



The Artist Gardener NYC

West 132nd Street Association Garden

September 3, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press contact: Francine Rogers 646-305-4600 / francinernyc@gmail.com

The Artist Gardener NYC

SLA Art Space

ANNOUNCES

Outdoor Art Exhibit

-Ankhlave Fellowship Alumni Exhibit-

“Resonance”

BIPOC Artists bringing an Art Exhibition to the Lithuanian Alliance of America (SLA)

From September 6th to October 30th, 2024 The Artist Gardener NYC, a New York-based organization, presents an outdoor art exhibition “Resonance,” at SLA ART SPACE located at the 307 West 30 St. NY, NY 10001.

Organized by Co-founders of The Artist Gardener NYC Francine Rogers and Natsuki Takauji.

As the organization's fifth annual exhibition, The Artist Gardener NYC is presenting seven artworks by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) artists who participated in the Ankhlave Garden Project Fellowship by Ankhlave Arts Alliance: **Cecilia Andre, Sherwin Banfield, Carlos Wilfredo Encarnación, Seema Pandya, Niceli Portugal, Natsuki Takauji,** and **Yiyi Wei**, who invited **Evan Voelbel** to collaborate on this exhibit. They have exhibited in Queens Botanical Garden, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and BronxArtSpace during their fellowship.

This exhibition explores each artist's cultural roots, contemplating the connections to the community, the reflections of sounds and colors, and the coexistence of nature and humans. Various public events are planned during the exhibition. The Artist Gardener NYC and Ankhlave Arts Alliance share a common belief in creating cultural enrichment and exchange through the

transformative power of art as a catalyst for difficult conversations and fostering dialogue between diverse communities.

A Brazilian-Lebanese artist, **Cecilia Andre** presents “Kaleidoscope Tower”, capturing light and casting color shadows that revolve around itself according to the angle of the sun. With a base that casts striped shadows over nearby plants, this piece mixes the colors in its transparencies. The synthetic color of *Kaleidoscope Tower* contrasts the natural colors of the garden around it. It stands to the size of a 6’2” person and it can be anthropomorphized as a body and an imaginative head with colorful ideas.

A Queens-based Trinidadian artist, **Sherwin Banfield** is known for his public sculptures celebrating Hip Hop culture in NYC. He is bringing his new installation “Borough Check”, which is a cluster of illuminated hands hanging from a branch like fruit, each clutching a microphone and displaying jewelry representing a blinged-out New York City borough. This cluster is a celebration of the spoken word celebrated in Hip Hop Culture through the Emcee who controls the crowd with clever street narratives from their respective borough. The microphone serves as a tool of amplification for inner light, emanating through each clutched fist, while offering the viewer an opportunity to amplify their own spoken word. Microphone Check, Borough check, One, Two.

“Resonantias III,” by a Puerto Rican artist, **Carlos Wilfredo Encarnación**, is part of The Resonantias Series; an ongoing celebration of the indigenous people from Borikén and the Caribbean.

The reflection of the mirror tiles and the resonance of the conch shells are invitation tools for self-reflection, contemplation and amplification of their contributions to our culture.

A Brooklyn-based artist informed by sustainability, biology, and her South Asian culture, **Seema Pandya**, presents “Hibernative Potential” which consists of Richlite (recycled paper and resin composite), bamboo, and wood. It represents the life-giving energy inherent in cycles of rest. What appears as inactivity and dormancy in nature is a sacred period of transformation, essential for life's abundance to emerge. The piece’s black cut-out forms celebrate the fractal essence of nature, interacting with its micro-ecosystem. Embedded with hollow bamboo cutouts, it provides winter shelter for solitary bees and beneficial garden insects, integrating art with ecological function.

“Apacheta” by a Brooklyn-based Peruvian artist, **Niceli Portugal**, is an Andean cairn used by the Incas to mark a milestone on a path or to communicate with the Apus, gods of the mountains. This apacheta with exposed rebar represents Harlem’s journey and struggles. The exposed rebar represents potential growth. In several areas of Latin America or Africa, taxes are lower for unfinished buildings. By keeping rebar exposed, the building is technically “incomplete.” This sculpture takes a critical look into Harlem looking for room for growth; highlighting relevant issues such as affordable housing, economic disparity, lack of youth programs, quality healthcare, and

crime. The imagery and aesthetics of this sculpture will be inspired by the poem by Langston Hughes “Harlem”

-What happens to a dream deferred? -Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? -Or fester like a sore--
-And then run? -Does it stink like rotten meat? -Or crust and sugar over-- like a syrupy sweet?
-Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. -Or does it explode?

A Queens-based Japanese artist **Natsuki Takauji** presents “Shinzo-no-Ki 心臓の木 (A Cardiac Tree)” made in metal, glass, and ceramic. The sculpture represents a sprout coming out from a heart, inspired by the deep connections between humans and nature. It interacts with real sprouts and plants that will grow around it. This is part of a series about the personification or deification of nature, which is fundamental in Japanese mythology and Shintoism.

“Subterranean Texture” by Brooklyn-based artists **Yiyi Wei** and **Evan Voelbel**, amplifies the textures and sounds of underground ecosystems that exist beyond our perception. The piece revolves around a collection of textures reflected through materials – wood, volcanic stone, and glass. The glass captures the impression of the soil it was blown into while the carved patterns of the wooden speaker simultaneously accentuate the structure of the wood grain while referencing the microscopic architecture of bone. The sound component marries the materials, gathering sounds through the soil via a contact microphone and amplifying them through a “bone conducting” voice coil, receiving and playing the sounds through materials rather than air.

This program was made possible by the generous support of the City Parks Foundation and Partnerships for Parks through the NYC Green Fund.

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Opening Reception conjoined with Solo Exhibition Confessional Portrayals-Drawings on Recycled Paper 2018-2024 by Rasa Vaisvilaite will take place on Friday, September 6th from 5-9PM.

Participating artists and their Instagram

Cecilia Andre @cecilia_andre_art

Sherwin Banfield @sherwinheartist

Carlos Wilfredo Encarnación @carloswilfredoart

Seema Pandya @seemalisapandya

Niceli Portugal @niceliportugal

Natsuki Takauji @natsukitakauji

Yiyi Wei @prunt_machine and Evan Voelbel @luminiferous_aether_

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About Ankhlave Arts Alliance

Ankhlave Arts Alliance is a NYC-based nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to advancing BIPOC artists in the contemporary art realm. Through our annual programming, including the AnkhLave Garden Project Fellowship, Curator in Residence, and Public Artist in Residence, we provide platforms for artistic expression and exchange. We believe in the transformative power of art as a catalyst for difficult conversations, fostering dialogue between diverse communities.

Instagram @ankhlave / Facebook @ankhlaveartsalliance

Email: admin@ankhlave.org Phone: 212-945-8847

About The Artist Gardener NYC

The Artist Gardener (TAG) NYC is a public art program that connects artists and public green spaces to improve people's and neighborhoods' lives through art.

It started as a sculpture exhibition in 2020 to provide relief and a safe escape from quarantine to West Harlem residents. The exhibition's success highlighted the need for a continuing program to support artists and green spaces; with support from the community and a grant from Partnerships for Parks in 2021, The Artist Gardener (TAG) NYC program was born. **Our Mission** is to create cultural enrichment and exchange by introducing local and international artists and their creative visions to the communities. To engage local residents in revitalizing green spaces through art activities. To stimulate expression of the community's cultural status and heritage, through art exhibitions and educational programs.

Instagram, Facebook: @theartistgardenernyc

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