

+ART

Engaging Artists 2015: aging + immigration

New York City is known historically as a city of immigrants, and today it continues to be. The latest city-wide census cited over 37% of the population identifying as foreign born—the highest percentage in over 100 years. Dually, there are about 1 million New Yorkers who are 65 and older, with 463,000 older immigrant residents or 46 percent of the city’s total senior population, calling New York City home. In fact, if current growth rates continue they will become the demographic majority in the next five years. Despite all of this, immigrant artists still receive minimal representation in the art world, while the issues of immigration are largely absent from mainstream contemporary artistic discourse. In addition, many immigrant seniors have lower incomes, much less in retirement savings and receive far fewer benefits from traditional social services than their native-born counterparts. To make matters worse, nearly two thirds of immigrant residents age 65 and older have limited English proficiency, while nearly 200,000, or 37 percent, live in linguistically isolated households. As a result of these language and cultural barriers, many older immigrants have trouble discovering existing support services and are much more likely to suffer from isolation, loneliness and depression.¹

Engaging Artists honors and supports these vital yet under-served part of the New York City community by offering a residency program that brings together local foreign-born and first generation American artists with elderly immigrants who live in their neighborhoods and share their native language and cultural heritage.

This year participating artists engaged in long-term volunteer projects to connect with seniors and aging populations in their community and cross-culturally through art activities, recreation, and dialogue.

At the end of the residency, each artist has begun to develop public art projects inspired by their volunteer experience and in collaboration with the individuals and groups they built relationships with along the way. Most artists continue to volunteer way after the end of the program, signaling the effect their experiences have on their emerging social practice.

During a six-week period, participants were required to volunteer at least a half a day per week at local organizations that provide social and health services to immigrant seniors. Artists can propose their own volunteer project, if they so choose, and More Art in partnership with Artist

¹ [“Planning for New York’s Aging Immigrant Population.” The Center for Urban Future, 2014.](#)

Volunteer Center provides opportunities with nonprofit and grassroots organizations—helping artists establish new partnerships.

Artists are encouraged to deepen their understanding of socially-engaged art through free professional development workshops, a collaborative studio space, as well as a capstone group exhibition and grant opportunities to further the work created during the program. Throughout the residency duration, a series of guest speakers offer context, insight, and connections with professionals in the fields of art and activism. Studio meetings offer the artists collaborative art projects to work on together and/or spur new ideas for each artist's practice. Participating artists must commit to attend the workshop series and all studio meetings (see [calendar](#)). ***This program is provided free of cost.***

2015 artists.

Alon Nechushtan, Israel
Annie Kurz, Romania
Aurelien Grez, France
Christie Neptune, West Indies
Eugenia Malioykova, Belarus
Guido Garaycochea, Peru
Hidemi Takagi, Japan
Michelle Melo, Colombia
Andrew Nemr, Canada/Lebanon
Chee Wang Ng, Malaysia
Sara Meghdari, Iran
Soi Park, South Korea
Trokon Nagbe, Liberia
Uday K. Dhar, India/UK

residency calendar.

MAY 19: Orientation | The Moderns | 7-10PM| Cynthia Tobar, Oral Historian presented on the essential aspects of collecting oral histories

Speaker series workshops and six week volunteering period begins

MAY 26: Workshop: "Working with Elders" | SVA | 7-10PM | Keynote Presentation by Christian González-Rivera, Research Associate at the Center for Urban Future on the report "[The New Face Of New](#)

[York's Seniors](#)" followed by Age Sensitivity Training by Jennie Smith-Peers, Executive Director of Elders Share the Arts

JUNE 4: Resident Meeting | Studio | 7-10PM

Shared Studio Access Begins

JUNE 9: Workshop: "Immigrant & Elderly Advocate Orgs." | SVA | 7-10PM| Speakers: Andrea Lawrence, Executive Director of Mazzi and Theresa Loong, Artist

JUNE 18: Resident Meeting | Studio | 7-10 pm

JUNE 23: Workshop: "Artist As Advocate" | SVA | 7-10 pm | Speakers: Pablo Helguera, Director of Adult and Academic Programs at the Museum of Modern Art; Amy Wilson, Artist; Rebekah Burns, Director of Art Programs, Lenox Hill House, discussed their work as artists and arts administrators working with immigrant seniors.

JUNE 30: Workshop: "Artist As Activist" | SVA | 7-10 pm | Artist talk from Betty Yu and William Powhida.

JULY 16: Resident Meeting | Studio | 7-10 pm

AUGUST 13: Resident Meeting | Studio | 7-10 pm

SEPTEMBER 10: Final meeting | Studio | 7-10 pm

SEPTEMBER 19: The Social - socializing + fundraising event | UnionDocs | 7-10 pm

SEPTEMBER 29: Engaging Artist Curatorial Review

Shared Studio Access Ends Wednesday, September 30

OCTOBER 15: Grant applications due

February 2016: Final Exhibition, Queens Museum

*All workshops will ran on Tuesdays 7-10pm at the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan (133 W 21 Street #608C) Resident Meetings ran on Thursdays from 7-10pm at a collaborative studio space (Industry City, 220 36th Street, suite 611, Sunset Park, Brooklyn)

final exhibition.

ENGAGING ARTISTS at Queens Museum

Community Partnership Gallery

On View: February 7-27th, 2016

[press release](#)

The Engaging Artists exhibition features the work of 8 NYC-based first generation and foreign born artists, who participated in the [Engaging Artists Residency](#). The works emerge from grassroots volunteering as a catalyst for social practice. In 2015, More Art's Engaging Artist Residents developed long-term projects to connect with aging populations through multilingual art-making projects, recreation activities, and conversations at nursing homes and community centers in their home neighborhoods—from Flushing, Queens to Crown Heights, Brooklyn. This exhibit features works that serve as documentation and response to critical issues associated with aging, health, home, and isolation through the lens of contemporary art.

Engaging Artists fosters inter-generational exchange and diverse artistic perspectives on the challenges associated with aging and immigration in New York City.

Featuring artwork by Annie Kurz, Aurélien Grèzes, Christie Neptune, Hidemi Takagi, Michelle Melo, Sara Meghdari, Soi Park, and Uday K. Dhar. Closing reception features a live composition and dance performance by Alon Nechushtan and Andrew Nemr.

public programs.

Sunday, February 7, 2016 (2:00-3:30pm)

Artist Talk: Art + Intergenerational Exchange

moderated by Silvia Juliana Mantilla Ortiz, IMI Corona Community Organizer and Artist Services Coordinator, Queen Museum

Engaging Artists Residents will discuss the challenges of working with aging immigrant populations. The event is co-produced by More Art and Artist Volunteer Center and a part of the ArtsEverywhere/Musagetes Artist Round Table ([A.R.T](#)) series. A.R.T is a platform that proposes new models for bridging artistic and scientific methods. Artist speakers include: Hidemi Takagi, Andrew Nemr, Guido Garaycochea, Aurélien Grèzes, and Raul Ayala.

Sunday, February 14, 2016 (1:00-4pm)

Family Art-making: “Memory Mats” Weaving past and present

More Art teaching artists will lead a textile-based collage activity. Both children and adults (ages 4+) are encouraged to design a set of drawn symbols and brief descriptions of memories on patches of textured fabric. Families will use thread and yarn weave these patches together, incorporating multi-generational perspectives into a single memory mat. The final object can be both decorative and used at family meals.

Saturday, February 27, 2016 (4-6pm)

Engaging Artists Closing Reception + Live Performance

Engaging Artist residents Alon Nechushtan and Andrew Nemr will present Duologue – a cross-cultural exploration of music and percussive dance traditions. They will engage in a constant flow of musical information, rhythmic and ethnic cultural references, morphed in a contrapuntal dialogue. Native of Israel, Nechushtan brings a few modal surprises from his homeland to this project, while Nemr, from a Lebanese heritage, finds complementary rhythmic input to complete the cycle.

community partners.

We thank the [Artist Volunteer Center](#) for facilitating volunteer opportunities in community organizations such as: Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration, Marcy Plaza Farmers Market (Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn), Brooklyn Gardens Nursing & Rehabilitation Center (Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn), Gaylord Senior Center (Harlem, Manhattan), India Home at Sunnyside Community Center for Active Adults (Sunnyside, NY), Institute for the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly – Carver Senior Center (East Harlem, Manhattan), Jefferson Senior Center (Harlem, Manhattan) The Korean-American Senior Citizens Society of Greater NY (Flushing, NY), The New Homestead Home (Kew Gardens, NY), Prospect Hills Senior Center (Crown Heights, Brooklyn) Saint Teresa of Avila Senior Apartments (Crown Heights, Brooklyn), Queens Community House, Kew Gardens Senior Center (Kew Gardens, NY), Washington-Lexington Senior Center (East Harlem, Manhattan).