

ART FOR CHANGE

Anya Kielar (b. 1978, New York, NY) earned a BFA from The Cooper Union School of Art, New York, NY and an MFA from Columbia University, New York, NY. Kielar has been featured in exhibitions at the Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL; The Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art, Ursinus College, Collegeville, PA; the FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY; White Columns, New York, NY; and the Zabłudowicz Collection, London, England, among many others. Kielar received the Martin Birbaum Scholarship in 2004, a Columbia University General Scholarship in 2003, and the Leslie-Lohman Award for Visual Arts in 2002. Her work is included in the Dikeou Collection, Denver, CO; Henry Art Gallery at the University of Washington, Seattle, WA; the Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL; the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Saratoga Springs, NY; and the Zabuldownicz Collection, London, England. Kielar lives and works in New York, NY.

Alicia Mersy is an artist and filmmaker of Lebanese and French origin, living and working in New York. After completing a Bachelor's degree in political science, she graduated from Central Saint Martins with a MA in Fine Art in 2013. She has since worked extensively in the Middle East, mainly in Palestine and Israel. Her work uses the camera to connect people to the divine by forging pathways towards personal and collective peace. She hopes to empower marginalized people by getting close to them, listening to their hearts, and bringing their vision to light. She is attracted to free spirits, radicals, and revolutionaries. Alicia creates space for conversations through video, digital images, and photography. Her work has been exhibited internationally in spaces like the Institute of Contemporary Arts (London, UK), the Tel Aviv Museum of Art (Tel Aviv, Israel), The Abrons Art Center (New York City, USA), Migros Museum of Contemporary Art (Zurich, Switzerland).

Cassi Namoda (b. 1988) spent most of her childhood traveling around the world, being exposed to a variety of ideas, cultures, and stories. As the daughter of a Mozambican mother and an American father she would regularly return to Maputo, Mozambique, throughout her early twenties before permanently settling in Los Angeles. With dream-like elements and folkloric references, her painting calls forth an evocative and intimate recollection. Cassi Namoda's work was recently acquired by the Perez Art Museum in Miami.

Na'ye Perez is a Brooklyn-based interdisciplinary artist. Pulling from his experiences growing up in Columbus, Ohio, LA and Camden, NJ as well New York, the artist's practice consists of a type of remixing—similar to how a sound engineer or producer samples hooks, beats and choruses to create new music. Perez collages materials such as Backwoods, Swishers Sweets, magazines, historical archives, and personal memorabilia in conjunction with symbols, colors, and patterns to frame his art.

Navigating personal experience, memory, and the importance of intimacy within the artist's community and himself establishes his narrative and modes of accessibility. The work renders everyday objects and interactions such as playing cards in gallery spaces for a performance, or riding bikes through the neighborhood through his work to further connect with the individual. These moments are juxtaposed with references to music, fashion, and black history— shifting the narratives to one of embrace and empowerment without a reliance on trauma. Whether it's exposure of color seen in contemporary popular fashion, or the aesthetics of graffiti and street art, reality becomes layers of texture and imagery for the environment and the people depicted carrying out their lives and sharing experience in each work.

Recent exhibitions include his solo shows, "Their Eyes Were Watching God" at RegularNormal Gallery (2021), "Still I Rise..." at Syracuse University (2019). His recent group exhibitions include "Emergent Poise", "Privilege of Getting Together" (2021), "inheritance" and "You Don't See Me" (2020). Currently participating in the inaugural Pratt FORWARD Artist Professional Program (2021). He was a part of the Pratt Project 3rd Residency Programs (2019) and The Shed's DISOBEY residency in Queens, NY (2019).

Curtis Talwst Santiago (b. 1979, Edmonton, Alberta) is a multidisciplinary artist whose nomadic and decentralized lifestyle has immensely informed his explorations of transculturalism, memory, and ancestry in the contemporary experience. Using the concept of "genetic imagination" or the ability to access generational knowledge through imaginative recollection, he wades through lost and hidden histories in an attempt to understand and discover his diasporic heritage. Santiago studied as an apprentice of Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun. He has exhibited internationally at venues such as The Drawing Center, New York, NY; The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY; The New Museum, New York, NY; The Eli and Edythe Broad Museum at Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI; the Institute of Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA; the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada; The Pérez Art Museum Miami, Miami, FL; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada; among others. He was included in the inaugural 2019 Toronto Biennial of Art in Toronto, Canada, and the SITE Santa Fe SITELines.2018 Biennial, Casa Tomada, in Santa Fe, NM. Santiago is an active member of the Board of Directors for the Drawing Center in New York, and this September 2021, will be an artist in residence at Black Rock Senegal. His work is in the Studio Museum's permanent collection in Harlem, New York, NY, Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama and the University of Saskatchewan. Santiago is currently living and working in Munich, Germany. Photo Credit: Holger Albrich.