

For Immediate Release
April 20, 2022



Mic Diño Boekelmann, *Paggank*

Conversations of Home

May 7 – June 26

Curated by Andrea Bell and Rashmi Viswanathan

With works by Julio Jose Austria, Jeho Bitancor, Mic Boekelmann,
Francis Estrada, Eva Marie Solangon, Maria Stabio

Opening Reception: Saturday, May 7

NARS Main Gallery

May 7, 2022, Nolan Park 5B, Governor's Island, New York. – The New York Art Residency & Studios (NARS) Foundation is pleased to present *Conversations of Home*, a site-specific exhibition by six international artists of the Philippine diaspora who make up the art collective **NE~~X~~SE**. Although their similarities begin with a shared heritage in the Philippines, their personal histories shape their individual expression as artists, as immigrants, and as children of immigrants in the United States.

The exhibition includes a diverse array of works. **Julio Austria's** project titled "Parallel Visions" will construct miniature bahay kubos, the iconic stilt houses of the Philippines. Since immigrating to the United States, Austria's nostalgic memory has replaced his lived experience of the houses themselves, so that what is left are images and representations. The houses call to mind another kind of absence: that of the Lenape wigwam that would have been the dominant form of domestic architecture in New York before colonization, when Governor's Island became a military garrison for colonial settlers. **Jeho Bitancor** will project figures of bodies formed from text taken from legal documents used to justify the colonial rule of both Paggank, the native Lanape name for Governor's Island, and of the Philippine islands. **Mic Boeklemann's** paper tree sculptures celebrate the species of pre-colonial Governor's Island, linking the island's present with its past. **Francis Estrada** intervenes in a collection of historical photographs that originally attempted to justify the "benevolent assimilation" demanded of colonized subjects, while **Eva Marie Solangon's** collages "Remanifest Destiny" will examine the island's colonial histories as sediments that build atop and transform each other. And finally, **Maria Stabio's** paintings reference the military history of Governor's Island through the use of botanical and other symbols typically excluded from formal histories of empire. By incorporating representations of plants that currently grow on the island, Stabio unites a close study of the present moment with the island's history.

Conversations of Home grapples with personal and political histories of colonialism and diasporic displacement, and their resonances with the Governors Islands' layered pasts and present. Colonization was and is not a single event, nor is it a thing of the past. It is an ongoing process that changes and shifts with time and can take any number of forms, which continue to haunt both Governor's Island and the Philippines. Historically connected by United States operations in World War II, the past and present of these islands are in conversation, and tell us of the images and afterimages of colonialism. The exhibition seeks, therefore, to provoke a conversation of home and alienation with and on an island that is also a palimpsest of cultural memories and movement.

About the Curators:

Rashmi Viswanathan is a historian of Modern and Contemporary Art who looks at the ways that arts move across different cultural, regional, and temporal contexts. She is an Assistant Professor at the University of Hartford, and lives in Brooklyn.

Andrea Bell is an art historian, independent curator and writer who focuses on modernism from the long 19th century on. She is interested in art in a global context, in alternative systems of making, and especially in institutional critique of the post-Enlightenment inheritance. She teaches art and design criticism at Parsons School of Design and lives in New York.

About the Artists:

Julio Jose Austria is a Philippine born visual artist who immigrated to the United States in 2011. His works focus on urbanization and migration. He provide a visual portrayal of his most profound life experiences based on his observations and absorption of his present and changing environment. His art

practice includes paintings with some multimedia and installation work. Currently, he divides his time between New York City and Manila.

Jeho Bitancor is a Filipino artist who has been based in New Jersey/New York since 2008. His art practice ranges from fine to applied art, working in painting, performance, mixed media, and graphic design. He has exhibited and performed across Southeast Asia and the United States for more than two decades. A recipient of numerous awards including the CCP 13 Artists Awards and the Vermont Studio Center Asian Artists Fellowship Award, his works are in the permanent collection of the Singapore Museum, the University of the Philippines Museum, Ateneo Art Gallery, De Lasalle University Museum, and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, among others. He was trained at the University of the Philippines, the Art Students League of New York, and New York University.

Mic Boekelmann was born in Quezon City, Philippines, then uprooted and replanted in Germany, Israel and the US where she received her BA from UC Berkeley. Her work has been shown at Princeton University, Salmagundi Club, Allied Artists of America, Phillips Mill, Princeton Public Library, Trenton City Museum and Sardenhaus Munich. She has been awarded the Sustainable Arts Foundation Fellowship, the Chautauqua Visual Arts Residency and was accepted to the NYFA Immigrant Artist Program, Creative Capital Professional Development Program and Emerging Programs Institute with the Alliance of Artists Communities. Boekelmann lives and works in Princeton, NJ where she runs an artist run space for classes, exhibits and retreats.

Francis Estrada was born in the Philippines and currently resides in Brooklyn, NY. He is an artist and educator who holds a fine arts degree in painting and drawing, and has taught in a variety of studio, classroom, and museum settings. Estrada interrogates how visual cues found in historical photographs, mass media, political propaganda, and personal archives influence or inflect social and cultural narratives.

Eva Marie Solangon is a Filipino American visual artist, designer, and teacher based in New Jersey. In 2015, she graduated from the School of Visual Arts majoring in Graphic Design. With the use of collage, illustration, and dark humor her works seek to destigmatize mental health in the Filipino community, and explore a progressive take on Catholicism and 90s subculture.

Maria Stabio was born in San Francisco, CA, and is a Filipino-American painter. She graduated with a BFA in Painting from Boston University and an MFA in Visual Arts from Columbia University. Her work has been shown at Spring Break Art Show (NY), NADA Miami (FL), Fjord (PA), Pen and Brush (NY), Chasama (NY), Essex Flowers (NY), (harbor) (NY), Orgy Park (NY) and Ely Center of Contemporary Art (CT). She was awarded artist residencies at ChaNorth (NY), Hinge Arts Program (MN), The Rensing Center (SC) and Vermont Studio Center (VT). In 2012, she was a recipient of the Artist in Residence Fellowship at Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar where she served as artist in residence and adjunct faculty for one academic year. She also works at Alexandre Gallery in New York City.

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The New York Art Residency and Studios (NARS) Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit arts organization committed to supporting artists and curators on an international level as well as engaging the local community in Brooklyn and the Greater New York area. Our mission is to present diverse platforms on which to nurture creative inspiration and innovative cross-pollination of ideas.

For further information, please contact us at www.narsfoundation.org / info@narsfoundation.org / 718-768-2765.



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