*, 2020; Anna Parisi, *Hail Potamotrygon Leopoldi*, 2015; Bahareh Khoshooee, *#EverChangingFacade*, 2020. Photograph by Walter Włodarczyk.



Installation view: Daniela Kostova, *Body Without Organs: Bulgarian Bar*, 2006, Levan Mindiashvili, *Levani's Room: AMERICA*, 2020; Esperanza Cortés, *Emerald Tears*, 2010-2014. Photograph by Walter Włodarczyk.



Installation view: Qinzha Najm, *Her World, Her View*, 2017; Yali Romagoza, *The Mistress of Loneliness: Chapter 1: The Departure*, 2019, *The Mistress of Loneliness: Chapter 2: Pursuit of Happiness*, 2019. Photograph by Walter Włodarczyk.

# Blanka Amezkua



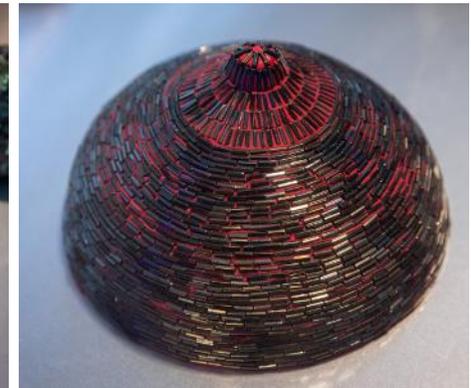
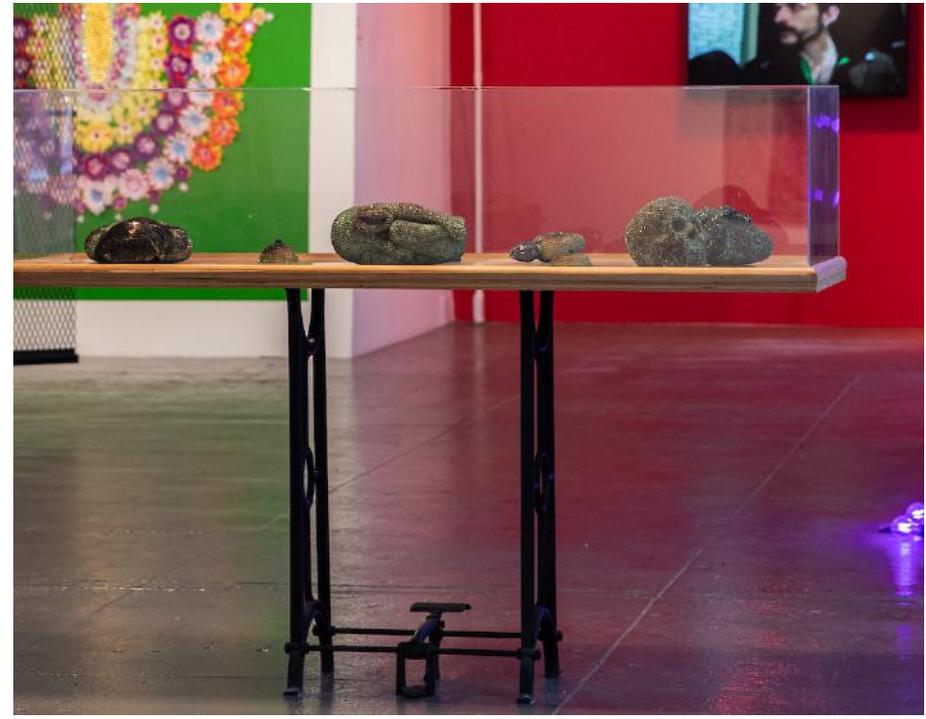
*US : WE.* 2020.  
Silk flowers, pins, latex paint (in situ).  
78 x 78 inches.



## Curator's Text

Born in Mexico, Blanka Amezkua often works with traditional portable materials such as paper and fabric flowers, deconstructing and shaping them into expansive wall based patterns and mosaics, examining the dynamics of cultural erasure and visibility in the process.

# Esperanza Cortés



*Emerald Tears*. 2010-2014.  
Clay, crystal, glass, metal base & plexi vitrine.  
66 x 24 x 50.5 inches.

## Curator's Text

Esperanza Cortés explores the historical and cultural mosaic of the Americas and the Caribbean, reworking found objects with painstaking and labor intensive detail to capture cultural symbols that act as sites of memory, implementing the human body as a symbol and expression of vulnerability and power dynamics.

# Bahareh Khoshooee



*#EverChangingFacade*. 2020.  
Foam sculpture and video.  
60 x 60 x 60 inches (approximate).



## Curator's Text

In her work, *#Everchangingfacade* (2020), Iranian artist Bahareh Khoshooee activates the multifaceted and multidimensional concept of migrant identity formation through Internet sourced and technological fragmentations, filling the gaps of re-imagined self with collaged fictional memories and alternative facts.

# Daniela Kostova



*Body Without Organs: Bulgarian Bar*. 2006.  
Video. 27' 46".



## Curator's Text

Daniela Kostova's work, *Body Without Organs: Bulgarian Bar* (2006) is a documentary video which follows the "discovery" of the infamous Bulgarian Bar through the eyes of an immigrant artist in New York City. Kostova interprets the bar and her relationship to it as a place of cultural refuge for a particular immigrant experience, manifested through Gypsy-Punk music.

# Cole Lu



*First Reversal, They've Come By Mistake to a Lake That is Sure to Reverse Any Lering Leaf (come to think of it, I don't want to tell you about that incident).* 2019.

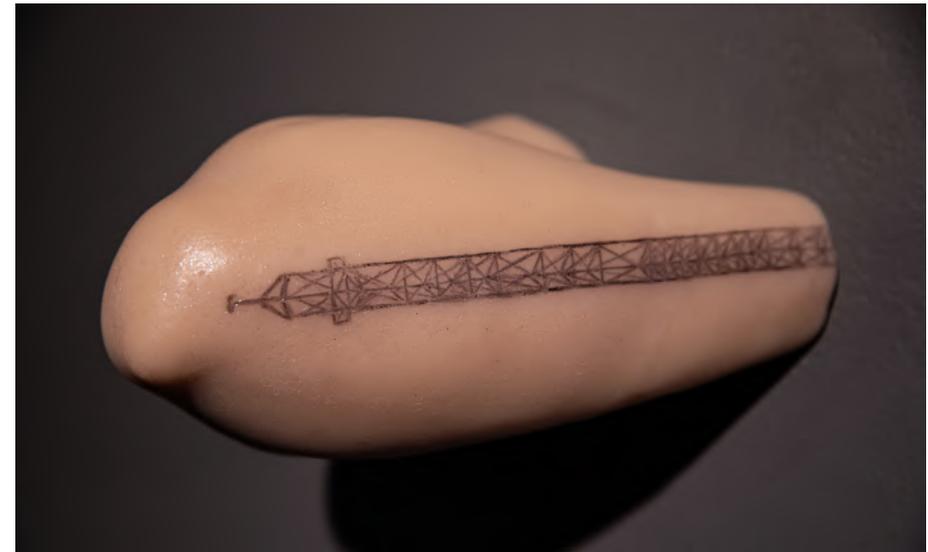
Stainless steel, aluminum, epoxy, cotton, leaves.  
20.4 x 14.5 x 7.8 inches.

*Thoroughbred (No Caster of Weather Foretold).* 2019.

Bronze.  
17.7 x 11.8 x 9.8 inches.

*The Proof.* 2019.

Silicone, rigid foam, metal, ink.  
9.8 x 9.8 x 7.8 inches



## Curator's Text

Cole Lu's work employs myths and speculative futures to explore exile as the only possible state, in which the body can exist without borders of time, space and autobiography. Beasts, body parts and doors to other dimensions and centuries co-exist to manifest and shape a re-invented, improved fluid existence.

# Ana Mendieta



*Parachute*. 1973.  
1/2-inch reel-to-reel video w/ Sound (digitized). 7' 9".  
Courtesy the Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection,  
LLC and Galerie Lelong & Co., New York



## Curator's Text

Ana Mendieta's early and lesser-known video work, *Parachute* (1973), explores Mendieta's role as an educator and a facilitator of knowledge and experience. The video presents the idea of imaginative play, human togetherness, and ultimate alienation through the use of a parachute as a gathering device of a student body.

# Levan Mindiashvili



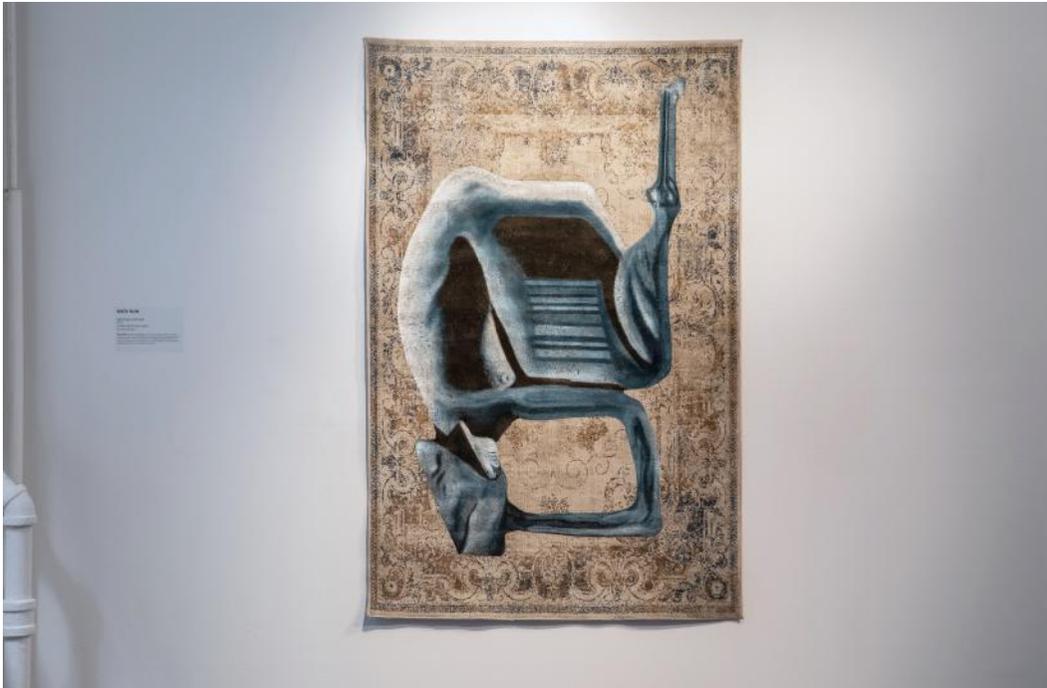
*Levani's Room: AMERICA*. 2020.  
Translucent printed chiffon & string lights.  
144 x 144 x 24 inches (approximate).



## Curator's Text

Georgian-born artist Levan Mindiashvili's window installation celebrates and honors the author James Baldwin and the artist Felix Gonzalez Torres, as significant cultural American catalysts for social change. Referencing Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* (1956)—a seminal book in the history of queer literature—the work explores issues of race, colonial history, and class inequality through the lens of an immigrant living in contemporary USA.

# Qinza Najm



*Her World, Her View.* 2017.  
Acrylic on carpet.  
72 x 48 inches.



## Curator's Text

Qinza Najm's painted figure on carpet, a ubiquitous object in households across much of the Middle East, stretches to fulfill roles and expectations and alternately presents an act of empowerment. The figure expands to dominate the carpet's area, appearing and disappearing in an uneasy equilibrium with the background, suggesting the multitudes contained within an individual.

# Anna Parisi



*Hail Potamotrygon Leopoldi*. 2015.  
Collage on paper.  
32 x 32 inches, plus frame



## Curator's Text

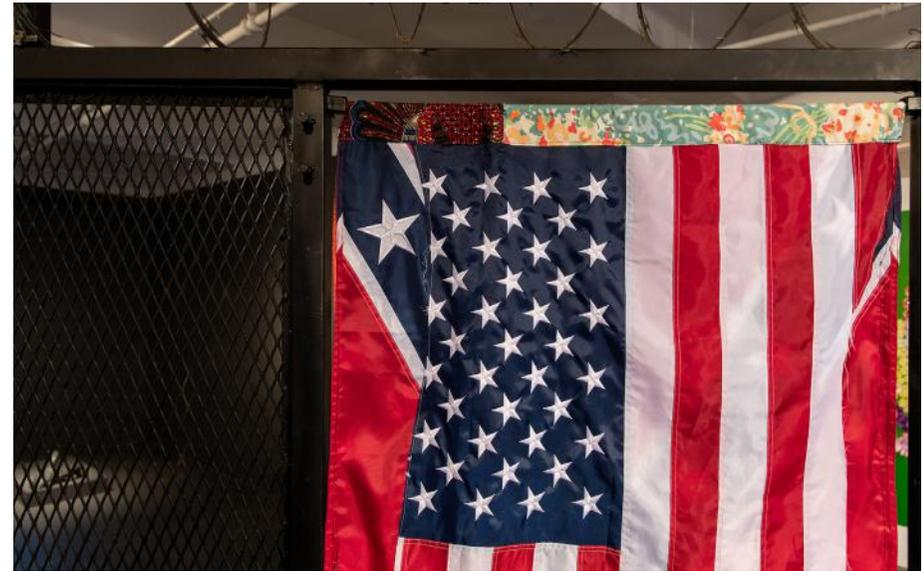
Brazilian-born artist Anna Parisi employs carefully sourced materials and historical facts, narratives and folklore to investigate the trauma and experiences of oppressed bodies. Parisi addresses questions of structural racism, white privilege, xenophobia, hegemonies, and colonialism through mixed media works on paper.

# daàPò réo



*Why Should We Be Deported? This is Very, Very Hard for a Family.*  
2020.

Metal, barbed wire, fabric.  
84 x 72 x 12 inches.



## Curator's Text

Nigerian-born artist daàPò réo boldly tackles the concepts of borders, walls, and restrictions of global migration through a participatory installation in which a hand crafted flag and barbed wire structure welcomes the viewer into the exhibition as an imagined "country."

# Yali Romagoza



*The Mistress of Loneliness:  
Chapter 1: The Departure.*  
2019.

Suitcase with video.  
31.5 x 29 x 6.9 inches.

*The Mistress of Loneliness:  
Chapter 2: Pursuit of Happiness.*  
2019.

Suitcase with video.  
31.5 x 29 x 6.9 inches.



## Curator's Text

Yali Romagoza's ongoing work *The Mistress of Loneliness* (2019-) is a sculptural, floor-based video installation which explores notions of migrant isolation, loneliness, longing, and strategies of survival, drawing on an autobiographical experience of migration from Cuba to the US.

# Performances

## Yali Romagoza

Friday, September 18th, 4 pm

Performers: Paola Martinez Fiterre, Yali Romagoza

Whitney Museum of American Art



*No Me Pongan En Lo Oscuro (Do Not Bury Me In Darkness), Action #2.* 2020.

Public Action, 30 min.

Photograph by Walter Wlodarczyk.



*No me pongan en lo oscuro (Do not bury me in Darkness) - Action #2* takes place outside the Whitney Museum of American Art. Two performers acting as Cuquita The Cuban Doll (Romagoza's alter-ego) stand still bearing simulated penises. The public action is part of an ongoing series of performances that raise critical questions about the exclusion and erasure of the Latina artist in the diaspora. As the artist writes, "The art system does not represent the Latina artist in all its diversity of cultures, identities, origins, and stories. Each new performance and public action will add a new Cuquita The Cuban Doll, creating the multiplication and expansion of the Cuquitas confronting various art institutions."

## Anna Parisi

Saturday, October 24th, 6pm  
Director: Gabriel Torres  
Collaborators: Alexandria Deters  
Camera: Natalia Almonte, Gabriel Torres  
Editing: Anna Parisi  
ZOOM



*Caught in the act*, 2020, 30 mins.  
Photograph by Gabriel Torres.



*Caught in the act* is a 30-minute performance that portrays the relationship between two girls from different racial backgrounds. It evidences their dependency on one another and how this relationship has been tarnished by ideas of colonialism, white supremacy, white fragility, and inequity.

## Levan Mindiashvili

Saturday, October 24th, 6pm  
Reading by Lucas de Lima  
ZOOM



A reading by Lucas de Lima in response to Levan Mindiashvili's work *Levani's Room: AMERICA* at *TIAB: Here, Together!* 20 mins.

Photograph by Walter Wlodarczyk.

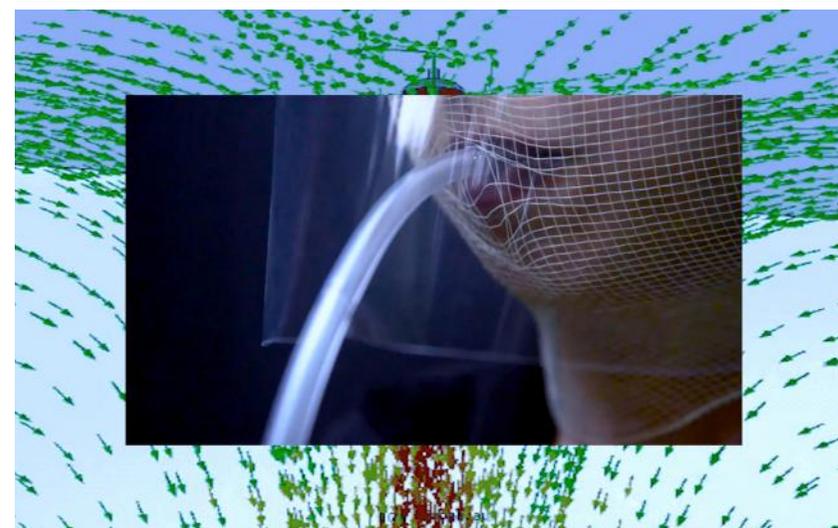
For the Immigrant Artist Biennial's closing performance, Levan Mindiashvili invited Brazilian-born, New York-based poet Lucas de Lima to read excerpts from *Cosmic Bottom*. Featuring text by James Baldwin, Levan Mindiashvili's installation comments on the representation of race, colonialism, identity, and queer love and desire in American culture. Lucas de Lima's manuscript expands on bottoming as an act of heightened receptiveness that collapses the sexual, the racial, the affective, and the ecological. Penetrable and permeable, the bottom opens a portal to life-worlds that are unintelligible to the gaze of phallic mastery, from Ariel the mermaid in the depths of the sea to the hole left by a mining dam's collapse in Brazil.

**Bahareh Khoshoee & Sareh Imani**

Sunday, October 4th, 4pm

Performers: Bahareh Khoshoee, Sareh Imani (Kalaktive)

ZOOM



*All standpoints are partial, 2020, 20 min.*

*All standpoints are partial* is a live Zoom performance accompanied by pre-recorded media that will be broadcasted online. Utilizing the cyberspace, this collaborative piece explores the immigration process during quarantine as it relates to technology, physical and digital screens, screenings, personal data collection, biased data profiling, machinic decision making and the subsequent lack of empathy.

## About the Curator



Installation view. Works: *daàPò réo*, *Why Should We Be Deported? This is Very, Very Hard for a Family*, 2020. Photograph by Walter Wlodarczyk.

**Katya Grokhovsky** was born in Ukraine, raised in Australia and is based in NYC. She is an artist, independent curator, educator and a Founding Artistic Director of The Immigrant Artist Biennial (TIAB). Grokhovsky holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, a BFA from Victorian College of the Arts and a BA (Honors) in Fashion from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Grokhovsky has received support through numerous residencies and fellowships including EFA Studio Program Membership, SVA MFA Art Practice Artist in Residence, Kickstarter Creator in Residence, Pratt Fine Arts Department Artist in Residence, Wythe Hotel Residency, Art and Law Fellowship, The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) Studios Program, BRICworkspace Residency, Ox-BOW School of Art Residency, Wassaic Artist Residency, Atlantic Center for the Arts Associate Artist in Residence, Studios at MASS MoCA, VOX Populi Curatorial Fellowship, NARS Residency, Santa Fe Art Institute Residency, Watermill Center Residency and more. She has been awarded the Brooklyn Arts Council Grant, NYFA Fiscal Sponsorship, ArtSlant 2017 Prize, Asylum Arts Grant, Chashama space to create grant, Australia Council for the Arts ArtStart Grant, NYFA Mentoring Program for Immigrant Artists, Freedman Traveling Scholarship for Emerging Artists and others. She has curated numerous exhibitions and events, including: *Art in Odd Places 2018: BODY*, *Soft Power* at Lesley Heller Gallery, *She's a Maniac* at Kunstraum Gallery, *Call of the Wild: Pioneers, Rebels and Heroines* at Vox Populi, and more. Her work has been exhibited extensively.

## About the Contributors

**Dylan Gauthier** is an artist and curator and Program Director of the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts Project Space Program, a 501c3 non-profit gallery devoted to experimental practices in the visual arts located in Times Square, NYC. Employing sound, performance, video, sculpture, and photography, Gauthier works through a research-based and collaborative practice centered on ecology, architecture, landscape, and social change. Gauthier is a founder of the boat-building and publishing collective Mare Liberum ([www.thefreeseas.org](http://www.thefreeseas.org)), and of the Sunview Luncheonette ([www.thesunview.org](http://www.thesunview.org)), a cop for art, politics, and communalism in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. He is co-organizer, with Mariel Villeré, of [Freshkills Field R/D](#), an artist-research residency based at NYC's largest former landfill. He is an Eyebeam Rapid Response fellow in 2020.

**Mary Annunziata** is a Brooklyn-based independent writer and curator whose research focuses on conceptual representations of conflict, surveillance, forced migration, and diasporic identity. She holds an MA in Critical & Curatorial Studies from Columbia University and has worked for institutions including the Royal Ontario Museum, the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Artist Protection Fund, a grantmaking initiative that provides fellowships for displaced and threatened artists from emergency zones worldwide. Mary currently serves as a Grant Writer for Access Now, an global non-profit that fights for human rights in the digital age, and as a Curatorial Advisor for The Immigrant Artist Biennial.

**Eva Mayhabal Davis** (b. Toluca, Mexico) is an arts advocate and curator. She has collaborated on exhibitions at BronxArtSpace, En Foco, Expressiones Cultural Center, MECA International Art Fair, Photoville NYC, Queens Museum, Ray Gallery, and Smack Mellon. Based in Brooklyn, NY, she is a Co-Director at Transmitter, a collaborative curatorial initiative. Davis was born in Mexico, raised in the United States, and studied art history at the University of Washington. She is a founding member of El Salón, a meetup for cultural producers.



Installation view: Levan Mindiashvili, *Levani's Room: AMERICA*. 2020.  
Photograph by Walter Wlodarczyk.

## About the Artists

**Ana Mendieta** was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1948, and died in New York City in 1985. In a brief yet prolific career, the Cuban-born artist Ana Mendieta created groundbreaking work in photography, film, video, drawing, sculpture, and site-specific installations. Amongst the major themes in her work are exile, displacement, and a return to the landscape, which remain profoundly relevant today. Her unique hybrid of form and documentation, works that she titled “siluetas,” are fugitive and potent traces of the artist’s inscription of her body in the landscape, often transformed by natural elements such as fire and water. The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC, in collaboration with Galerie Lelong & Co., recently catalogued and digitized the entirety of Mendieta’s moving image works, discovering that the artist remarkably made more than 100 in the ten-year period in which she worked in the medium. The groundbreaking exhibition of her moving image works, *Covered in Time and History: The Films of Ana Mendieta*, was organized by the Katherine E. Nash Gallery, University of Minnesota in 2014, and has since travelled to several institutions worldwide, including NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, Florida; University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; Bildmuseet, Umeå, Sweden; Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin; and the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris. Mendieta’s work has been the subject of six major museum retrospectives, the most recent of which, *Ana Mendieta: Traces*, was organized by the Hayward Gallery, England, in 2013, and travelled to the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Austria, and the Galerie Rudolfinum, Czech Republic. *Ana Mendieta: Earth Body, Sculpture and Performance 1972–1985* was organized by the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., in 2005 and travelled to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Des Moines Art Center, Iowa; and Miami Art Museum, Florida.



**Anna Parisi** is a Brooklyn-based Brazilian artist working predominantly with sculpture and performance. She works across the boundaries of areas and materials with a committed focus on investigating questions that address the traumatic violence against black, female-coded, and historically oppressed bodies by insisting on creating art that opposes structural violence and questions patriarchal, heteronormative, and racial hegemonies. Her works are critically attuned to the current political and socio-cultural contexts. Through both her artistic practice and curatorial work, Anna is interested in addressing issues of racial disparity, gender, human and civil rights from an intersectional perspective. She is utterly interested in promoting dialogue within African Diasporas and among people of different backgrounds and ethnicities. Anna holds an MFA in Fine Arts from Parsons, The New School of Design in New York, a BFA in Communications with a minor in Filmmaking from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), and an MA in Strategic Design from the Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing (ESPM-Rio). She has exhibited or performed at The Hunter East Harlem Art Gallery, La Galleria La Mama, UrbanGlass, The Bureau of General Services—Queer Division and The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center, Smack Mellon, Wesbeth Gallery, Queens Museum, Artigo Rio, Musée D’Elysee in Lausanne, among others.



**Bahareh Khoshooee** is a multidisciplinary artist born in Tehran, Iran in 1991, the year the Internet was made available for unrestricted commercial use. In her work she explores the underlying tension between reality and fiction, confabulation and manipulation, false memories and alternative facts. She attended Skowhegan School of Art and Painting in 2018, received her MFA in Studio Art from the University of South Florida in 2017, and her BA in Industrial Design from the University of Tehran in 2014. Khoshooee will be mounting her solo exhibition at Baxter St in November 2020. She has presented her work at the Orlando Museum of Art (Orlando), NADA MIAMI 2018, Elsewhere (New York), Housing (New York), and Rawson Projects (New York). She has been included in various group exhibitions including at C24 Gallery (New York), Museum of Photography (Stockholm), 2018 Taiwan Annual (Taipei), Fajr International Film Festival 2018 (Tehran), and the Museum of Fine Arts St. Petersburg. Her work has been featured in The Huffington Post, The Guardian, Artnet News, Vice, The Metro, and The Creators Project.

**Blanka Amezkua** is a Mexican born bicultural (Mexico/USA) mestiza artist, cultural promoter, educator and project initiator based in the South Bronx. Formally trained as a painter, her practice is greatly influenced and informed by folk art and popular culture. In 2008 she began an artist-run project in her bedroom called the Bronx Blue Bedroom Project (BBBP). BBBP ran from 2008-2010. She currently runs AAA3A (Alexander Avenue Apartment 3A) an alternative artist-run project which offers food, dialogue, workshops, and art in her living room. She is a member and she actively supports Running For Ayotzinapa 43, an international community of amateur athletes based in NYC. They run for truth and justice for the Ayotzinapa 43, for the tens of thousands of disappeared in Mexico, and to promote a dialogue and consciousness concerning human rights violations worldwide. Mentions of her work and projects can be found in various notable national and international publications.



**Cole Lu** (b. Taipei) is an artist and writer based in New York. Lu's work has been included in Contemporary Art Museum (St. Louis), Pulitzer Arts Foundation (St. Louis), Institute of Contemporary Art (Philadelphia), American Medium (New York), Vox Populi (Philadelphia), The 3rd New Digital Art Biennale – The Wrong (Again), I Never Read (Basel), FILE: Electronic Language International Festival (São Paulo), Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (New York), Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts (Omaha), The Luminary (St. Louis), Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (Los Angeles), Syndicate (Cologne), and K-Gold Temporary Gallery (Lesvos). Lu has been awarded fellowship at Vermont Studio Center (Johnson), and residencies at Triangle Arts Association (Brooklyn), The Wassaic Project (Wassaic), and Minnesota Street Projects (San Francisco). Lu's Risograph publication, SMELLS LIKE CONTENT (Endless Editions, New York) is in the Artist book collection of the Museum of Modern Art Library (New York).



**daàPò reo** is a New York-based, Nigerian born visual artist working in textile installation, performance and video. His work probes the boundaries and interactions between surface and structure, representation, and identity. Recently, he returned to his primary love of textiles and needles, venturing into heraldic art and exploring a series of mixed media works that weave sociocultural, economic and political commentaries that are shaping the world today. His practice proposes questions on human consciousness and social responsibility as well as interdependency and self-transformation through personal perspective. His work features the American flag as a recurring motif for its symbolic significance. As one of the most recognizable national banners worldwide, the U.S. flag epitomizes a sense of home and pride in one's identity, but also the face of the Western world. Of its imperialistic liberalism and recent drift to the political right, he uses it as a catalyst for conversations, a canvas to crystallize ideas and feelings and cross-examine a variety of themes.

**Daniela Kostova** is an interdisciplinary artist who works with photography, installation, performance and video. Her projects address issues of geography and cultural representation, the production and crossing of socio-cultural borders, and the uneasy process of translation and communication. Her work is exhibited at venues such as Queens Museum of Art (NY), Kunsthalle Wien (Austria), Institute for Contemporary Art (Sofia), Centre d'art Contemporain (Geneva), Antakya Biennale (Turkey), Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, (Torino), Kunsthalle Fridericianum (Kassel) and many others. In the summer of 2019, Daniela was commissioned by VIG to wrap the well-known Ringturm building in Vienna, Austria. Her piece Future Dreaming spread on 4000 sq. meters represents one of the biggest public art displays in Europe. In 2016 she had a solo show as an A.I.R. Gallery Fellow in NYC and was a resident at the Center for Art and Urbanism (ZK/U), Berlin. In 2011, Daniela won the Unlimited Award for Contemporary Bulgarian Art. In 2009, 2007 and 2006 she received travel grants from NYFA, the American Foundation for Bulgaria and the European Cultural Foundation. Daniela's work is reviewed in New York Times, Brooklyn Rail, Flash Art, Art in America and more. Kostova serves as Director of Curatorial Projects at Radiator Gallery, Artist Mentor at NYFA's Immigrant Artists Program and Board Member of CEC ArtsLink in New York.





**Esperanza Cortés** is a Colombian born multidisciplinary artist based in New York City. Cortés's exhibitions include, Smack Mellon Gallery, Neuberger Museum of Art, Bronx Museum of Art, Queens Museum, El Museo Del Barrio, MoMA PS1, Socrates Sculpture Park, Artist Space and New York State Biennial. National exhibitions include Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, LA, Helen Day Art Center, VT and Cleveland Art Museum, OH. International exhibitions include Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Japan, Mexico, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Spain and Greece. Awards include: John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship, BRIC Media Arts Fellowship, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Grant, Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant and Puffin Foundation Grant. Residencies include: McColl Center for Arts + Innovation, Museum of Arts and Design, Caldera Residency, BRIC Workspace Program, Joan Mitchell Center, Sculpture Space, The Fountainhead, Socrates Sculpture Park, Brooklyn Children's Museum, Bronx Museum AIM Program, MoMA PS1 International Studio Program, Bielska BWA Gallery, Altos de Chavon. Reviews include: Art Forum, Artnet, Hyperallergic, Artnews, New York Times, New Art Examiner, Art in America, Art Nexus and Whitehot. Interviews on public television and radio in the USA, Europe, South America and the Caribbean. Cortés's work is in private and public collections including the American Embassy in Monterey, Mexico.

**Levan Mindiashvili** is a Georgian born Brooklyn based visual artist who creates immersive modular installations that deal with fluidity as a current state of being. He questions canonical truths regarding identity, language, and history, and explores expanding fields of contemporary cultural production, including queer underground rave culture and social sculpture. He holds his BFA from Tbilisi State Academy of Arts and MFA from The National University of Arts of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Among his awards are CreativeTime X Summit grant for creative dinners, AIM Fellowship of The Bronx Museum of The Arts, and Commission for Public Art Projects from The National Endowments for Arts. His works have been included in recent group exhibitions at the SchauFenster, Berlin; SculptureCenter, New York; BRIC Biennial Vol.3, Brooklyn; Recent solo presentations include "89.19" at Berlin Art Fair; "Now is Always Someone Else" NARS Foundation, Brooklyn; "I Should Have Kissed You Longer" TAF, Tbilisi; "In Search of The Miraculous," NADA Miami. His works have been mentioned in OSMOS Magazine, The Art Newspaper, The Observer, ArtAsia Pacific, Hyperallergic, Art Margins, etc. His works are in public collections of Georgian National Museum, State Silk Museum (Tbilisi) and National Art Museum of China (Beijing).



**Qinza Najm** is a Pakistani-American artist whose interdisciplinary artistic practice explores gendered violence and female subjectivity. Utilizing performance, video, painting, and other mediums, the artist, originally trained as a psychologist, understands herself as a denizen of the world, using artistic means to create empathy and understanding between societies and cultures in order to address the deepest social traumas. Born and raised in Lahore, Pakistan, Najm pursued her studies in fine arts at Bath University and The Art Students League of New York. She has exhibited internationally at the Queens Museum (NY), Christie's Art (Dubai), Art1Basel (Miami, FL), National Museum of China and the Museum of the Moving Image (NY), among others. Her work has been featured in Artnet News, the Huffington Post, the NY Daily News, International Business Week, BuzzFeed, and Herald. She lives and works in New York.



**Yali Romagoza** (b. in Havana, Cuba, based in NYC) is a multi-disciplinary artist, whose practice reflects on notions of feminism, identity, power and oppression and explores broader issues of migration, politics and social behavior. By constructing her artistic vocabulary through mining her own biography of dislocation and immigration, Romagoza's work examines the cultural displacement and alienation, through a combination of various mediums, such performance, video, installation, photography and conceptual costume. Romagoza graduated with an MFA in Fashion from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2013-2015) and a BA in Art History from the University of Havana, (2001-2006). Her works have been included in the Gothenburg Biennial (2007), Havana Biennial (2009), Bétonsalon, Paris, (2009), Liverpool Biennial (2010). She has performed at Links Hall Theater, Chicago (2012), White Box, NY (2012), Teatro LATEA, NY (2018), Art in Odd Places, NY (2018), Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, NC (2018), Grace Exhibition Space (2019), NY Latina American Art Triennial (2019). Romagoza has collaborated with Carmelita Tropicana and Ela Troyano in Post-Plástica, at El Museo del Barrio, NY (2012) and Schwanze-Beast, Vermont Performance Lab, Vermont (2015), UCRArtsblock (2017), Queens Museum (2019), Leslie-Lohman Museum (2019). She has been granted numerous awards and residencies including Cátedra Arte de Conducta by Tania Bruguera, La Habana (2007), Bétonsalon Centre d'Art et de Recherche, Paris, (2009), NYFA Immigrant Artist Mentoring Program (2017), NY, Creative Capital NYC Taller (2019), NY.

The Immigrant Artist Biennial 2020:  
Here, Together!  
September 9 – October 24, 2020

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Curator: Katya Grokhovsky

Artists: Blanka Amezkua, Esperanza Cortés, Bahareh Khoshooee, Daniela Kostova, Cole Lu, Ana Mendieta, Levan Mindiashvili, Qinza Najm, Anna Parisi, daàPò réo, Yali Romagoza

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EFA Project Space, launched in September 2008 as a program of The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, is a collaborative, cross-disciplinary arts venue founded on the belief that art is directly connected to the individuals who produce it, the communities that arise because of it, and to everyday life; and that by providing an arena for exploring these connections, we empower artists to forge new partnerships and encourage the expansion of ideas.

The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (EFA) is a 501 (c) (3) public charity. Through its three core programs, EFA Studios, EFA Project Space, and the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, EFA is dedicated to providing artists across all disciplines with space, tools and a cooperative forum for the development of individual practice. EFA Project Space is supported by public funding from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in Partnership with the City Council, and by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. This pamphlet is the third in the end\_notes publication series, timed to coincide with the closing of EFA Project Space exhibitions, which presents critical and reflective texts that trail an exhibition as it leaves the gallery and enters the world.

TIAB presents work by U.S based immigrant artists from around the world and sets out to form an international dialogue through exhibition of ambitious projects and events with an aim to facilitate a diverse and experimental discourse as well as build a globally connected and united community in the times of extreme anti-immigrant sentiment, unrest, discrimination and exclusion.

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This project is fiscally supported by:

NYFA   
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## TIAB 2020 Here, Together! Programming:

### TIAB 2020: Here, Together! Kick Off

March 7, 2020  
Curated by Katya Grokhovsky  
Performances by Hanae Utamura,  
Christopher Unpezverde Núñez  
Brooklyn Museum

### TIAB 2020: Apart, Together! Online Roundtable Series

*The Emergency Exposes Your Status and ...Our Shared Vulnerability*  
March 25, 2020  
Co-Moderated by Katya Grokhovsky and Dylan Gauthier  
ZOOM

### TIAB 2020: Apart, Together! Online Roundtable Series

*The Dinner Party*  
April 8, 2020  
ZOOM

### TIAB 2020: Apart, Together! Online Roundtable Series

*Artists Respond To Anti-Asian Racism, Xenophobia, And Immigrant-Bashing In The Time Of COVID-19, Roundtable.*  
April 22, 2020  
Co-moderated by Katya Grokhovsky and HC Huynh  
ZOOM

### TIAB 2020: Here, Together! Central Exhibition

September 9th – October 24th 2020,  
Curated by Katya Grokhovsky  
Artists: Blanka Amezkua, Esperanza Cortés, Bahareh Khoshooee, Daniela Kostova, Cole Lu, Ana Mendieta, Levan Mindiashvili, Qinza Najm, Anna Parisi, daàPò réo, Yali Romagoza  
EFA Project Space

### TIAB 2020: Here, Together!

September 26, 2020  
Co-curated by Katya Grokhovsky and Harry Weil  
*To hold gently*  
Performance by Gyun Hur  
The Green-Wood Cemetery

### TIAB 2020: Here, Together!

November 1, 2020  
Co-curated by Katya Grokhovsky and Harry Weil  
*Conscious Oblivion*  
Performance by Iván Sikic  
The Green-Wood Cemetery

### TIAB 2020: Here, Together!

October 16 – December 18, 2020  
Virtual exhibition  
*Home Land*  
Curated by Katya Grokhovsky  
Artists: Cinthya Santos-Briones, Wang Chen, Alicja Gaskon, Anh Thuy Nguyen, Nazanin Noroozi, Ming-Jer Kuo, Victoria-Idongesit Udondian, Luisa Valderrama  
<https://virtual2020.theimmigrantartistbiennial.com>

### TIAB 2020: Here, Together!

October 16 – December 18, 2020  
Virtual exhibition  
*The Imminent Arrival*  
Curated by Katya Grokhovsky  
Artists: Bianca Abdi-Boragi, Shay Arick, Irja Boden, Federico Cuatlacuatl, Firoz Mahumd, Abena Motaboli, Rehab El Sadek, Buket Savci, Joo Yeon Woo, Minoosh Zomorodinia  
<https://virtual2020.theimmigrantartistbiennial.com>

### TIAB 2020: Here, Together!

October 16 – December 18, 2020  
Virtual exhibition  
*Mother Tongue*  
Co-curated by Mary Annunziata, Allison Cannella, Anna Mikaela Ekstrand, Katya Grokhovsky

Artists: Ferguson Amo, Mahsa Biglow, Sera Boeno, Carolina Casusol, Cecile Chong, Furen Dai, Priyanka Dasgupta & Chad Marshall, Priscilla Dobler Dzul, Matilda Forsberg, Nina Ghanbarzadeh (Afkhamian), Yikui (Coy) Gu, Luma Jasim, Tiri Kananuruk, Cecilia Kim, Marina Kassianidou, Marina Leybishkis, Stefana McClure, Rodrigo Moreira, Renana Neuman, Sari Nordman, Kasia Ozga, Dafna Rehavia, Tereza Swanda, Johanna Strobel, Katreen Sorokina, Hui-Ying Tsai, Tansy Xiao, Haksul Lee & Natsuki Takauji, Tao Wei

Performance projects: Kevin Quiles Bonilla, Marcela Casals, Salomé Egas, Bianca Falco, Georgia Lale, Silkworm Pupae (Jiaoyang Li & JinJin Xu), Jorge Rojas, María Verónica San Martín  
<https://virtual2020.theimmigrantartistbiennial.com>

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For more information,

<https://www.theimmigrantartistbiennial.com>

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