



SWING FORWARD WHILE SWAYING BACK

*Presented by Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, Bronx Council on the Arts,
and the Bronx Arts Alliance*

**On view from October 3 to December 5, 2018
at the Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos in the Bronx**

**Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos, 450 Grand Concourse at 149th Street
Room C-190, Bronx, NY 10451**

In *Swing Forward While Swaying Back* Bronx artists realize collaborative installations that provocatively and poetically challenge their audiences. Each project simultaneously draws on rich and varied art, activist, and cultural histories to search for something beyond itself - whether in relation to economies of generosity and exchange, practical information about immigration rights, or complex conversations about cultural heritage.

“When I was drawing connections between the work by the artists in this exhibition, I was reflecting on Elaine Scarey’s book *On Beauty and Being Just*,” says **curator, Amanda McDonald Crowley**. “Scarey writes: ‘[mental life] is porous, open to air and light, swings forward while swaying back, scatters its stripes in all directions and delights to find itself beached beside something invented only that morning or instead standing beside an alter from three millennia ago.’ It struck me that these Bronx artists all find beauty in their objective to make work that clearly positions itself with a goal to ensure a more just future, but they all also look to their varied pasts to draw connections and to stay grounded in the present.”

The artists in *Swing Forward While Swaying Back* collaborate with their audiences and with other artists to ‘complete’ their works. It is an exhibition that is about collaboration and invites participation.

Alicia Grullón, serves up empanada and knowledge with her project *¡Empanar!* – a mobile art project working off Bronx street food culture and traditions from El Taller Gráfico Popular (initially realized as a commission with the Bronx River Art Center). The initial project has been realized as a public performance in Bronx Parks.

Blanka Amezkua pays tribute to 43 male students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College who were forcibly taken then disappeared in the State of Guerrero, Mexico on September 26, 2014. She has three interconnected works in the exhibition: **43 Para Ellos / 43 for them**, is a photo documentation of pieces that were created through January-February 2015, during 43 consecutive days, in different locations; 1-40 were created in Athens, Greece, and 3 in Belgium; **¡Vivos se los llevaron, vivos los queremos!** is an on site mixed media installation with 43 floating figures; and a list of the names of 43 disappeared students stenciled on paper completes the installation.

Throughout the exhibition **Fran Ilich’s *Diego de la Vega Coffee Co-op: Against the Walls of Capital*** will offer up organic coffee sourced locally in Chiapas from Zapatista autonomous farms. Working with **Gabriela Ceja** and whoever wants to join in, Ilich will set up shop in the Gallery where cups of coffee can be traded for alternative currency, barter, and time deposits

(as well, as voluntary money donations). Visitors can also engage with the ancient economic game ritual of Patolli. The goal of the project is to connect anti-capitalist social movements in New York City with their pairs in Chiapas to create a horizontal financial flow. **Love and Labor**, a film directed by **Stephanie Andreou & Sarah Keeling**, about Ilich and Ceja and their work together to create a life that supports their activist efforts will also screen in the gallery.

In her **Domino Slop** works **Francheska Alcantara** connects gesture, ritual, and myth by utilizing Hispano cuba soap to re-interpret the game of dominoes, a cultural staple in the Caribbean and the Diaspora. This particular soap is an essential signifier within Alcantara's practice as it holds connotations to black and brown bodies and more specifically to women's everyday "feminine hygiene routine". Her 2017 performance **South Bronx Marking** takes these ideas and layers them with a performance addressing gentrification in the Bronx. The piece started in the Mott Haven neighborhood in the South Bronx, progressed along the Grand Concourse (passing by Longwood Art Gallery at Hostos) and finishing at 163rd (Bronx Museum of the Arts). The soap becomes an element to make space and bring symbolic cleansing to communities affected by displacement.

Walter Cruz's, *The Only Way Out Is Through* - a site specific wall mural and installation - invites audience members to wear his jackets. Cruz has adorned nearly every jacket he owns with statements of affirmation and meditation - intended as a way to inject positivity into the public spaces he frequents inhabited by Black and Brown people; as reminders to hold ourselves in light. Bronx artist **Art Jones** will be present at the opening to work with Walter to complete the installation, adding polaroids of audience members wearing his jackets, contributing to his ongoing project to provoke positive action and dialogue.

Yelaine Rodriguez's *Maman Brigitte, We are here, because you were there*, a series of wearable art and photographs of shot in Cuba by Rodriguez's collaborator Alexandra Muñoz, is part of a larger body of work in which Rodriguez sources syncretic religions and traditions founds in African Diasporic Communities, such as Voodoo and Santeria. In this serie she explores death loa in Voodoo - Maman Brigitte. Rodriguez explores representations of identity and race in her work, as well as problematic roles of women in historical references by celebrating shared experiences of women of color. Rodriguez will work with Bronx artists **Melanie Gonzales** and **Benton C Bainbridge** to stage a performance for the closing of the exhibition on December 5.

The exhibition is realized by Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture and hosted at Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos, in partnership with with Bronx Council on the Arts and the Bronx Arts Alliance. Funding for **Swing Forward While Swaying Back** comes from the Hostos Community College Foundation, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. Additional support is provided by the Bronx Council on the Arts. Bronx Council on the Arts is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; Arts Midwest and the National Endowment for the Arts; and City Council members Andrew Cohen and Mark Gjonaj. Also supported in part by the Booth Ferris Foundation, New Yankee Stadium Community Benefits Fund, Hispanic Federation, the City of New York, and the Department of Youth and Community Development. Special thanks to Hostos Community College and the Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture for their support.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Opening Reception

Wednesday October 3

5:30 - 8:30pm

Opening Reception with artists' performances and interventions:

- **Alicia Grullón** will distribute empanada along with the Broadsheet that is part of the ***Empanar!*** Installation. The broadsheet provides information to immigrants on their rights and where to seek counsel;
- Bronx artist **Art Jones** will be present at the opening to work with **Walter Cruz** to complete the installation *The Only Way Out Is Through*, adding polaroids of audience members wearing Cruz's jackets, contributing to Cruz's ongoing project to provoke positive action and dialogue;
- **Fran Ilich** in collaboration with **Gabriela Ceja** will activate the *Diego de la Vega Coffee Co-op: Against the Walls of Capital*, serving coffee and inviting audience members to join the Coffee Coop in Longwood Gallery @Hostos.

Diego de la Vega Coffee Coop Activations

Wednesday October 17, 31; November 28

5:00 - 7:00 pm

Diego de la Vega Coffee Coop: Against the Walls of Capital

Every other Wednesday evening, the **Diego de la Vega Experimental Economies and Finance research group** will host open meetings in response to a gift of 50 kgs of Zapatista coffee from Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional to find paths to organize, resist and create alternatives Against the Walls of Capital.

* Zapatista farm workers gave migrant collective in the USA over 2 tons of such coffee.

A Film Screening of ***Love and Labor*** will take place on October 31, 5:00 – 7:00 pm.

Filmmakers Stephanie Andreou & Sarah Keeling will be present.

Closing Reception

Wednesday December 5

5:30 - 8:30pm

Closing Reception with performance directed by Yelaine Rodriguez in collaboration with Melanie Gonzalez and Benton C Bainbridge.

ARTIST BIOS:

Alicia Grullón creates work that transforms how community and history are experienced. She uses true narratives and situations where power relations or identity are in question. Grullon is interested in exploring encounters between people and how they are locations where issues of race, class, gender, and activism open. What her role is as artist in the community and how art can actively serve community are questions she reconsiders when developing projects. Inspired by citizen action movements, her response to current events or social issues comes from an impulse to use art as chronicle and witness. Grullon pays particular attention to the intersections of photography, video and performance and how the work borders between reality and theatricality, the staged and the documented. She has exhibited at El Museo del Barrio, Bronx Museum of the Arts, Socrates Sculpture Park, Marcone and BRIC Galleries. She's participated in Performa 11, Art in Odd Places, and in the Artists Files with A Blade of Grass Foundation. Her work has been funded by Franklin Furnace Archives, The Puffin Foundation, Department of Cultural Affairs, Bronx Council of the Arts, and the Crompton Foundation. Residencies include: Bronx Museum, Korea Arts Council, Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts and Migrating Academies in Kassel, Germany.

Blanka Amezkua: Artist. Cultural. Promoter. Educator: Amezkua was formally trained as a painter. She studied in Florence, Italy and received her B.A. from California State University, Fresno. Recipient of the BRIO award from the Bronx Council on the Arts in 2007, she initiated an artist-run project called the *Bronx Blue Bedroom Project* in 2008. In 2010, BBBP's two-year trajectory was included in *Greater New York: 5 Year Review* at MoMA-PS 1 and *Alternative Histories* at Exit Art. Between 2010–2016 she lived in Athens, Greece. She currently runs AAA3A (Alexander Avenue Apartment 3A), an artist space in her living room on Alexander Avenue in Mott Haven, South Bronx.

Fran Ilich is an artist and writer based in New York City who works in the theory and practice of narrative media, experimental economies and finance, and hacktivism. He is the author of several award-winning novels, a monograph on narrative and ideology, and numerous works of narrative media that range from interactive web telenovelas, experimental theater, alternate reality games, and utopian experiments in social organization that link agriculture and art. In his recent project, Aridoamérica Winter Plan, he turned a storefront space in Williamsburg into a neighborhood coffee co-op with its own micro-economy, for a solo exhibition funded by ISCP at El Museo de Los Sures. He was a fellow at Eyebeam and A Blade of Grass. he has produced work for exhibitions or projects of the New School's Vera List Center for Art and Politics, No Longer Empty and others. He was Visiting Lecturer at the Literature Department of the University of California San Diego and director of the Literature Department at Centro Cultural Tijuana. He participated in Berlinale Talent Campus, Transmediale, ARCO, Documenta, EZLN's Festival Mundial de la Digna Rabia, Other Futures (Amsterdam), Antidoto (Sao Paulo), The Economist Summit Mexico. Has shown work at the Walker Art Center, Creative Time Living as Form, IAGO (Oaxaca), and others.

Francheska Alcantara is captivated by the connection between gesture, ritual, and myth as they constantly mutate within Caribbean culture and the diaspora. By this she means, she has a particular interest in interrogating interactions performed within the realm of domestic life that have specific social meaning in this culture; it is in these interactions that cultural norms and traditions live. Alcantara's aim is to utilize the subjective experience that resides in this interplay to explore slippages where reality is never grounded or congealed.

Walter Cruz is a dreamer, creator and collaborator who believes in the power of a community-based artistic practice. Cruz's passions for design and the arts push him to create work that reflects his African diaspora roots and experiences living in the U.S. When not creating new work, Walter serves as teaching artist in NYC and as the graphic designer for the Black Alliance for Just Immigration. Cruz has exhibited both nationally and internationally. Currently his work can be viewed in Los Angeles at the Center for Political Graphics and at the Museum of the City of New York, with upcoming shows at the Longwood Gallery in The Bronx and at Columbia University in Manhattan. Above all, Walter's motivation is to continue creating work in which Black and brown folks can see themselves with the objective to complicate the narratives of his peoples.

Yelaine Rodriguez is an Afro- Dominican-American Artist, Educator, & Independent Curator. Her work examines self-identity; a practice that debates problematic women roles in historical references and the shared experiences of women of color. She utilizes the idea of being "the other", by exploring the misguided information formed by the spaces created of having been raised in two worlds, the South Bronx and the Dominican Republic. Her commitment to her community was her motivation to create La Lucha: Dominican Republic & Haiti: One Island, an artist-based organization that brings Dominican and Haitian artist together. Since its inauguration in 2014, La Lucha has created safe artistic spaces by holding various artist talks and exhibitions throughout the city with emerging and established artists of the Dominican and Haitian Diaspora. She graduated with a BFA in Fashion Design from Parsons the New School of Design in 2013, where she was awarded a scholarship to study Photojournalism in Paris, and Fashion Design at Central St. Martins London. Rodriguez is the recipient of the Van Lier Fellowship at Wave Hill 2018 and a Fellow from the Caribbean Cultural Center of the African Diaspora 2017. Her work has been included at BRAC, The Andrew Freedman Home, American Museum of Natural History, Rush Art Gallery, The Clemente Gallery, as well as El Centro Cultural de España in the Dominican Republic. She has taught at Altos de Chavón School of Design in La Romana, D.R. and currently teaches at Parsons the New School of Design in NY.

CURATOR BIO:

Amanda McDonald Crowley is an independent cultural worker and curator. She develops platforms to generate dialogue, bringing together artists with professionals from varied disciplines to create space for audience engagement and social practice. She has recently developed exhibitions and public art programs with Kulturföreningen Triennial (southern Sweden), PointB (Brooklyn NY), New Media Scotland and the Edinburgh Science Festival (Edinburgh), Pixelache and the Finnish Bioart Society (Helsinki), YMPJ (Bronx NY), and Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts (Omaha). She is currently a curatorial collaborator/advisor on several artist led projects including on Mary Mattingly's Swale (NYC), Di Mainstone's Human Harp (UK), Juanli Carrion's OSS Project (NYC), Shu Lea Cheang's CycleX (Paris/upstate NY), Vibha Galhotra's S.O.U.L Foundation (Delhi, IN). She has held leadership and curatorial roles with organizations such as Eyebeam art + technology center NYC and Australian Network for Art and Technology; and on Festivals including ISEA2004 (International Symposium of Electronic Art) Finland and Adelaide Festival 2002. She has done curatorial and research residencies at Helsinki International Artists Program (FI), Santa Fe Art Institute (US), Bogliasco Foundation (IT), Sarai New Media Institute (IN), and Banff Center for the Arts (CA). publicartaction.net

HOST ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTNERS

ABOUT THE BRONX COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA) is a private, non-profit membership organization that has been the official cultural agency of Bronx County since 1962. Recognized nationally as a leading arts service organization in providing cultural services and arts programs, BCA serves a multicultural constituency of almost 1.4 million residents. BCA provides an array of services to 1,000+ artists and more than 250 arts and community-based organizations. For more information, please visit www.bronxarts.org.

ABOUT THE HOSTOS CENTER FOR THE ARTS & CULTURE

The Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture of Hostos Community College / CUNY was created in 1982 to serve the cultural needs of residents of the South Bronx who do not have the means or the inclination to attend arts events in Manhattan. In so doing, the Hostos Center strives to create forums in which the cultural heritages of its audiences are affirmed and nurtured. Its patrons, however, come from all over the metropolitan area, making the Center an institution of regional importance. In its state-of-the-art facilities (a museum-grade art gallery, operated jointly by the Center and the Bronx Council on the Arts, and two theaters of 900 and 360 seats each), the Hostos Center presents renowned visual and performing artists as well as local professional artists. www.hostoscenter.org

ABOUT HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Celebrating its 50th year in 2018, Eugenio María de Hostos Community College has been an educational agent for change that has been transforming and improving the quality of life in the South Bronx and neighboring communities. Since 1968, Hostos has been a gateway to intellectual growth and socioeconomic mobility, as well as a point of departure for lifelong learning, success in professional careers, and transfer to advanced higher education programs. Hostos offers 27 associate degree programs and two certificate programs that facilitate easy transfer to The City University of New York's (CUNY) four-year colleges or baccalaureate studies at other institutions. The College has an award-winning Division of Continuing Education & Workforce Development that offers professional development courses and certificate-bearing workforce training programs. Hostos is part of CUNY, the nation's leading urban public university, which serves more than 500,000 students at 24 colleges. www.hostos.cuny.edu

ABOUT THE BRONX ARTS ALLIANCE

The Bronx Arts Alliance is a collective of arts and cultural institutions and organizations. Its mission is to build, support and promote the works of artists and arts organizations throughout the Bronx. BxAA is also focused on actively engaging neighboring communities through the arts.

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