

PASADO Y PRESENTE

ART THE YOUNG LORDS
AFTER 1969-2019





Detail of *Once We Were Warriors* (1999) by Juan Sánchez

THE NATHAN
CUMMINGS
FOUNDATION



PASADO Y PRESENTE

ART AFTER THE YOUNG LORDS 1969-2019

Artists

AgitArte
Luis Carle
Máximo Colón
Pepe Coronado
Sophia Dawson
Marcos Dimas
Alex "Fdez" Fernández
Scherezade García
Miguel Luciano
Carlos Jesús Martínez Domínguez
Palén Obesa
Hatuey Ramos Fermín
Karen Revis
Shellyne Rodríguez
Adrián Viajero Román
Anthony Rosado
Juan Sánchez
Taller Boricua
Nitza Tufiño
Rafael Tufiño
Valor y Cambio

Exhibition Venues

NATHAN CUMMINGS FOUNDATION

475 10TH AVE., 14TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018

MARCH 3RD – OCTOBER 25TH

THE LOISAIDA CENTER

710 EAST NINTH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10009

JUNE 3RD – SEPTEMBER 6TH

Curators

Libertad O. Guerra

Yasmin Ramirez, PhD

Curatorial Consultant

Natalia Viera Salgado

Graphic Designer

Alex "Fdez" Fernández



Photographer

Melvin Audaz

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PREFACE

The Nathan Cummings Foundation is a multigenerational family foundation, rooted in the Jewish tradition of social justice, working to create a more just, vibrant, sustainable, and democratic society. We partner with social movements, organizations, and individuals who have creative and catalytic solutions to climate change and inequality. *Pasado y Presente: Art After the Young Lords* is part of our Art Exhibition program, which started over 20 years ago, enabling us to partner with local curators and arts organizations to highlight artists and bodies of work that speak to our social justice values, advance magnetic new narratives and disrupt problematic ones. It is one of several ways that our grantmaking highlights the power of art to conjure a more just future. The Young Lords and the artwork inspired by them created this imaginative vision of the future, while tending to the practical needs of the present. They were ahead of their time. This is the perfect exhibit for the foundation to host because we're interested in how the inequalities we're fighting against are so intertwined and in fostering visionary ways to move our communities forward.

Elizabeth Méndez Berry
Director, Voice, Creativity and Culture
The Nathan Cummings Foundation



WORDS OF SOLIDARITY FROM THE YOUNG LORDS

This celebration is not about the wax museum. As Young Lords we support the struggles of our people and are in solidarity with the people of the world. The 50th anniversary is not just about the past or the legacy...it is about the present and the future. "Let's be realistic....let's do the impossible"

Mickey Meléndez
Founding Member

We were encouraged to study up, come back, wage ideological struggle, that's what we called it, battle for your idea. That was a real enlightening thing for so many of us. . . . You were encouraged to develop yourself, because what was at stake was changing the world. That was probably the most intellectually stimulating period of my life. It was like a really good college class, but with much more significance. The time is ripe for a new generation to take the reins.

Gilbert Colón
Cadre

The Young Lords Party represents the boldest, the most courageous, the most politically astute resistance in the United States to the colonial occupation of Puerto Rico. We were prophets: free breakfast, tb testing, patient rights, garbage pick-up, gender equality, lead paint poisoning prevention, Puerto Rican Studies, prison rights, inter-cultural dialogue, etc., all were fought for in huge demonstrations or small hand-to-hand combat on the urban streets of America. I was/ am honored to be a part of history.

Felipe Luciano
Chairman

There is no better moment than now, to bring together young people, artists, workers, our diverse communities, and the Young Lords—50 years later—with the mission of continuing to fight for justice and serve the people.

Minerva Solla
Cadre

We were young and angry and daring then, convinced that with enough courage and sacrifice we would end injustice, free Puerto Rico, and build a better world. Fifty years later, our loftiest dreams remain unrealized, but we did manage to free our own minds, to inspire later generations of Latinos to demand respect, even to produce a few concrete reforms that improved life in our community, and none of it was easy, yet most of us have never stopped struggling, which is the only lesson that matters.

Juan González
Minister of Education and Health

Lately, I've been thinking of the meeting at the Real Great Society in summer of 1969 at 110th street in East Harlem. The question was, like always, what is to be done to educate and protect our people, who are experiencing this tragedy and painful situation. The beauty and talent expressed at that moment was spontaneous and powerful: "sweep the filthy streets and clean our community, let us change our own reality." We have the power to change not only how other people perceive use, but how we perceive possibilities in our own community. It is of utmost importance that we not only acknowledge how we perceive ourselves, but that we also understand the idea that we are a powerless people. We have our human dignity. We have the freedom and power to create a better future right now. We will not apologize for resisting our own oppression, we only learn as we struggle, because we the so-called "other" people have no other option but to resist and dare to make a better future for ourselves and future generations. LOVE ALWAYS

David Pérez
Field Marshal

There was always a feeling, even then, that we were building something for the future. Something new. A Latin pride. They were some of the best years of my life.

Pablo Guzmán
Minster of Information

We were a shining example of crossing barriers of race and ethnicity to bring people together to fight for Puerto Rico and a just and revolutionary world. Our goal is to highlight our history and connect it with the movements of young people happening today.

Denise Oliver-Vélez
Young Lords Minister of Finance and Economic Development

The Young Lords demands for justice in the late 1960s sparked the REBEL IMAGINATION of Puerto Ricans. Artists created new cultural works and institutions that embraced our African and Taino culture and denounced our oppression in the United States and Puerto Rico. A new language was born. In that historic moment, art was resistance, and resistance was art.

Iris Morales
Attorney, educator, filmmaker and former Deputy of Education for the Young Lords Party



YLL50TH ANNIVERSARY

PASADO Y PRESENTE ART AFTER THE YOUNG LORDS 1969-2019

NATHAN CUMMINGS FOUNDATION
MAY 3RD — OCTOBER 25TH, 2019



CURATORIAL STATEMENT

YASMIN RAMIREZ PhD

Pasado y Presente: *Art After the Young Lords* commemorates the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Young Lords Organization in New York. Inspired by the community activism of the Young Lords Organization in Chicago (1968), The New York chapter of the Young Lords launched their first action during summer of 1969 by cleaning up the trash-ridden streets of East Harlem. When their demand that the NYC Sanitation Department provide the group with brooms and send trucks to pick up trash on regular basis was denied, the Young Lords and local residents piled garbage on Third Avenue and set it on fire, dramatizing the urgent need for basic human services that were absent in East Harlem and other communities of color in New York. The “Garbage Offensive” of 1969

was the first of many occupations of streets and public facilities in East Harlem, the South Bronx and the Lower East Side that brought the New York Chapter of the Young Lords Organization to international attention and popular acclaim.

What made the Young Lords way of mobilizing so successful in the past and why do the Young Lords continue to inspire us today? Social movements generate a repertoire of strategies, tactics, expressions, behaviors, and material objects to create cohesion among participants and disseminate their ideas to the wider public. Social theorist, TV Reed calls this matrix of actions and objects “movement culture” and observes that the most impactful movement cultures utilize the arts to alter or transgress

dominant cultural codes.¹ The Young Lords deployed their collective talents to portray Puerto Rican culture as resilient and reframe Puerto Rican youth culture in New York—pejoratively associated with delinquency and gangsterism—as comprised of organized troops of socially conscious young adults who were unafraid to defy authority in defense of Puerto Rican and other oppressed communities. As Pablo Guzmán put it: “The fact that our people, when put against the wall, have managed to kick ass for centuries—that is good, that is part of our culture, right. That’s why we say that the most cultural thing we can do is pick up the gun to defend ourselves. Culture, see, is the gun—as long as we understand that it is not the gun that should control us but the (Young Lords) Party should control the gun.”²



Detail of Taller Boricua poster installation in the Nathan Cummings boardroom.

The Young Lords' prominence in our collective imagination of the 1970s is due in large part to their transgressive, yet visually compelling movement culture. As documentary photographs by in this show by Máximo Colón and Luis Carle demonstrate, the Young Lords attracted some of the brightest and best-looking young adults in the city. They were an army of beautiful rebels who could disarm their critics by flashing smiles as they marched down the city's streets. Dressed in purple berets, leather jackets, dark clothing, combat boots, and buttons emblazoned with a rifle superimposed on the Puerto Rican flag, the Young Lords

paramilitary dress code inverted mainstream stereotypes of Puerto Ricans as a docile, insular

people. Flaunting their affiliation with the Black Panthers and other radical leftist organizations of color, the Young Lords could also be seen wearing Afros, braids, dashikis, and Panther pins. Their sartorial affirmation of their African and Native American (Indio) ancestries challenged the Puerto Rican community's internalized shame of being mixed-race people and projected a more complex, heterogeneous understanding of Puerto Rican/Latinx identity that younger generations have since embraced. Female members of the Young Lords rejected the second-class status that women were accorded in society. They fought for and won leadership positions and made gender equality a priority of the Young Lords platform. The Young Lords were also early advocates for the LGBT community, Sylvia Rivera, the founding member of the Gay Liberation Front (1969) was allied with Young Lords members on the Lower East Side.

The Young Lords ability to look good while doing "bad" deeds brought them notoriety in the barrios and broadcast studios across the nation. The cross-disciplinary talent pool in the Young Lord's central committee factored into their ability to continuously draw attention and sympathy to their causes. Comprised of first-generation college-educated Black and Puerto Rican men and women from working-class households, the Young Lord's leadership circle—which included Juan González, Felipe Luciano, Pablo Yoruba Guzmán, Denise Oliver, Hiram Maristany, and Iris Morales—brimmed with creative aptitudes. González, YLO Minister of Education, acquired his media-savvy during the Columbia student protests of 1968. Luciano, was a former member of the Last Poets, a Black Power performance poetry troupe. Luciano and Guzmán, Ministers

Culture, see, is the Gun...

Pablo "Yoruba" Guzmán



Hatuey Ramos-Fermin - *Vine pa' echar candela (I came to fuel a fire)*, 2019 - Detail

of Information, were the group's charismatic spokesmen. Oliver, YLO Revolutionary Artist and Minister of Economic Development, designed many early posters and illustrations that appeared in *Palante*, the Young Lord's bilingual newspaper. Hiram Maristany, was the Young Lords in-house photographer. The Young Lords also recognized the seminal Nuyorican poet and playwright, Pedro Pietri, as their poet laureate.

Taller Boricua, the first Puerto Rican artist collective in New York, worked across the street from the Young Lords offices; their posters publicizing protests and cultural events in East Harlem during the 1970s to the present capture the enduring arts-based movement culture that the Young Lords set ablaze. AgitArte, a poster collective based in Puerto Rico and Valor y Cambio, a project to introduce community currency in Puerto Rico are contemporary examples of artist-led activism on the island that re-articulates the Young Lords demand for: "community control over our institutions and land."



Detail of "Siempre" (2019) by Viajero

Spanning different generations, nationalities, and ethnicities, the artists displayed in *Pasado y Presente* represent a small percentage of a global arts community that is connected to the Young Lords by what we might think of as a purple thread of passion for art in the service of social justice and vanguard aesthetics. Works by Coronado Studio, Sophia Dawson, Marcos Dimas, Hautey Ramos Fermín, Scherezade García, Miguel Luciano, Shellyne Rodríguez, Adrián Viajero Román, Juan Sánchez, Nitza Tufiño, and Rafael Tufiño, show us that the Young Lords' movement culture leads down a path where art and politics intersect; activists, artists, and the people intermingle; culture is recovered and reconstituted; and Pedro Pietri's manifestoes are committed to memory:

To be free means to be proud of yourself!

To be proud of yourself means to be creative!

To defend your dreams means to have courage!

To make your dreams come true in your lifetime!

*And once your dreams come true, you will never have to worry about dying as long as you live!*³

1. T.V. Reed, "Reflections," in *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 297.

2. Pablo "Yoruba" Guzmán, "Before People Called Me a Spic, They Called Me a Nigger," in *Palante*, 77.

3. Pedro Pietri, excerpt from "El Puerto Rican Embassy MANIFESTO" (1994), reproduced in *El Passport* (1994) and designed by Adal.

PASADO Y PRESENTE ART AFTER THE YOUNG LORDS 1969-2019

THE LOISAIDA CENTER
JUNE 3RD – SEPTEMBER 6TH, 2019



CURATORIAL STATEMENT

LIBERTAD O. GUERRA

Things do come together after falling apart; *Pasado y Presente: Art After the Young Lords* is a reminder that faced with oppression and coloniality, the concomitant quests for justice and equity form part of an eternal return to the aesthetics of liberation and the free development of all.

Fifty years after the Young Lords initiated their legendary organizing work in the streets of New York City, Anthony Rosado, Pepe Coronado Studios (Pepe Coronado, Alex "Fdez" Fernández, Carlos Jesús Martínez Domínguez, Palén Obesa & Karen Revis), Scherezade García, Valor y Cambio, and Agitarte dare to persist in the uncomfortable and unfinished dialogue of the Lords' theater of struggle. The diverse materiality, and generative methodologies of their works should not mask a core unity of intention: a non-nostalgic return and re-commitment to the roots of the Lords' program; and a narrative that underlines the simultaneously conflictive and joyous

"Native Reservations we are,
But giving our fight for
freedom everywhere."

Luis 'El Terror' Días



Agitarte - Se Acabaron Las Promesas, 2017



Carlos Jesús Martínez Domínguez - *Dominicans Celebrating The 1844 "Independence" Reminds Me Of Southerners Romanticizing The Confederacy, 2012-16*

Caribbean voices that connect the here and there, threading a fragile but stubbornly persistent bridge of memory, affect, politics, spatial practices, and aesthetics. Cultural work as organizing, and cultural workers as organizers; playfulness, exchange, and conviviality as a political program; a sense of communal belonging and visibility brought forth by bridging our homelands and our diasporic struggles. Collective and individual self-determination, freedom, anti-racism, control over institutions and land, anti-militarism, gender equity, unity. A series of incomplete maps of the different roads to freedom, these works organize, preserve, engage, demand, celebrate, and re-appropriate; therein lies their questioning beauty and critical power. Forward.

WORDS OF SOLIDARITY FROM WILLIAM CORDOVA

Dear Cultural Practitioners,

Developing one's practice requires constant self analysis, critical perspective and taking creative risks. These risks require a great deal of focus, time and being resourceful; these things are all possible but require discipline and sacrifice.

Humility, spiritual values and integrity are all essential tools not only for art making or for our survival, but for a profound and healthy existence.

Maintaining clarity, staying grounded will allow us to contribute to our collective communities sans the pitfalls of self serving motives.

Learning from life's pros and cons will reveal an infinite source of wealth. It's up to us to decide what we do with that wealth.

In spirit, rete f6, en espirito!

-William C6rdova (Cultural Practitioner and member of the Young Lords Party 50th Anniversary Committee)

Design by William C6rdova for the Event "The Young Lords, New York @50 Activism: Past & Present"



July 26, 2019 6-9PM

Nathan Cummings Foundation &
The Loisaida Center

EXHIBITING ARTISTS

AQUÍ SERVIMOS
SOLIDARIDAD



CENTROS DE
APOYO MUTUO



AgitArte is an organization of working class artists and cultural organizers who create projects of cultural solidarity in grassroots struggles against oppression, and propose alternatives that generate possibilities for transformations in our world. We initiate and facilitate collaborative community-based popular education and arts programs, along street theater and visual art projects to agitate and organize in our collective struggles for liberation.

For more than 20 years, AgitArte has developed over 50 cultural projects alongside community partners in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. These programs include Papel Machete, a radical theater and puppetry collective dedicated to education, agitation, and solidarity work; Casa-Taller, a residency/workshop space in Santurce, Puerto Rico, run by members of Papel Machete, which also hosts a community vegetable garden; collaborations with organizations in Puerto Rico, the diaspora, and beyond, including El Puente (Brooklyn); Southerners on New Ground (Atlanta); Mijente, and Centros de Apoyo Mutuo in Puerto Rico; and publications such



Scroll Installation at Loisaida Center



Scroll Installation at Loisaida Center



Installation at Nathan Cummings Foundation

as the book *When We Fight, We Win! Twenty-First-Century Social Movements and the Activists That Are Transforming Our World* (2016), co-authored by AgitArte and Greg Jobin-Leeds.

The posters on display were created by AgitArte/Papel Machete artists, and artists in solidarity with the struggle in Puerto Rico. These images are free and available for download on our website. When sharing, please also include the text and hashtags written for each artwork.

Statement by; Dey Hernández
WWFVW Art Director | AgitArte
Project Manager

www.agitarte.org



Installation at Nathan Cummings Foundation



Scroll Installation at Loaisida Center

Born in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, Máximo Rafael Colón is a New York based photographer who studied at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Beginning his career in documentary photography while a teen, Colón's work is a testament of the struggles and aspirations of the Puerto Rican diaspora dating from the civil rights era to the present. Although his primary medium is analogue photography, Colón also creates assemblages in the found object tradition. His works have been exhibited in several venues throughout New York City and Puerto Rico and a number of his photographs form part of the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños archives at CUNY Hunter College and of the permanent collection at the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.



It's the same struggle.

Colón's photographs were prominently featured in ¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York (2015) held at the Bronx Museum, El Museo del Barrio and the Loisaida Center. He is currently editing *My Upside-down World: Deconstructing Photography*, a five-year digital project encompassing photographs from New York, Puerto Rico, Berlin, Mainz, Paris, Havana, and Toronto.

“Colón’s work is a testament of the struggles and aspirations of the Puerto Rican diaspora”



Photo Installation at Nathan Cummings Foundation

West Hallway

It's the Same Struggle
N.Y.C., 1971
Silver Gelatin Print

Las Caras Lindas
N.Y.C. 1975
Silver Gelatin Print

Una Vida Mejor
Operation Move In
N.Y.C. 1971
Silver Gelatin Print

Young Lords Office Installation

Pedro Pietri
Taller Boricua N.Y.C. 1973
Silver Gelatin Print



Se Acabaron Las Promesas.



The Student Strikes

East Hallway

Young Lords
N.Y.C. 1971
Silver Gelatin

Plaza Borinqueña
Bronx, N.Y. 1972
Silver Gelatin
Print

City Wide Student Strike
N.Y.C. 1971
Silver Gelatin
Print

Los Niños de la Bandera
N.Y.C. 1974
Silver Gelatin
Print

PBS Realidades Demo
N.Y.C. 1971
Silver Gelatin Print

Puerto Rican Gothic
N.Y.C. 1975
Silver Gelatin Print

Post Maria's Serenade
Old San Juan
Puerto Rico 2017
Silver Gelatin Print

Se Acabaron Las Promesas
San Juan, Puerto Rico 2017
Silver Gelatin Print

Anthony Rosado is a Nuyorican Afro-Boricua Queer storyteller merging anthropological writing, visual art, interactive performance, and creative workshops as Founder of The Testourmonials Project; utilizing curation to internationally influence investment in collecting, preserving, and glorifying stories of community-driven cultural conservation. Rosado produces and hosts art series to provide platforms for marginalized artists and community-oriented solution making. His works address identity, ancestral legacy, giving/receiving love, and knowing true stories. As a proud New York City native Rosado administrates event development with organizers, galleries, collectives, and nonprofits in gentrified neighborhoods to bridge residents in pursuance of progressive community-inclusive city planning; housing justice; story-telling and archiving.

Y'ALL BETTA QUIET DOWN!

Artist Statement

Sylvia Rivera was a Nuyorican/Venezuelan transwomin who sacrificed her health, financial, emotional, and housing security to ensure Queer individuals today are granted freedoms she never experienced. In the '50s-'70s countless gender non-conforming Queers were subject to "...sub-section 4 of section 240.35 of the New York Penal Code which states persons 'masked...by unusual or unnatural attire or facial alteration' are subject to arrest. They could arrest 'any person wearing fewer than three articles of clothing appropriate to their sex'. "(15 David Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution*). "Upper head female impersonation" was the leading schema of policing utilized to target leaders like Sylvia. Transwomin, especially low-income non-white Transvestites (as they called themselves at this time), were shunned by embarrassed middle to upper class gay cisgendered men. In her speech at the 4th annual Stonewall riots march Rivera was dismissed and waited for indefinite speaking time. She was booed approaching the mic by white gay cisgendered men who co-opted the Stonewall Revolution and Pride Marches. She boldly

and fiercely exposed their hypocrisy to them and ended in communal rejoice of "GAY POWER!" This altar commemorates a woman who stood on the front lines of the Stonewall riots and the Young Lords Party revolutions, decked in glimmering sequins. Axé!



Y'ALL BETTA QUIET DOWN! 2018. Paper Maché, Found Object, Wood, Acrylic Paint, Cement, Bra, Slip, Panties, Tank Top, Boxer Briefs, Tie, Monitor. Sylvia puppet by: Adam Ende with Bryan Fernández, Francisco Valera, and Niki Rios commissioned by Loaisaida Center for its Cabezudos collection; Video interview with Carlito Rovira conducted by Loaisaida Center for Present! The Young Lords in New York 2015 exhibit; Speech by: Sylvia Rivera.

Luis Carle is an artist-photographer who moved from Puerto Rico to New York in 1984 to study photography at Parsons School of Design. In 1992 founded and directed O.P. Art, Inc. (Organization of Puerto Rican Artists, Inc.) to support the work and vision of emerging artists.

Carle's photographs are in the permanent collections of the Leslie Lohman Gay Art Museum in NYC and the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. His works have been shown in galleries and museums throughout New York and abroad including the Caribbean Museum in St. Croix, Museo of Contemporary Arts, San Juan; Museo de las Americas, San Juan; Centro Gallery at Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College; El Museo del Barrio; MOCADA: Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts; The Museum of Modern Art; The Hague Arts Center and Sarkowsky Gallery, St Petersburg, Russia.

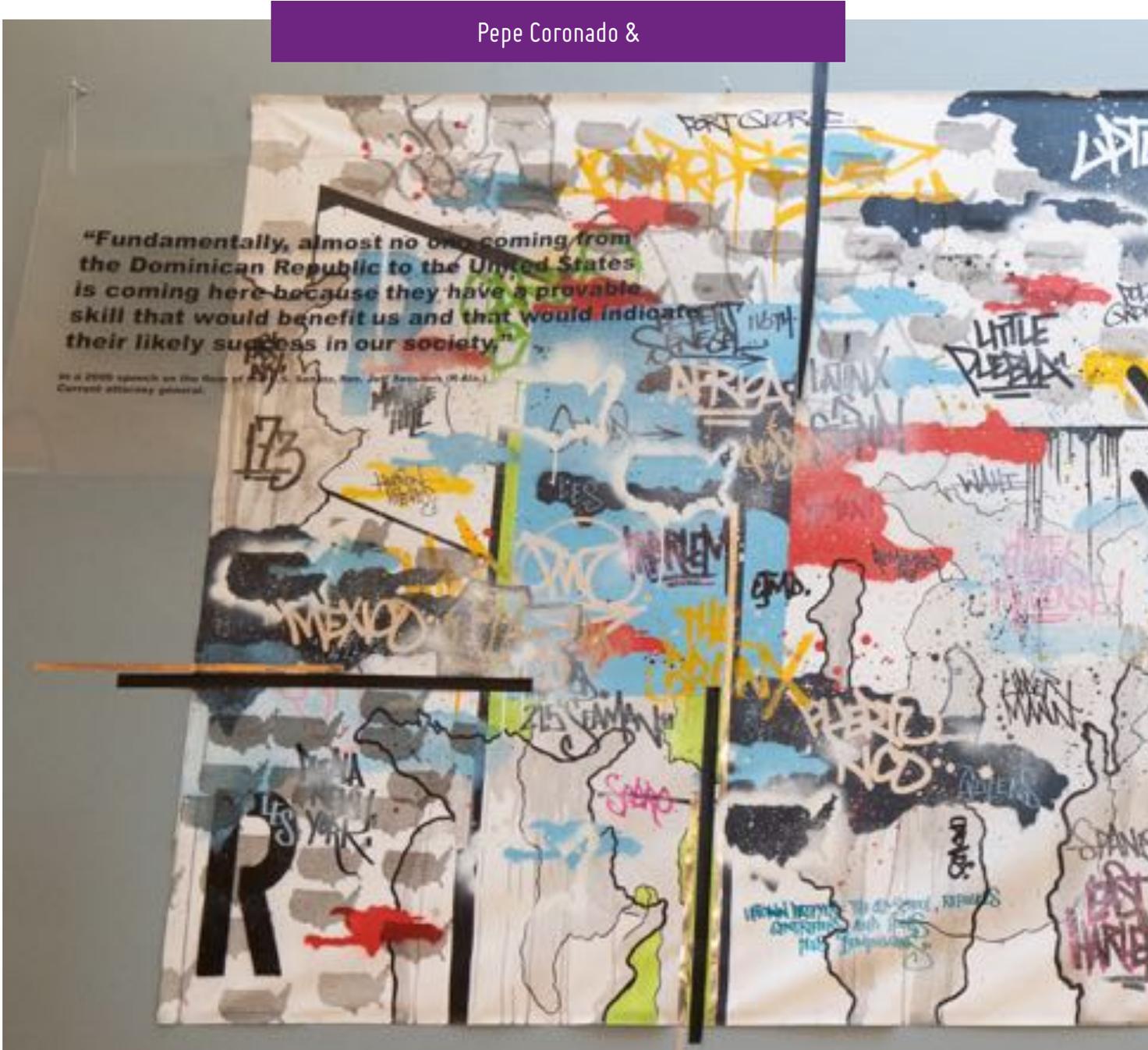
Artist Statement

My generation was the one between oppression and freedom. I feel proud that my portrait of the Sylvia Rivera is the first image of a transgender Latinx person to enter the collection of the National Portrait Gallery. Sylvia Rivera is a LGBTQ



rights pioneer; she was a leader in the Stonewall Riots of 1969 and an ally of the Young Lords who formed the YLP women's caucus and YLP gay and lesbian caucus.

Respect Trans, 2000
(Portrait of Sylvia Rivera with
Christina Hayworth and Julia Murray)
Silver Gelatin Print



Pepe Coronado was born and raised in the Dominican Republic and currently resides in New York City. Coronado is a founding member of the print collective Dominican York Proyecto GRAFICA, founder of Coronado Print Studio, and was a resident teaching artist at the Hudson River Museum in New York. He has taught printmaking at the Corcoran College of Art, Georgetown University and at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, where he earned the Master of Fine Arts. Coronado was a master printer for Pyramid Atlantic in Silver Spring, Maryland; the Hand Print Workshop International in Alexandria, Virginia; and the Serie Print Project in Austin, Texas. He has been a visiting artist at Self Help Graphics in Los Angeles.

Carlos Jesús Martínez Domínguez is a Caribbean New Yorker, Father, Atheist on some days, Non Theist Agnostic on others, Apostate, Leftest, Socialist, Agitator, Occasional Contrarian, Ethical Polyamorist, HS dropout, GED holder, Autodidact, Educator, Debater, white people fearing, all people loving, Marijuana Advocating, Hip Hop, Sneaker, comic and sci-fi loving non Latino/a/x identifying Dominican Puerto Rican Interdisciplinary Artist born on a military base in North Carolina in 1976. Carlos Jesús Martínez Domínguez a.k.a FEEGZ, Figaro & Firo173 has exhibited, taught and spoken in dozens of institutions nationally and internationally. He has exhibited at El Museo del Barrio, Studio Museum in Harlem and Centro León Museum among many others. Washington Heights NYC since 1984.



ARTIST STATEMENT (to be read as a spoken word poem)

Pepe Coronado + Carlos Jesús Martínez Domínguez/FEEGZ
Uptown Bateyes: The Old School, Refugees, Gentrifiers and Hoods, Plus Dominicans, 2017. Mixed-media, screenprint, stencil, spray paint, marker + tape 6' x 12'.
Installation at Nathan Cummings Foundation

While making uptown Bateyes we set out to highlight the HOODS of upper Manhattan and throughout NYC.

Our minds on an older New York with Puerto Rican and African American islands amongst Jewish, Italian, Greek, and Irish oceans.

Somewhat recent immigrants and Refugees from Africa, The Americas and Asia.

The overt and down low conquistadors like Gentrifiers and the self proclaimed "preservationists".

White Flights' past and it's current revenge, because gentrification is MAGA's smarter sibling.

White supremacist terms like Latina/o/x with its unimaginative Eurocentricity.

And Dominicans since the 60's if you don't count Juan Rodríguez (Jan Rodrigues).



Installation at Loisaida Center

Rooted in the philosophy of creating art in the community, the Coronado Printstudio is not only a fine art printmaking studio, but a space where artists can shed boundaries and barriers to engage in open dialogue around history, identity, and important issues of our time.

Pepe Coronado, the master printer at the studio, believes that “printmaking, by nature, is a collaborative medium. It’s a community-oriented art form.” Based on this principle, Pepe founded the studio in 2006, and in 2015 relocated to the vibrant neighborhood of East Harlem. The Studio believes in collaboration because it believes that voices and stories are most powerful when seen and heard collectively.

The power of art motivates the studio to reach and engage diverse institutions and sectors nationally and internationally. The Studio believes that the interconnectivity of diverse artistic disciplines is a necessary catalyst to ripple art into the American social imagination. By gaining visibility around the world, the studio invites the attention back to its works, thereby imprinting louder voices of diverse narratives, and broadening the definition of contemporary American art.

Alex “FDEZ” Fernández is an autodidactic artist who works in various mediums, born in New York, partly raised in the Dominican Republic and currently living in the Bronx. During his years in the Dominican Republic, he began to be influenced by their artistic carnival colors and traditions as well as the Costumbrista style. As an adult, he attained a B.F.A. in Electronic Design and an M.A. in Art Education from City College of New York, which has led to his research into the art history, social justice, criticism, and the exploration of various mediums and techniques.

Artist Statement

His artwork explores societal issues that are influenced by our current world and infused with a reflection of his divided Dominican/American heritage. It uses allegory, symbolism, satire & impactful images, to compose works that critique world cultures, religions and social/political issues from the world we live in, with the intent to capture human emotion in response to these. His work has been displayed in various group shows around the world including Italy, New York and Dominican Republic.



Protect and Serve, 2018. Screen Print. www.fdezart.com

Karen J. Revis is a painter, papermaker and printmaker living in New York City. She has attended residencies at Pyramid Atlantic, The Women's Studio Workshop and Henry Street Settlement. Karen exhibits and is represented by Sears Peyton Gallery in New York, Kaller Fine Art in Washington D.C. and Weber Fine Art in Greenwich, CT. She studied fine art at The Corcoran School of Art and received a BFA from Pratt Institute.

Her work is featured in *The Art of Encaustic Painting: Contemporary Expression in the Ancient Medium of Pigmented Wax* by Joanne Mattera and her work is in numerous public and private collections, including Alliance Capital Management (NY), the Venetian Macau Hotel (Macau), The Metropolitan Club (Boston) and Winston & Strawn (SF).



The End of Black Harlem, 2018. Digital Print.

Adrián Román, also known as Viajero, was born in New York City of Puerto Rican descent. Throughout his travels to the Caribbean, Central America, Africa, and a number of cities across the United States, he has exposed himself to a variety of cultures that have influenced his work. Viajero is an artist resident of the NARS Foundation in Brooklyn New York, and works closely with the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute in New York City. In 2012, he exhibited at Museo de Arte de Caguas, Puerto Rico as part of the group show AFROLATINOS, which was awarded Best Exhibit 2012 by International Association of Art Critics. Viajero was most recently nominated for the Joan Mitchell Foundation grant for sculpture. He has exhibited in solo and group shows in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Artist Statement

My work is informed by issues of race, migration and identity while exploring both the personal and historical memory of the two disparate worlds that I inhabit: the tropical landscape of Puerto Rico and the overpopulated cityscape of New York. My practice combines drawing, painting and sculpture within immersive installation environments composed of objects collected from different communities,



Siempre, 2019. Mixed Installation.

from salvaged wood and window frames to historic artifacts and vintage photographs. The resulting environments can fill an entire wall or an entire room, and often incorporate sound and aromatics that draw

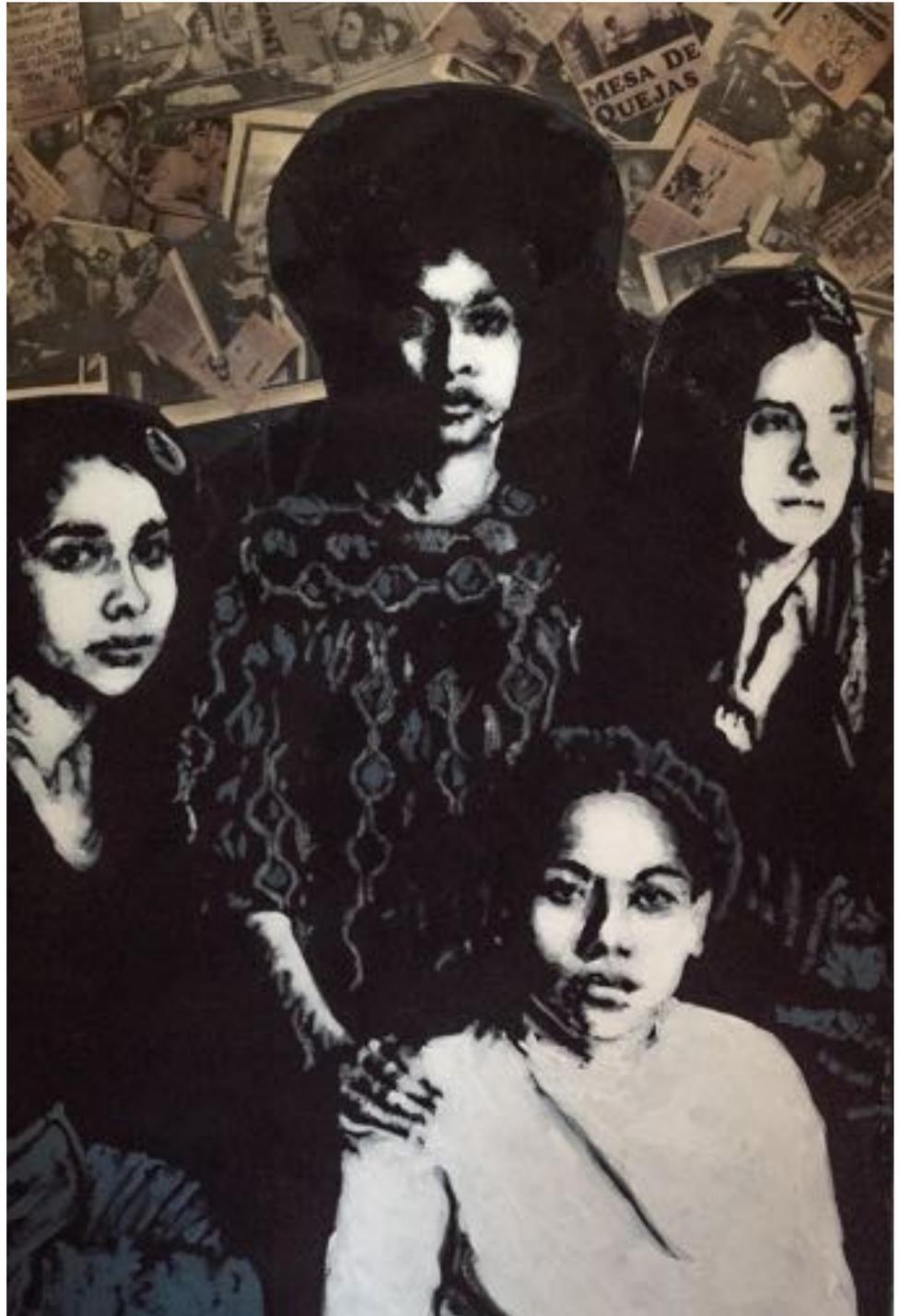
upon the history and memory embedded in the objects. I'm interested in the continuity of time, and in how these interventions may bring these living histories forward to the present. This altar is a symbol to

always acknowledge and never forget those activists, artists, and community leaders who pave the way for us.

Sophia Dawson is a Brooklyn based visual artist who has dedicated her life's work to exposing the stories and experiences of individuals who are striving to overcome the injustices they face both individually and collectively. By raising awareness of these individuals she aims to humanize social justice issues and to prevent such experiences from being repeated in the future. She holds a B.A from the School of Visual Arts and a M.A. in visual arts administration from New York University. Her work has recently been exhibited in Rush Arts Gallery and the Bronx Museum for the Arts. She is a recent participant of the Whitney Museum's Independent Studio program and a current resident of the Bronx Museum of Art's first residency program. She leads art workshops at Rikers Island through Artistic Noise a nonprofit based in Harlem that serves the growth of court involved youth. Some of the subjects of her practice include mothers who have lost their children to police brutality both past and present, the Central Park 5, and political prisoners from the Black Liberation movement that are still incarcerated within the United States.

Artist Statement

My paintings are inspired by Michael Abramson's photos of the Young Lords in his book, *Palante*. Photographs that depicted women at the forefront of the movement were selected with the goal of conveying the roles women assumed in building the organization and defending its highest aspirations. They were conceived over the course of numerous conversations with the women of the Young Lords. The depth of mutual love and respect that the women of the Young Lords exhibited for one another



Women of the Young Lords, 2015. Acrylic and collage on canvas. 42" x 64"

er in these exchanges capture the sense of "sisterhood" that emerged in tandem with the women's movement of 1960s. I crafted the paintings in layers to portray the theme "The Revolution within the Revolution." While the Young Lords Organization was determined to effect change within its own community, the very women

and men of the organization were forced to confront the need for transformation within each individual and within the organization as a whole. I hope these portraits will inspire the new generation of activists coming to political consciousness to continue their legacy.



Vine pa' echar candela (I came to fuel a fire), 2019
Site-specific mixed media-installation of
Young Lords Office in the Bronx

Hatuey Ramos-Fermín is an artist based in The Bronx. He is the co-founder of meta local collaborative, a Bronx-based artist collective, and Boogie Down Rides, a bicycling and art project. He has organized projects and made presentations at a security guard training school (in tribute to Fashion/Moda), community centers, churches, restaurants, laundromats, as well as galleries and museums. He has mentored young adults at the Center for Urban Pedagogy, and The Bronx Museum of the Arts, where he also served as Curator of Education. Ramos-Fermín has also participated in the Elizabeth Foundation for the Art's Shift Residency, and The Laundromat Project's Create Change Artist Residency. He received his BA from the University of Puerto Rico and his MFA from St. Joost Art and Design Academy. Hatuey currently is the Director of Programs at The Laundromat Project.



Detail of Young Lords newspaper, *Palante*

Project Description

Ramos-Fermín's site specific installation, *Vine pa' echar candela, 2019* is a based on photographs of the Young Lords office in the The Bronx, updated with books and digital projects by contemporary activists and artists. On the wall are xeroxes copies of surveillance records written by FBI agents who infiltrated the Young Lords with the intent to destroy the group by provoking dissention and violence among its members.

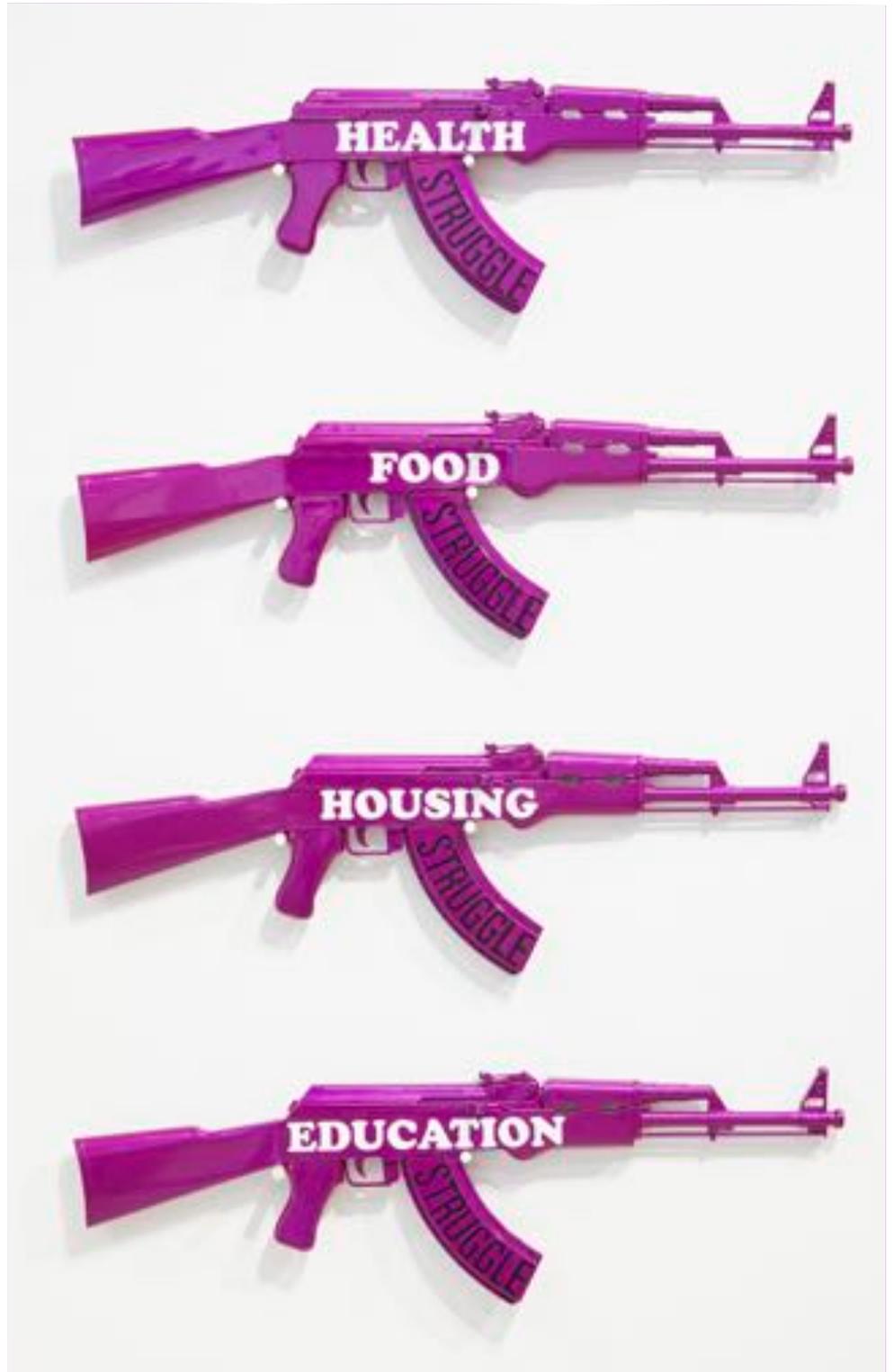


Detail

Miguel Luciano is a multimedia visual artist whose work explores themes of history, popular culture, social justice and migration, through sculpture, painting and socially engaged public art projects. His work has been exhibited widely both nationally and internationally. He is the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Award, Louis Comfort Tiffany Award Grant, and the A Blade of Grass Socially Engaged Art Fellowship. His work is featured in the permanent collections of The Smithsonian American Art Museum, The Brooklyn Museum, El Museo del Barrio, the Newark Museum, the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, and the Museum of Art and Design in Miramar, Puerto Rico. Luciano is a faculty member at the School of Visual Arts and Yale University School of Art. He is currently an Artist in Residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Civic Practice Partnership Artist Residency program.

Artist Statement

Health, food, housing, and education were some of the core community issues that the Young Lords organized around. This work refers to an original silkscreened poster graphic produced by the Young Lords (c.1970), whereby the issues themselves (presented in the silhouette of purple AK-47's), became the symbolic weapons, and the ammunition for change was the people's struggle. Here these original graphics are translated as sculpture, drawing attention to the way these same issues remain in crisis within our communities today.



Health, Food, Housing, Education
(after the Young Lords), 2015
Wood, urethane enamel, vinyl
72" x 34" x 3"

Juan Sánchez earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from The Cooper Union School of Art in 1977, and in 1980, a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Mason Gross School of the Arts of Rutgers University. His mixed medium paintings, prints, photographs and video installations have been exhibited throughout the United States, Europe, Egypt and Latin America. Sánchez has had solo exhibitions at EXIT ART, P.S.1/MoMA Contemporary Art Center, El Museo del Barrio, the 1994 5th Havana Bienale, Bronx Museum of the Arts and El Museo de Historia, Antropología y Arte, Universidad de Puerto Rico. His work is represented in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Smithsonian American Art Museum, The Museum of Modern Art, El Museo del Barrio, El Instituto de Cultura Puertorriquena in Río Piedras, PR and El Centro Wilfredo Lam in Havana, Cuba, among others.

Artist Statement

The people of Puerto Rico are United States citizens, and yet they are still facing extremely disastrous conditions and neglect from the devastation of hurricane María. The economy is bankrupt and the United States has complete control over the people. This speaks very clearly to their second-class citizenship since 1917 and their colonized existence since 1898. *Tres Banderas*, 1998 *Once We Were Warriors*, 1999 are viscerally rich, layered mixed-media prints that is most appropriate at this moment. They speak to the culture, pride, history and contributions of the Young Lords Party. The photograph I took of a Puerto Rican flag tattoo on the arm of a young U.S. marine in the 1970's, and a famous portrait of Young Lords Felipe Luciano, Iris Morales and Juan González by photographer Michael Abramson juxtaposed with Taino and African symbols and torn collage edges of the urban environment, express the Young Lord's impact on the Puerto Rican Diaspora, their advocacy for self-determination, civil and human rights and social justice for all oppressed people.



Once We Were Warriors, 1999
Mixed Media Print, 34" x 60".

Shellyne Rodríguez is a visual artist who works in multiple mediums to depict spaces and subjects engaged in strategies of survival against subjugation. With a Decolonial mindset rooted in hip hop culture, her work utilizes text, drawing, painting, found materials, and sculpture to emphasize her ideas. Shellyne graduated with a BFA in Visual & Critical Studies From the School of Visual Arts and an MFA in Fine Art from CUNY Hunter College. She has had her work and projects exhibited at El Museo del Barrio, Queens Museum, New Museum and her work has recently been commissioned by the city of New York for a permanent public sculpture, which will serve as a monument to the people of the Bronx. Shellyne is also a community organizer and an active member of radical grassroots collective Take Back the Bronx.

Artist Statement

Addressing the lack of services in the community by the Sanitation Department, the Young Lords took action by marching into the Sanitation offices and demanding brooms. When this request was met with resistance, they took the brooms by force and went into the streets to clean them. Together with the community, they swept large piles of garbage polluting El Barrio into the center of the street and set it on fire, forcing the city to respond to their demands.

This work is an invocation of this action. Charred by the revolutionary fires of burning garbage, this deity takes the shape of the broom and emerges, baring her teeth as a warning to our enemies, or as a warm greeting to our friends. With her Great Azabache hand, she bestows power and protection on all of the children of El Barrio. Charged with the power of over 100 small azabache fists which form together to create a whip, the strength of this weapon is the combined power of the people.



Phoenix (The Garbage Offensive), 2015
Mixed media installation with broom, 67" x 24" x 30"



Installation at Nathan Cummings Foundation

Still in operation today, Taller Boricua/The Puerto Rican Workshop, Inc., was founded in fall 1970 by Puerto Rican Art Workers Coalition members: Marcos Dimas, Adrián García, Martín Rubio, Armando Soto, and Manuel Neco Otero. Two reknown artists from Puerto Rico who had recently migrated to New York, Carlos Osorio and Rafael Tufiño, joined the group soon after its inception. Nitza Tufiño, Rafael Tufiño's daughter, became the first women artist to join the collective. Taller Boricua was a central meeting place for the Puerto Rican creative community in New York during early 1970s. Originally located across the street from the Young Lords offices, the artists who gathered at Taller Boricua saw themselves as activists and were dedicated to creating "art for the people." Though they operated as distinct organizations, personal interactions and

artistic borrowings between the Young Lords and Taller Boricua fostered awareness and appreciation for Puerto Rico's history and culture. Posters by Rafael Tufiño hung in the Young Lords Offices and Marcos Dimas' poster of Ramón Emeterio Betances was reproduced in *Palante*. Likewise, Young Lords actions and the covers of *Palante* became sources of inspiration for Taller members.

The collective organized traveling exhibits in Latino neighborhoods throughout the city, hosted free printmaking workshops, and created posters for community events and political rallies such as the massive march to the United Nations for Puerto Rican independence that the Young Lords led on October 30, 1970 and rally to protest the death of Young Lord Julio Roldán. Taller Boricua's street actions were complemented by

a dedicated studio practice. The artists exceeded the Young Lords' demand for a true education in Puerto Rico's African and indigenous Taíno heritages by creating a visual vocabulary that combined forms from both cultures. This Afro-Taíno aesthetic became Taller Boricua's signature style.



En el espíritu de Betances, 1971.



La Mujer Puertorriqueña, c.1972.

Marcos Dimas earned his BFA degree from the School of Visual Arts in 1970. As Co-founder and Executive Director of Taller Boricua, Marcos Dimas has been the curator of over 400 exhibitions of mid-career and emerging artists as well as themed group exhibitions on a wide range of socio-political topics and aesthetic movements. His prints and paintings are in the private and museum collections in the United States and Puerto Rico including El Museo del Barrio, The Bronx Museum, and The Smithsonian Museum of American Art.

Marcos Dimas

En el espíritu de Betances, 1971

Digital reprint

Courtesy of the artist

Marcos Dimas

Lolita Lebrón Puerto Rican Freedom Fighter, 1973

Digital Reprint

Courtesy of the artist

Marcos Dimas

Ese Es, Ese Es, 1973

Digital reprint

Collection of the Artist

Marcos Dimas

La Mujer Puertorriqueña, c. 1972

Digital Reprint

Courtesy of the Artist



Las Cuatro Cruces de los Young Lords: Norte, Sur, Este y Oeste.
1974. 4 Mixed Media Prints. Collection of Nitza Tufiño

Rafael Tufiño was born in Brooklyn, New York, raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and trained as an artist in Mexico. Returning to Puerto Rico in the late 1940s, Tufiño employed his broad artistic background to foster an artistic renaissance on the island during the 1950's that was akin to Mexican renaissance in early twentieth century. A versatile modernist who worked in abstract and figurative modes, Tufiño was best known for his archetypal renderings of the Puerto Rico's folk culture which earned him the title of "El Pintor del Pueblo" (the People's Painter). Examples of Tufiño's posters of Puerto Rican folk culture could be seen in the Young Lords' offices in East Harlem. Seen within the context of the Young Lords politically charged-window displays, Tufiño's popular images of caramel-colored farmers and black

folk singers were re-coded as portraits of the island's revolutionary proletariat. In 1970 he moved back to New York and co-founded Taller Boricua/The Puerto Rican Workshop in East Harlem. Located across the street from the Young Lords offices, he and other Taller members made many posters for political rallies and marches. This four part cruciform series was created in homage to the martyred Julio Roldán. In 1970, Young Lords member Julio Roldán – who had been arrested at a demonstration in the Bronx and was pending arraignment – was found hung to death in his cell at the "Tombs" prison facility in lower Manhattan. Taller Boricua members created posters for The Young Lords procession through East Harlem with Roldán's coffin.



La Promesa despues de Huracan Maria, 2018. Woodcut and Gold Leaf. Collection of Rafaela Luz Billini

Nitza Tufiño, born in 1949 in Mexico City, raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico, is a recognized muralist, public artist and printmaker with studies in Manhattan and South Orange, New Jersey. She obtained her B.F.A at the Academia de San Carlos from the Universidad Autonoma in Mexico City and holds an M.S. in Urban Planning from Hunter College, CUNY.

As a community activist and art educator she has helped found established community-based organizations and art institutions in New York City such as Loisaida, Inc. and El Museo del Barrio; Served as a consultant on Puerto Rican and Caribbean Art at The Brooklyn Museum and The Metropolitan Museum. As a muralist, she has been commissioned by the East 3rd Street Music School in Manhattan, New York Metropolitan Transit Authority, New York City Health and Hospital Corporations, LaGuardia Community College, Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut and the Hospital for Special Care to develop and create murals for their institutions. She also developed and established the Muralist art program at Central Connecticut University in New Britain. She is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions that include the Donal G. Sullivan Award from the Department of Urban Planning, Hunter College; the Mid-Atlantic Endowment for the Arts Regional Award, from the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation; the New York's Foundation for the

Arts Artist Fellowship; the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund for Outstanding Contribution to the Arts Award in conjunction with Mayor David Dinkins of New York; New York City' Council's "Excellence in Arts" Award given by Council President, Andrew Stein and the Manhattan Borough President's Excellence and Outstanding Achievement Award given by Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, among others. She was the first female artist of El Taller Boricua since 1970; and is now a founding member of Consejo Gráfico, a national coalition of Latino printmaking workshops and individual printmakers.

Artist Statement

The celebration of the Three Kings includes a tradition of children requesting wishes of the Three Kings. In this piece the children are asking for clean water, fire for cooking, and the growth of everything green in Puerto Rico, devastated by Hurricane María. The children and youth have not given up hope of the rebirth of Puerto Rico. In spite of the challenges that they have faced, they are armed with a spirit of resilience and victory. A catastrophe is turned into a moment of unification with a goal to rebuild and restore. Such as all poison being turned into medicine, and the belief that Winter always turns to Spring.



Installation at Nathan Cummings Foundation

On May 26, *Valor y Cambio* (#valorycambio), a participatory art installation and community currency project, had its New York City premiere at the 2019 Loaisaida Festival, followed by a summer residency that included collaborations with local businesses and other venues as part of *Pasado y Presente: Art After the Young Lords 1969-2019*.

The pesos were available through a refurbished ATM called a VyC machine, for *Valor y Cambio* (“Value and Change”) located at the Loaisaida Inc. Center. Par-

ticipants recorded their responses about what they value. After recording, the machine offered the pesos, which businesses accepted in exchange for some items. These archived recordings will be part of a documentary about the project.

Started by artist Frances Negrón-Muntaner and collaborator Sarabel Santos Negrón in Puerto Rico last February, *Valor y Cambio* raises the question of what communities value and introduces a community currency called pesos of Puerto Rico—named after the project’s birth-

place—as a means of change, in the sense of both money and social transformation. By combining art, storytelling, and solidarity economy principles, *Valor y Cambio* seeks to facilitate a broad conversation about what is a just economy and how to foster collective empowerment in the face of austerity and neoliberal policies. Through engaging with local communities and establishments that are willing to use the currency for a specific period of time, the project provides an experience about how the economy can better respond to the needs of most people. It also allows

participants to practice a different conception of wealth based not on extraction and profit, but full access to education, environmental protection, and racial and gender equity, among other fundamentals. Community currencies are increasingly used around the world to value the skills, stories, and talents of communities with limited access to the official currency. These currencies do not substitute the official one, but they enable communities to exchange work, time, and resources to meet their needs. Today, thousands of community currencies circulate in the world, including in the United States.

The peso has six denominations, each featuring a figure or community selected for their commitment to the project's four core values: solidarity, equity, justice, and creativity. They are: the siblings Gregoria, Celestina, and Rafael Cordero, pioneers of Puerto Rico's modern public education system; the abolitionist physician Ramón Emeterio Betances; feminist and labor organizer Luisa Capetillo; poet Julia de Burgos; human rights advocate and MLB Hall of Famer Roberto Clemente; and the eight communities of the Martín Peña Channel in San Juan.



Installation at the Loisaida Center

MAY 31th
JUN 30th

WE ACCEPT PESOS OF PUERTO RICO

SE ACEPTAN PESOS DE PUERTO RICO

CITY-WIDE ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES ACCEPTING THE PESO:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mil Mundos Libreria 2. The Loisaida Center 3. Teatro SEA 4. Teatro La Tea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Repertorio Español 6. Downtown Art 7. La Marqueta Retoña 8. No Longer Empty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. The LitBar 10. La Morada 11. Port Morris Distillery 12. Girls Club LES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Pregones PRTT 14. Museum of Reclaimed Urban Spaces (MORUS) 15. El Museo del Barrio 16. Essex St. Market
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Share what you value with the VyC machine at the Loisaida Center and obtain the PR Peso in exchange. Use the pesos for a limited time at participating venues around the city.
For more information, visit loisaida.org/contact-us/ and valorycambio.org.

Installation at the Loisaida Center



Urban intervention/interactive printmaking. Carved rubber (lifebuoy material), linoleum ink.

Scherezade is an interdisciplinary visual artist born in Santo Domingo, The Dominican Republic and based in Brooklyn, New York. Through her practice of drawing, painting, installation, sculpture, animated videos and public interventions, she creates contemporary allegories of history, colonization and politics. García's work frequently evokes memories of faraway home and the hopes and dreams that accompany planting roots in a new land. By tackling the collective memory as well as the ancestral memory in her public intervention and studio base practice, García presents a quasi-mythical portrait of migration and cultural colonization.

Scherezade's work is included in the permanent

collection of The Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington DC, El Museo del Barrio in NYC, The Housatonic Museum of Art in CT, and El Museo de Arte Moderno in Santo Domingo. She has exhibited at museums and art centers such as The Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington DC, El Museo del Barrio, NYC, The Newark Museum of Art in NJ, The Sugar Hill Museum, BRIC in Brooklyn, and others.

Artist Statement

The images carved in the rubber are of marine landscapes that aim to narrate the experience of the immigrants through time. These landscapes carved in the "back and forth" of the waves are tattooed in our human experience. The landscapes are carved in the rubber of the innertubes (connecting with my floating devices), and are presented as scrolls, suggesting the endlessly nature of our collective history, and our storytelling.

The "liquid highway" refers to the oceanic route, the road that can be interpreted as an obstacle or as an opportunity. The constant movement of the sea, in its "back and forth" immersion us into a universal connection whose fluidity defines our identities and life itself. The sea carries our ever evolving DNA, it carries our ancestral collective memory. Through the action of printmaking, the public has the opportunity of printing a little section of the landscape, and taking a souvenir of a history that unite us all, yet everybody prints/owns a "piece of the sea" which is unique and alludes to our individual experiences.



Image of visitor interacting with the printmaking.

Presente! The Young Lords in Loisaida

Libertad P. Guerra and Wilson Valentín Escobar



Announcement of the New York chapter of the Young Lords Organization in Tomkins Square Park, 1969. By Hiram Maristany

Beginning with their official and authoritative announcement at Tompkins Square Park on Saturday July 26, 1969, the founding of the Young Lords Party (YLP) represents a watershed historical moment in “New Rican” history in the Lower East Side (Loisaida) that allows us to make connections between the past and present. This history provokes us to project an idea of a new socially just world on behalf of a disenfranchised community still struggling for visibility, recognition, and respect on their own terms. The YLP’s works and actions were produced within a particular historical context, and as such, they bear the marks of that time and simultaneously encompass a zeitgeist of collaboration, liberation and aesthetic exploration; they also offer an expansive window of a community in action audaciously celebrating their cultural differences without apology.

A common thread is a community rich in history and imagination. These Latinx and Puerto Rican artists and activists used culture to recast themselves as agents of change who participated in combating self-hatred and shame of their cultural heritage. In the process of doing so, they also redefined neighborhood spaces, engaged in art-based community making, created community-based arts centers, and made, as Earl Lewis claims, “congregation out of segregation”.⁴

The cultural activism expressed in the Lower East Side took shape in a variety of forms that can be organized as a tripartite edifice:

1. The Theater of Struggle:

During the 1960s and 70s, the YLP used public spaces and public institutions as domains of struggle where they could enact new strategies that would inspire community to social action. Dramatic imagery, discourse, and bodily aesthetics took on over-the-top qualities that satirized conventional thinking and behavior, local government structures and the elite in the style of carnival. While the ultimate goal of the YLP was to transform the state and its institutions, the aesthetic quality of their approach was playful, emotional, and symbolic. The YLP rejected traditional avenues of party-driven change and espoused an exuberant activism that advocated for a new society and social structures.

2- Visible Loisaida:

The YLP intentionally enacted a cultural citizenship through public activities that fostered a sense of social interaction, public participation, cultural entertainment, and individual and communal belonging. Together, these public acts demonstrated a community embarking upon the process of placemaking that combated invisibility and social isolation through intentional acts that created a sense of public belonging.

3-Institution Building:

The YLP demonstrated that many existing institutions were structurally racist, sexist, and classist. Because of this inherent shortcoming, many aggrieved community members -including the majority of Puerto Ricans residing in New York City- were unable to benefit from the services offered by numerous institutions and social service agencies. A major YLP goal was to respond to these structural flaws and develop institutions that could adequately address the needs and desires of community members. One of those institutions was the New Rican Village (NRV), a cultural arts center, founded in 1976 by former Young Lord and Lower East Side branch chapter member, Eddie Figueroa.

Theatre of Struggle

For many years, Loisaida served as a refuge for numerous Puerto Rican individuals, artists, and organizations frustrated with and alienated by dominant identities and institutions. Given this history, the YLP felt that the residents and social activist institutions of Loisaida would be more receptive to their mission and spirit. The selection of the Lower East Side by the YLP as the birthplace of the party falls in line with the neighborhood's radical history and tradition, and actively inserts the group within a lineage of New York City-based urban resistance movements. In the words of Former Deputy Chairman Felipe Luciano, an original member of the Last Poets (1968), the Lower East Side was a burgeoning "place that represented the counterculture of New York City." At the time, "Puerto Ricans were political and stubborn, already fighting against gentrification. There was a sophistication and a political genius already operating in the Lower East Side, where as in El Barrio there was a social genius."

"Puerto Ricans were political and stubborn, already fighting against gentrification."

Felipe Luciano

When the Young Lords announced their presence at Tompkins Square Park on July 26, 1969, they used cultural practices to make their official announcement. They picked this day in order to commemorate the attack on the Moncada Barracks by Cuban rebels in 1953. Felipe Luciano, used his public speaking skills in aesthetic evangelization

to present his acclaimed poem, "Jíbaro, My Pretty Nigger," accompanied by conga drums before a Tompkins Square Park audience comprised of Black Panthers, Lower East Side residents and activists. African American verbal art tradition, of which Luciano drew from, had been used to engage community, implore evangelical persuasion, invoke a hidden code of double-entendre references for social change, and used dramatic oral style to communicate forward-looking, alternative epistemologies that cultivated critical thinking on everyday matters. Luciano's spoken word style combined this tradition with the Caribbean-based, Afro-diasporic troubadour style of rhyming stories in poetic form.

The founding nucleus of the Lords were a group consisting mostly of second and third generation Puerto Rican youth self-organized to improve the social conditions within their disenfranchised communities. Believing they had the capacity to bring about social transformation was simply historic; it revealed a decolonial consciousness with the competence and commitment to undertake the complicated task and responsibility of effectuating social change, and thus proactively shape their future. In essence, this cadre of youth took it upon themselves to initiate change and not wait for an invitation from New York City elites and power brokers; the dire conditions and the acute social neglect warranted immediate action. Weary of false promises uttered by politicians, and alienated by the inherent failures of institutional racism, sexism, and classism, along with the inadequacies of public policy to correctly address the needs of their community, the YLP declared their commitment to ad-



Young Lords' Lower East Side chapter, marching for the liberation of Carlos Feliciano. 1971. Photo by Máximo Colón.

vocating for social change, community redevelopment, and to proactively reclaim public space as a public display of power.

During the initial stage of the YLP, they worked at the Black Panther headquarters office at Christodora House, located at 143 Avenue B, directly across from Tompkins Square Park, an important gathering space for local residents and progressive activists throughout New York City. While the City of New York owned and operated the building, it never fully utilized every floor. In the late 1960's, various community-based and local social service organizations moved in; this included the regional headquarters of the Black Panthers. According to unofficial accounts, the YLP operated out of the Black Panther office during their early days. This, however, was short-lived as the Black Panther Party was under police surveillance and the Christodora office had been raided in 1969. Prior to this raid, members of the YLP decided to open their own office in the Lower East Side at 256 East 3rd Street, between Avenues B and C, only doors away from the legendary Nuyorican Poets Café.

The YLP was the only national, Latinx group who had direct access and trust with the Panthers, a collaboration that speaks to the important and long-standing Afro-diasporic connections already existing between both communities. This close relationship and solidarity, which was also a by-product of the segregated housing policies that forced many Puerto Ricans and African Americans to live side-by-side within particular neighborhoods, is evident in the work of documentary photographer Hiram Maristany, a member of the YLP who shot the seminal photos of their demonstrations for their newspaper *Palante*.

Maristany's work captures a "theatre of struggle,"² as noted by Carlito Rovira, a Lower East Side branch member of the YLP, that

envisioned the street as a canvass for dramatic and democratic participation. Public gatherings "send an electricity to those who are powerless," combat a psychology of oppression, and offer a "a glimpse of the power that [Puerto Ricans] have." Within these public gatherings, protests became collective art-making expressions that allowed for a sense of community to develop amidst the drama of demonstration. By going out in public to communicate their ideas, enact cultural practices, partake in communal celebrations, and contribute to political discourses and activities, community members, artists, and activists also created a space to celebrate their marginalized identities and cultural practices, where a solidarity of difference was fostered that directly confronted issues of racism and classism in a manner that harkens back to carnival celebrations. And because public space is a contested terrain, the takeover of the streets via public gatherings and artworks became interpreted as political acts and an affront to routine political practices. Thus the public displays of power expressed through the arts and foregrounded by the YLP became a focal point in which to enact a cultural citizenship: an idea that directly acknowledges how cultural difference from dominant norms should not be politically penalized or diminished. Public expressions allowed for a sense of community to develop, and celebrate their cultural identities in a manner that resembles theatrical political drama. Taken together, these dynamics reveal the relationships between self-expression, personal transformation, and the arts as a means to revitalize various dilapidated New York City neighborhoods, and to foster a cultural and community

renaissance molded around new diasporic identities.

Sylvia Rivera (1951–2002)

"They gave us a lot of respect. It was a fabulous feeling for me to be myself – being part of the Young Lords as a drag queen – and my organization [STAR: Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries] being part of the Young Lords."³

In the quote above renowned Stonewall-uprising veteran, Sylvia Rivera, summarized the intersection of diverse political liberation struggles during the Vietnam War years. Black, gay, feminists, Puerto Rican, Native American, Chican@/Mexican revolutionaries blended in an unlikely and heady brew of human solidarity, ideological affinity and conflict, political expediency, necessity and survival. One of the things many of these different liberation movements had in common was a forced kinship, through being blacklisted and harassed by the



Video still of Sylvia Rivera. *Y'all Better Quiet Down*, original authorized video, 1973 Gay Pride Rally, NYC.

United States' government surveillance and policing apparatus. This experience brought together an alliance that allowed YLP members to understand the congruent struggles between gay and transgender community members with their own and thus, stand in solidarity with them. This explains why Carlito Rovira, a Lower East Side branch member, served as Sylvia Rivera's bodyguard. Given the hostility and threats she regularly encountered, including sexism, homophobia and disrespect, these challenges were identified as similar to the everyday struggles Young Lord members sought to challenge and transform.

This solidarity between STAR and the YLP was also expressed publicly. One of the first places STAR unfurled their banner in public was at a mass demonstration of the YLP in East Harlem against police repression in the fall of 1970. The YLP welcomed them and it opened up space for an internal Gay Caucus within the party and to generate unity with the Gay Liberation Front and Third World Gay Liberation,

the first openly Gay radical group of color in NY. Minister of Information, Pablo "Yoruba" Guzmán, is quoted as saying "our struggle was one and the same," and Denise Vélez, states: "members of the women's caucus were key in the founding of a Gay and Lesbian caucus within the Lords. We fought against racism, alongside the Panthers, and for the first time, young Afro-Latinas could be proud of their heritage."

Sylvia Rivera, drag queen, transgender revolutionary, Civil Rights activist, Vietnam War opponent, and Young Lord, who, as a teenager, survived living on the mean streets of New York City, was at the center of it all.

Visible Loisaída

The photo documentation of Máximo Colón, a photographer, activist, and former Lower East Side resident, is an important resource about the YLP's evolution and practices. In order to record how a community occupies, claims, and forges community in public spaces, Colón's im-

ages demonstrate how an engaged observer, through the lens of his camera, is unified with the subjects and the issues being documented. Colón captures the dynamism of a segregated community that makes congregation through their intentional struggles to occupy and claim public spaces. His images demonstrate a community embarking upon the process of placemaking that combats invisibility and social isolation through calculated acts that create a sense of public belonging.

Colón was born in Arecibo, Puerto Rico but having earned his colors in the storied streets of the Upper West Side, Máximo's images transport eyes and brains to a place where photo-technique, aesthetic purpose, and ideological commitment are one and the same thing. They also imbue the observer with a hunger for more, because there is something magical in the way he picks up those exact moments where popular street culture is not only played out, but also transmitted and preserved. Máximo's images complicate understandings of tradi-



Binbo Rivas, coiner of the term 'Loisaída', performing at geodesic dome by CHARAS, 1975. Photo by Máximo Colón.

tion and folklore as static modes of culture. In his work, tradition is highlighted as an active, urbane, public and transparent reproduction of knowledge in a permanent and transcendent present tense. And so important figures like Sammy Tanco is eternally young, Mon Rivera is eternally here, Bimbo Rivas is eternally rhyming off, and Tato Laviera is eternally the street organizer and lexical curator of words on the page.

Máximo Colón did not want to be an artist, he did not care about that, and he did not care about the money; he still does not. He wanted his work to be a tool for 'the movement', to be a lobbyist for his people, to change the world, to advance education, housing, economic and social opportunities; to raise compassion through his short-fused and hot-tempered camera eye.

The nucleus for creative interventions occurred on the streets through public displays of power, but also within new, alternative institutions such as CHARAS/ El Bohio and the New Rican Village (NRV). Before Loisaida became synonymous with gentrification, it was associated with urban blight, where many abandoned buildings and vacant lots adorned most of the neighborhood. At the time, CHARAS grew out of the Real Great Society, which was first developed in

the mid-1960s by former gang members Chino García, Armando Pérez, Angelo González, Jr., Bimbo Rivas, Rabbit Nazario, and Papo Giordani.⁴ Similar to the Lords -- which was also developed by former gang members -- CHARAS sought to bring about change within the Loisaida community. Prior to taking over their 605 East 9th street location in the early 80's, they undertook a number of community-based initiatives, including arts programming and a housing collaboration with world-renowned futurist engineer, R. Buckminster Fuller, to adapt geodesic domes to the needs of poor communities and teach alternative methods of housing. These geodesic domes were frequently spotted in vacant lots throughout Loisaida and were also used to stage cultural events; they became iconic signifiers of an organically driven home-steading movement, community resistance, and revitalization were readapted as an active, architectural cultural artifact that doubled as a historical relic of an important moment within Loisaida history.

Another central figure in helping to create a "visible Loisaida" is the late poet, playwright and activist, Jesús Abraham "Tato" Laviera (1950-2013). Born in the barrio of Santurce in San Juan, P.R., he and his family moved to the Low-



Máximo Colón, *Las Caras Lindas*, 1975. (photo of Fiesta Loiza Aldea on Lower East S



Máximo Colón, *Fiesta Loíza Aldea on Lower East Side, 1975*. (photo of Tato Laviera dancing)

er East Side when he was a child. As a young adult, he became involved in various social and political causes within the neighborhood, where he showed an early knack for activism and organizing. This would prove to serve as an important foundation for his creative imagination and artistic code. According to Elizabeth Colón, a close friend of Laviera since they were both teenagers, “[Tato’s] poetry and creativity came from his involvement and his participation in the community’s struggle, growing up on the Lower East Side, seeing the abuses and how others who were in charge had the power to intervene and did not. He deeply understood the need of people to participate in their future.”⁵

Tato’s talents as an “in the trenches” organizer grew in stature and influence; he worked with the likes of Doña Petra Santiago, Ernesto Martínez, Dora Collazo-Levy, and other Loísaída icons. Locals knew Tato first as a community powerhouse who became a leader among a long list of important institutions and events: the director of the Association of Community Services Centers, Inc., the creator of Salsa at Szolds (the precursor to the Loísaída Festival); the President of New Jíbaro Democrats - the official Party organization in Part C of the 63rd Assembly District; a strong force behind the Lower East Side Loíza Aldea Celebration; a founding member of the Coalition for Human Housing and

the Coalition for Housing Development Corporation; and, the architect behind the creation of Loísaída Inc. If this weren’t enough, Laviera also directed the University of the Streets, an educational project that helped adults obtain a high school diploma and attend college.

In the late 1970s, Laviera became a full-time poet. *La Carreta Made a U-Turn*, his first poetry book, published in 1979 by Arte Público Press, received much praise. His second book *Enclave* (1981) made him the first Hispanic author to win the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation, and poems from his third publication, *AmeRícan* (1986), have been included in more than thirty anthologies.

His oeuvre revolves around the development of an identity that is inclusive of bilingualism and biculturalism, and contributes to the establishment of Afro-Caribbean traditions that imbue poetry with orality and musicality. Laviera’s poetry, according to Carmen Dolores Hernández, “is a documentation of injustices, of painful dualities, of uncertainties; it is also a testimony of the strength of the Puerto Ricans in New York who have defended their distinctness.”



Eddie Figueroa at the New Rican Village, circa 1976. Photo by J.Carrero.

is best reflected in the New Rican Village's Cultural Arts Center, the multi-disciplinary arts space that housed live music, poetry, theater, dance, and the visual arts. Founded in 1976 by the former Young Lord Eddie Figueroa (1947-1990) at 101 Avenue A, it was established as a verification of artists' commitment to community and personal renewal through cultural expression. It was an artistic home and sanctuary for Puerto Rican and Latina/o arts and artists in New York during a time when they had limited access to artistic venues to experiment, workshop, and present their artistic craft.

Eddie Figueroa was a larger than life figure who envisioned artistic practice as a means of individual and social emancipation. A former member of the Lower East Side chapter of the YLP, and New York University student who studied theatre and psychology, Figueroa was adept at connecting the internal world with social reality. As someone who was unafraid to speak his mind, even against some of the positions espoused by the YLP, he valued independent thought and found refuge in the arts to embody and envision a sense of a liberated consciousness and being. Using some of the organizing skills developed through his affiliation with the Lords, Figueroa fused his talents in the arts and political organizing by opening the NRV at a time when there were few art spaces that welcomed forward-looking aesthetic exploration. Believing that artistic expression created both individual and social change, Figueroa was a staunch advocate and practitioner of art and activism, and saw the two as entwined.



..... poster of facade of NRV, circa 1976.

Figueroa's achievements were numerous and included the successful collaboration with the late Joseph Papp, the leading public arts organizer of New York City and founder of the Public Theater and Shakespeare in the Park, where he and other artists of the NRV performed a mobile public arts tour as part of their commitment to bringing "live art to the people." His acting skills, acute oratory and organizing talents, along with his ability to envision social justice and liberation through creative expres-

sion, centered Figueroa as a pivotal figure to laying important groundwork in the Lower East Side, and for the Latina/o community in New York City overall.

Institution Building

Also important to our understanding of the YLP are the cultural imaginations and actions of what Wilson Valentín-Escobar calls a new "Latin@ cultural left" that established non-profit cultural arts institutions, organized public arts programming and educational workshops, and spear-headed aesthetic changes within a variety of mediums beginning in the 1960s and 70s. This

The goal of the NRV was to foster an avant-garde sensibility of artistic collaboration and experimentation with artists of different mediums and genres to create an innovative artistic synergy that fused new identities with fresh artistic imaginations. The activities that emerged from the NRV gave birth to a Latinx, avant-garde Cul-

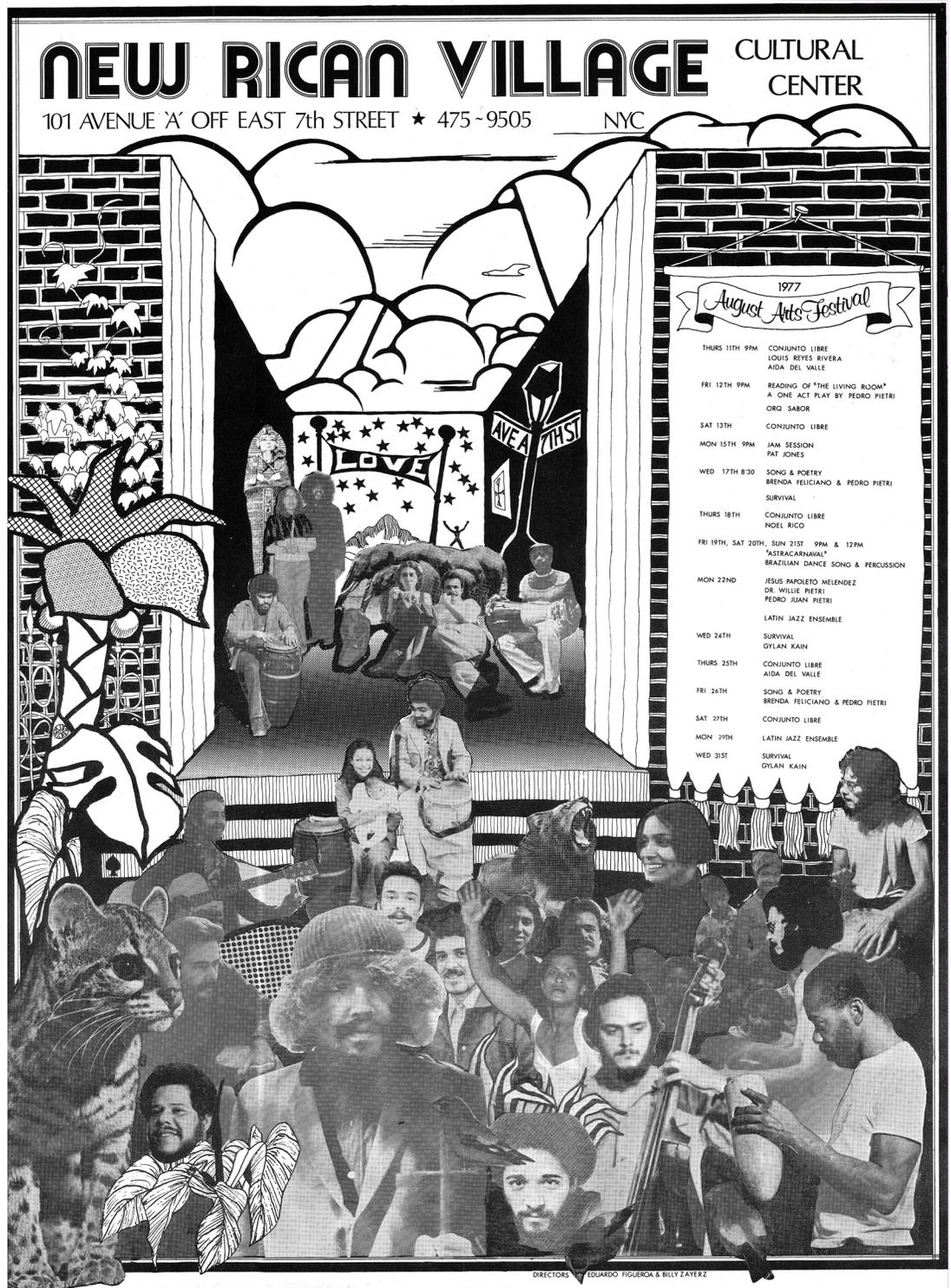
tural Renaissance. Envisioning themselves as avant-garde artists, Figueroa, Pedro Pietri, Sandra María Esteves, Andy and Jerry González, Ana Ramos, Willie Figueroa, Mario Rivera, and the numerous other working-class artists at the NRV understood that the arts had the capacity to transcend time and space and transfer them into a new world separated from their current social marginalization. Creativity had the capacity to bring participants and spectators to exist in a different temporal and spatial reality, and thus, this arts center also doubled as an artistic embassy of refuge, embedded in a different experience that housed the original, conceptual art project, El Puerto Rican Embassy.

To generate interest and draw the public to the NRV Arts Center, Figueroa, like other arts institutions, relied on a community of important artists who designed posters and graphics materials to reach out to community members. Some of these graphic artists and illustrators include Sandra María Esteves, Vicente "Chente" Morales, Carlos Osorio, Néstor Otero, Manny Rivera, and Jorge Soto, among others. Their work showcases how artists mediate between their subjectivities and their environments, and illustrate a working-class impressionism that pushes forward a new visuality of the city, of themselves, of their communities, and their neighborhoods. These are artworks that announce, declare, and document activities of everyday life while alerting residents of NRV cultural activities that foster

a sense of entertainment, belonging and placemaking. The posters, amidst their public display at lampposts, fire hydrants, and/or storefront windows and community bulletin boards, are inexpensive pieces of art that provide accessibility to a community yearning for access to creative expression. As graphic artworks, designed by some of the premiere visual artists of New York City, they helped foster a visual identity to the NRV

that corresponded to its avant-garde sensibilities and vision.

One of Figueroa's chief collaborators and visionaries was the late Reverend Pedro Pietri (1944-2004). Dubbed the "Sun Ra of Puerto Rican Letters" and the "Poet Laureate of the Young Lords Party," Pedro Juan Pietri embodied the emerging sensibility of a generation of Puerto Ricans with one foot planted in



Sandra María Esteves, *New Rican Village*, 1977.

the rhythms and culture of Puerto Rico and the other in a multicultural/ethnic urban ethos of New York City. Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico in 1944 and raised in Harlem, Pietri created a hybrid sensibility that merged decidedly Puerto Rican elements with those found on the streets and barrios of New York City. A poet, playwright and performer of prolific talent, Pietri stands out as one of the premiere exemplars of a distinctly Nuyorican aesthetic and has become a seminal figure in both the history of Puerto Rican letters and that of the downtown poetry scene in New York. Though often humorous, Pietri's work was also deeply political, like the performance piece, "El Puerto Rican Embassy," which he staged throughout New York with the mixed-media artist, Adál Maldonado. This piece included "The Spanglish National Anthem," and "Puerto Rican Passports."

In a 1996 interview with the New York Times, Pietri stated, "This is about proclaiming the whole thing about being sovereign without the trials and tribulations of armed conflict." "You don't have to leave or go anywhere. You don't have to be a radical or wear a beret. You just have to have a passport."

Puerto Rican Embassy

El Embassy is a mixed-media art response to the failures of traditional, institutional structures that are unable to seriously address colonialism and its personal, social, and political effects upon the Puerto Rican community and its Diaspora. El Embassy is a satirical, metaphysical vision that doubles as a phantom of decolonial, liberatory consciousness. It is currently housed in a spurious state apparatus called the Spirit Republic of Puerto Rico. The spirit component transcends three-dimensional existence and brings to the fore the reimagining of a community diffused throughout various locations.⁶

Location does not define a nation, as imagined and understood by Eddie Figueroa, Pedro Pietri, and Adál Maldonado, the three founding members of El Embassy. "The Puerto Rican Embassy is a concept, it's an idea, it's not a physical location. We're dealing with concepts that are beyond geography, beyond three dimensions. With the Puerto Rican Embassy and the conception of the Spirit Republic of Greater Puerto Rico, we're declaring our independence... The spirit republic is a free place. So we can do away with plebiscites and voting, because the only person that you should be voting for is yourself."

As such, El Puerto Rican Embassy allows for one to live in cultural exile wherever one lives and to not be bound by geography. This is realized through the various art projects developed by mixed-media, surrealist artist and cultural ambassador, Adál Maldonado, that include the

audacious El Passport, El Currency, El Post Stamp, El Map of El Spirit Republic de Puerto Rico, the Out of Focus Nuyorican blurred headshots, and the 13-minute video, West Side Story in Redux. Adal's work calls attention to the ability of artistic interventions to disrupt false social realities and engage in decolonial social action through cultural practices. In essence, art takes the lead to address complex political dilemmas.

The YLP and the Loisaída community have a history to tell that has been silenced for too long, distorted, and partially forgotten. Our goal has been to offer a counternarrative to the image of a passive and resigned community; rather, we emphasize the cultural and political agency of local history makers, and ground our research in the accounts of numerous artists and YLP activists. In these pages we have interwoven these perspectives with corroborating photographs and documents that collectively construct the distinctive character and rich history of Loisaída.

Today, as in 1969, Ahora/Now is always the right time for change and to proclaim ¡Presente!



Adal, *El Puerto Rican Embassy*, mixed media installation, 2015.

1. Earl Lewis, *In their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth Century Norfolk* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 90.
2. Quote from oral history interview with Carlito Rovira by Wilson Valentin- Escobar and Libertad Guerra.
3. Section excerpted and edited from: <http://www.motleymoose.com/diary/1641/we-were-young-lords-not-young-ladies>
4. CHARAS is an acronym named after the organization's founders: Carlos Chino García, Humberto, Angelo, Roy, Anthony, and Sal Armando Pérez, and Roberto Nazario. Charas/ El Bohío became the umbrella term for the PS 64 building they appropriated with Adopt-A-Building through sweat equity organizing and the different community and cultural organizations it housed.
5. Edited Excerpts from: "Tato Laviera, 63, Poet of Nuyorican School" by David González, *New York Times*: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/06/arts/tato-laviera-nuyorican-poet-dies-at-63.html>; and *Tato Laviera Bio* by Centro De Estudios Puer-torriqueños: <http://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/tato-laviera-bio>
6. Section excerpted and edited from: <http://edmorales.net/eddie-figueroa-and-the-puerto-rican-imaginary>

AFTERWORD

Art and Revolution

Johanna Fernández, PhD

Pasado y Presente: *Art After the Young Lords* put wind in our sails. Its March 2019 opening came in the context of rising white supremacy in the continental United States and a man-made human rights catastrophe in the US-Mexico border. It also came in the time of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico and the epic political awakening created by the fallout of imperial rule and disaster capitalism on the island. The exhibit's curatorial frame on the Young Lords' impact and legacy was pitch perfect.

True to form, life imitated art. In the context of these events, the history of the Young Lords assumed even greater import. To this end, the Young Lords 50th Anniversary organizing committee adapted the exhibit's title: *The Young Lords New York @ 50: Activism, Past and Present*.

Fifty years ago, this generation of socialist youth made it their top priority to expose US imperialism in Puerto

Rico. Despite the violent political repression that defined Puerto Rican life since the 1930s, the Young Lords alongside others broke through the taboo of political activity; reclaimed the Puerto

Rican flag and restored its powerful cultural and political meaning. They set their sights on Puerto Rican independence and freedom for everyone, everywhere.

The story of the Young Lords is intoxicating to many because it resonates with the suffering and aspirations of millions of young people who are outsiders in America. Like the children of NAFTA, who migrated from Mexico and other parts of the Caribbean and Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s, the Young Lords were the sons and daughters of a vast migration from Puerto Rico to cities like New York, Chicago and Philadelphia that was also fueled by US-led economic policy: Operation Bootstrap. Like many today, the Young Lords also underwent the crucible of migration as children. The Young Lords inspire because they gave their generation the language and analysis to make sense of the trauma produced by the large-scale economic and political forces that massively displaced their parents from their homeland.



**The Young Lords Party
50th Anniversary
New York**

July 26, 2019 6PM - 9PM

 Schomburg Center
for Research
in Black Culture
New York Public Library

515 Malcolm X Blvd, New York, NY 10037

www.younglordsny.org #YoungLords50NY YoungLords50NY@gmail.com

Design by William Córdova

Like migrants today, Puerto Ricans were blamed for the problems of American society. They were depicted as knife-wielding criminals and junkies on the one hand, but also as mild-mannered people who could be pushed, around on the other. But the Young Lords changed this trope. Their intrepid organizing campaigns, literature, bold political analysis, and media savvy reclaimed the dignity of New York's hardest-working and most exploited workers and replaced stereotypes with powerful images of radical, strategic, and articulate militancy. As Barry Gottehrer, Mayor Lindsay's assistant, told me in an interview, the Young Lords couldn't be placated with antipoverty money, and you couldn't mess with them either. They took over a church and a hospital and made out like bandits on the evening news. And in their quest, they discovered and asserted in public discourse the distinctiveness of their identity in the United States.

Fascination with the Young Lords Party is rooted in its dramatic, smart, even humorous campaigns and strategic use of media. The Party's inventive protests made even its haters take a second look; it made known its collective persona, built its ranks and reputation, and broadened support for its causes. The Young Lords did the work of black Twitter in the streets.

They exposed police brutality and fought police repression in the streets. They honed in on the city's jails deplorable conditions; put forward demands for prisoners' rights; and compelled the mayor to initiate the city's first municipal investigation of the arrest of one of their own and the prison conditions that led to his death. Ahead of their time, they formed part of the eras prisoner's rights movement, and exposed imprisonment as a tool of repression against radicals, the poor, the black and the brown. They also believed that human rights are most important when we are most vulnerable and most hu-

man— when we are sick—and demanded free healthcare for all. In the context of the city's larger decentralized health rights movement, they drafted the first-known patient bill of rights in collaboration with hospital workers and medical staff at Lincoln.

The Young Lords were also determined to bring into the light of day conversations that had once been confined to hushed whispers among Puerto Ricans and other Latinos. They denounced antiblack racism in Puerto Rico and Latin America and theorized its root causes. The Young Lords inspire because they defied major social taboos. They denounced their parents' attempts to sever, in the public sphere, any associations between Puerto Ricans and black Americans. But the Young Lords did more. They embraced the politics of the most persecuted and maligned black power group of the 1960s and adopted its organizational model. Undeterred by fear, and determined in their hearts to right the wrongs of society, they barreled into a relationship with the "least of these"—the Black Panther Party. Although they didn't know it at the time, they were making common cause with the era's most iconic organization.

They built a profoundly multiethnic movement: approximately 25 percent of their members were black American, and between 5 and 8 percent were non-Puerto Rican Latinxs, among them Cubans, Dominicans, Mexicans, Panamanians, and Colombians. The Young Lords' membership reflected the demographic character of a postmodern city, of which New York and Los Angeles are today the best expressions. They were among the first to use the term "Latino" based on common currents in the history and politics of the people of Latin America and their mass displacement from their homelands as a result of U.S. economic and imperial policies on that continent.

The Young Lords challenged machismo, the oppressive character

of the family, and the virginal discourse of the church. Like radicals before them, the women of the Young Lords theorized intersectionality before it became a thing. At the same time, they were attentive to the primacy of class structures and grounded their analysis of gender inequality in a structural critique of the family, capitalism, and colonialism. And like most radicals active across the world since the second half of the 19th century, the Young Lords studied Marxism and identified socialism as an alternative to capitalism.

Beyond all these things, the Young Lords helped incubate the Nuyorican Arts movement and situate the significance of art in society. At an occupied church in East Harlem, the Young Lords created a stage for artists who grasped the significance of art, both as a vehicle of resistance and an expression of humanity. At the occupied church, the Young Lords' expansive vision of art making broadened an emerging struggle of civil rights in the arts and helped redefine the goals of a cohort of activist artists toward independent art spaces and institution building. Together, these artists and revolutionaries understood that the politics of cultural production—of who has access to it and who doesn't, of representations of subjugated people in art, and the absence of some artists and not others in the art world—is bound up with the struggle for human liberation.

In this moment of joint struggle, these actors prefigured the many possibilities for the arts in a new society: that a radical redistribution of time and resources could unleash the creative capacity and humanity of all.

May a new generation of visionaries fight for the highest aspirations of humanity.

Johanna Fernández, PhD, is the author of *The Young Lords: A Radical History*



Juan Sanchez, *Tres Banderas*, 1988



Maximo Colón, *Plaza Borinquena, Bronx NY*, 1972



Loisaída Center logo for Presente Exhibition, 2015.

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