

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Conflictual Distance

As part of **The Immigrant Artist Biennial 2023:**
Contact Zone

November 16, 2023 - January 6, 2024

Opening Gathering: November 16, 6-8 PM



*Gallery closed for the holidays: November 23-26, 2023 &
December 23-31, 2023

Curated by Bianca Abdi-Boragi, Katherine Adams, and Anna Mikaela Ekstrand

Artists: Golnar Adili, Marcelo Brodsky, Pritika Chowdhry, Erika DeFreitas, Maria Kulikovska, Keli Safia Maksud, Emilio Rojas, Mila Panić, Jovencio de la Paz, Nida Sinnokrot, Slinko, Rafael Yaluff

Image above: Mila Panic, *Burning Field*, 2017. HD video projection, 106 min.

Courtesy of the artist and The Immigrant Artist Biennial.

Drawing inspiration from artist Oraib Toukan's reflections on 'cruel images,' *Conflictual Distance* probes concrete approaches to presenting distant conflicts to local publics. The exhibition considers conflict through the lens of political exile and cultural diasporas, focusing on immigrant artists' experimental approaches to processing distant conflicts in local contact zones. In Toukan's formulation, 'cruel images' contain evidence of political and bodily violence but are confronted at an extreme political or geographic distance from their events' site of occurrence. Such images always risk numbing the viewer or becoming spectacle, as much as they may stimulate activism. Departing from similar considerations, *Conflictual Distance* asks after models that make it possible to carry the burden of a distant conflict in a present location that is removed from the geographic or historical source of its most critical events. When exhibitions are so often asked to carry out various forms of site-specific placemaking, called on to speak to an immediately present public, how can we make visible those experiences that aren't fully legible from within an exhibition site's immediate surroundings?

Artists in *Conflictual Distance* explores ecologies of the image that question how the urgencies of distant conflict situations can be processed with "local" visual means. For example, picturing an annual burning of her family's agricultural field in Bosnia, artist Mila Panic—also an immigrant to Germany—engages with conflicts around personal cultural inheritance. Panic's video installation marks the implications of emigration for one's home country and the community who stays behind. Through photographs overwritten with annotations about local struggles and the long-term effects of state violence in various regions, Argentinian artist Marcelo Brodsky offers an approach to engaging with archives of struggle in times and places that may be far removed from events that first precipitate conflict in one's home region. Keli Safia Maksud's *They Try*



Their Tongues explores how changes in countries' national anthems across various African countries have registered changes in the local political power. Musical forms transcribed with thread within Maksud's installation mark the lingering tensions of political transitions.

Whether the conflicts they address are personal or collective, each artist in *Conflictual Distance* tackles how the mediation of distant conflict pushes images to their infrastructural limit. Confronting the risk of their references becoming dislocated and decontextualized such that their meaning is misunderstood in its "foreign" setting, the media in these artists' works become novel modes of inscribing "elsewhere" here, where we find ourselves in the present. The cumulative effect of such exercises is to fashion a layered sense of place, unbound to strict divisions between locality or foreignness.

Conflictual Distance is part of *The Immigrant Artist Biennial 2023: Contact Zone* held across venues in New York and New Jersey from September 2023 to January 2024. [Find the full program here.](#)

Public Programs

All events and programs are free and open to the public at EFA Project Space (323 West 39th Street, 2nd floor), unless otherwise mentioned.

Opening Gathering

Thursday, November 16, 6-8 PM

Taking into consideration the events around the world, and particularly in countries of conflict and war, EFA Project Space and The Immigrant Artist Biennial offer this time and space for people to convene.

Field Work

Online Roundtable: "Ukraine, Making Art in Times of War"

Saturday, November 18, 1-2:30 PM

An online roundtable on the war in Ukraine with **Maria Kulikovska**, **Slinko**, and Berlin-based curator **Valeria Schiller** as speakers moderated by **Katya Grokhovsky**.

Online Event: [Join via Zoom](#)

Arena

Performance: Emilio Rojas: "Open Wound: A Gloria"

Saturday, December 9, 2023, 5-6:30PM

A performance work by **Emilio Rojas** as part of an ongoing yearly project where he dry tattoos the US-Mexican border on his back.



Closing Reception & Workshop

Saturday, January 6, 2024, 4-6 PM

Co-organized and facilitated in collaboration between The Immigrant Artist Biennial Team and EFA Project Space staff.

About: The Immigrant Artist Biennial



The Immigrant Artist Biennial presents immigrant artists through various formats, facilitating a platform of support for projects by often overlooked and silenced voices. Founded in 2020 by its artistic director Ukrainian-born, NYC-based artist Katya Grokhovsky TIAB is fiscally sponsored by New York Foundation for the Arts and funded through its host partners, grants, sponsorships, donations, and its Patron Circle.

FOR PRESS INQUIRIES

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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 and the communities that arise because of it. By providing an arena for exploring these connections, we empower artists, curators, and other participants to forge new partnerships and encourage the expansion of ideas. The program is based on Open Calls as well as invitational exhibitions and projects. It is a home for emerging, mid-career, as well as established curators and artists. We focus our attention on community engagement and public programming. www.projectspace-efanyc.org **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 is supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and additional funding from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.