

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Immigrant Artist Biennial 2020: Here, Together!

Curated By: Katya Grokhovsky

September 9–October 24, 2020

Virtual Opening Reception:

Wednesday, September 9, 2020, 6-9 pm via [Zoom](#)

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, 323 West 39th Street, 2nd Floor, NYC, between 8th & 9th Aves.

Hours: Wednesday–Friday, 11:30 am–6:30 pm, by reservation: www.projects-space-efanyc.org/reservations
www.projects-space-efanyc.org | projects-space@efanyc.org | 212-563-5855 ext 244



Yali Romagoza, *The Mistress of Loneliness (Chapter 1: The Departure)*, video, 2019.

EFA Project Space is thrilled to present *The Immigrant Artist Biennial 2020: Here, Together!* a timely exhibition featuring multidisciplinary works by eleven US-based Immigrant artists, curated by Katya Grokhovsky. 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. Grokhovsky writes, “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.”

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 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.

In her work, *#Everchangingfacade* (2019), Iranian artist **Bahareh Khoshoee** 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'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'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'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.

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'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.

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.

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'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.

Through the works on exhibit and public events, talks, and performances, *The Immigrant Artist Biennial* expresses ongoing efforts to counter the seemingly dominant paradigms of colonialism, xenophobia, and politically-motivated bigotry to create a common ground and a global community. By uplifting and

spotlighting these artists from elsewhere who have chosen to make New York their home, the exhibition is a ray of hope for a future that we can yet create — “here, together!”

EXHIBITION EVENTS

Wednesday, September 9th, 6–9 pm: Virtual Opening Reception and Curatorial Walkthrough via [Zoom](#)

Friday, September 18th, 4 pm: Performance by **Yali Romagoza** via IG Live [@efaprojectspace](#)

Sunday, October 4th, 4pm: Performance by **Kalaktive collaborative duo (Bahareh Khoshoee & Sareh Imani)** via [Zoom](#)

Saturday, October 24th, 6pm: Closing Reception, Catalog Launch & Performances by **Levan Mindiashvili** and **Anna Parisi** via [Zoom](#). Presented in conjunction with EFA Open Studios 2020.

For full event details, visit <https://www.projectspace-efanyc.org/events>.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

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 ARTISTS

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.

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.

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.

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.

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).

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.

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), Art|Basel (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.

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.

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.

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 (TIAB) 2020: Here Together! 2020 is an inaugural multi-site project presenting works by 60+ US-based immigrant artists in September–December 2020. TIAB is Fiscally sponsored by NYFA (New York Foundation for the Arts). EFA Project Space is presenter of TIAB's central exhibition, made possible in part with public funds from Creative Engagement, supported by New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and administered by LMCC (the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council). Project Space programming is made possible through the generous support of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Performance events are supported by the [women & performance: a journal of feminist theory](#) public programs fund. www.theimmigrantartistbiennial.com*

TIAB 2020 Fall Programming:

September 9th–October 24th: EFA Project Space (central exhibition)

Opening: September 9, 6-9 pm via [Zoom](#) | [Registration Link](#)

October 16th–December 18th: Three virtual exhibitions, presented online:

<https://virtual2020.theimmigrantartistbiennial.com>

PRESS INQUIRIES

Judy Giera, Program Manager
EFA Project Space Program
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ACCESSIBILITY AND COVID-19

Online reservations are required at least 24 hours in advance of your visit, via efaproject.space/reservations. Reservation slots of 30 minutes each can be made for parties of up to 3 people at a time. *Note that masks are required to view the exhibition and must be worn at all times.* EFA Project Space is located on the 2nd floor of 323 West 39th Street, between 8th and 9th Avenues. The building has an ADA wheelchair accessible elevator that provides access to the gallery from the ground floor. There are all-gender single stall bathrooms and an ADA approved bathroom on the 3rd floor. The space is not scent-free, but we do request that people attending come low-scent. Admission to the building does not require an ID, but you will be asked to sign-in and out to facilitate contact tracing, as necessary. The closest MTA subway station is the Port Authority A, C, E stop which is ADA wheelchair accessible. Texts and programs are in English. Large format texts can be provided with an advance request. EFA Project Space is committed to nurturing an intergenerational environment and we encourage children & kid noise at our events. Please notify us of any accessibility needs by email to projectspace@efanyc.org, or by phone at (212) 563-5855 x 233.

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 **EFA 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 is a catalyst for cultural growth, stimulating new interactions between artists, creative communities, and the public. www.efanyc.org

EFA Project Space has received public funding from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in Partnership with the City Council, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, as well as from generous individuals in our community. EFA Project Space's SHIFT: A Residency for Arts Workers is supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF).



A Program of The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts
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