Rising Eylandters Zine

This Winter 2020, emerging artists from Staten Island, are reclaiming their narratives as part of the forgotten borough. The Eyelandters share a creative outlook valued for the future. Before 1975, Staten Island, under its non-anglicized name, was spelled Staaten Eylandt, honoring the Dutch Parliament when New Amsterdam was under colonial rule. 7 lucky artists of all genders, ethnicities and identities created a creative community over the month of February. This resulting publication represents a movement of Post-Contemporary in order to remind the art world and New York City that we are here, vibrant, talented, and have a representation that matters to a wider dialogue to learn from.

Mission Statement

Teen Ambassadors is a collective of emerging artists from New York City. Ambassadors congregate at Snug Harbor to develop a portfolio over a short term residency through workshops. Artists present on local & international art movements, genres, and techniques, all while inviting teens of every gender, orientation, ethnicity and background to experience the work, exhibited at The Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art. The Ambassadors invite the world to witness their ever growing archive.
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Staten Island Zine League:
Maggie Buford
Jenna Snyder

The Teen Ambassadors under Snug Harbor’s Youth Matters program are generously supported in part by NYC Councilmembers Debi Rose and Steven Matteo.
Why are the contemporary arts centers important for locals?

By featuring various thoughts, meanings, and histories pre-sent-ed to a wider audience, we ex-pand and open our minds. Hav-ing access to observe, enjoy, and process art from all walks of life, (that isn’t accessible if I would go about searching for it on my own), makes art education easier to obtain. Therefore, having a contemporary arts center brings people together from various demographics through similar, creative interests.

Featuring hyper current artistry is important to have diversity in thought and to represent different points of view that bring us to one location; art is a visual language that provides motion, movement, and connections. Visual literacy breaks political, social, and geographical boundaries to reach audiences far and wide.

Focusing on hyper local forums draws local artists and brings a shared community, identity, and collective consciousness closer. The upside of access to local artists is recruitment, as opposed to drawing in interna-tional voices with notoriety who are often not interested in issues impact-ing our neighborhoods.

- Cleo, Sarah, and Christina

They are important because local artists can display their art in these lo-cations. Also, it’s important to have local artists because they can spread their culture with other cultures. Local art from the past and present can be compared to show the changes in the community. Art centers are symbols of the local area they represent.

- Rich and Richard
What excites you about art in your community?

It is good to see that the artists can be creative with whatever they make. The art here represents the culture of this region, so we can learn from it.

Something that inspires me about art in my community is how it can be relatable. I also wonder about how people learn about the things they didn't know before. It shows what artists view about this community and at the same time how people and culture are developed as shown in the art work.

- Rich and Richard

We would describe St. George as a very quiet and very pretty. The lower east side is very busy, loud, dirty. I see a lot of plays, dance, and singing around the area of North Shore Staten Island. The Lower East Side on the other hand is a melting pot for culture, people, arts, and has a variety of genres of art that are embedded in social justice, American history, and reconfiguring the American identity, due to the influx of migrants from across the globe that have called this neighborhood home.

- Cleo, Sarah, and Christina
How does art make people happy and bring about a sense of peace and compassion?
with Dr. Reda Abdelrahman

Abdelrahman
The science behind art needs to be considered in order to analyze its effect. The neurology and chemicals help to discern the meanings behind certain pieces. The brain can interpret certain images and symbols as different emotions such as happiness and joy. How can certain significant people in the art world be unified using underlying subtle and prominent messages?
- Emma and Sarah

Art brings about peace through the central themes of closure, freedom of expression, and meaning to be enjoyed by a wider audience.
- Christina, Cleo, and Flannery

Art brings people together and united through an appreciation of different characteristics of art. Different pieces of art bring different emotions when different people look at them.
- Rich and Joe
Being a refugee, Egyptian, and an artist in America for sure carries its challenges, but for Reda Abdelrahman the sky isn’t the limit. Abdelrahman has explored his graceful portfolio with the Teen Ambassadors. His delicate imagery touches on feminism as it relates to beautifying the Arab woman’s body and reflecting on his childhood memories of living by the Nile River or growing up in Ismailia, Egypt. One would think there’s no harm in his creative impact. Yet, due to censorship in the Islamic Republic, what may seem an innocent representation of his life and empowering to others is a threat of the religious government’s control of freedom of information. We American’s take freedom of difference for granted. This human right that is often weaponized in other countries where any ideology that isn’t the status quo of the religion in place is seen as a threat. This situation specifically marginalizes artists like Reda and pushes them to seek refuge in a western nation where his views can be celebrated.
When meeting Reda, I was enamored by the “eye of Horus” necklace dangling on his body. This iconic symbol holds significant weight in relation to his cultural past and invokes a conversation of symbolism. Hamsa Unforgotten has a dialog with Reda’s use of symbols. The hamsa - also known as the “Hand of Fatima,” the daughter of the prophet Muhammad, as well as the number five in Arabic - is a cross cultural image recognized and used as a sign of protection many times throughout history. The hamsa is believed by some, predominantly Muslims and Jews, to provide defense against the evil eye. It is also an interior decoration celebrated by my Mizrachi Yemeni Jewish family and millions of various demographics world wide who, like Reda’s art, find a language that visually speaks to all.

Now living 5 years as a Refugee artist and art historian in New York City, Dr. Abdelrahman will be exhibiting his exhibition “I Am Everybody” exploring the impact of ancient Egyptian History on Contemporary Western Culture. Drawing from his practice as a student of the renowned University of Minya at the College of Fine Arts he uses his influence of contemporary Arabic art and the environment surrounded by outstanding Pharonic monuments and Coptic monasteries which inspired his artistic focus of collaging. He uses both ancient and modern techniques to leave a lasting impression on emerging American Artists in Staten Island.
What considerations do artists make when representing subjects and presenting objects to the public?

Artists have to condense and pinpoint something from a variety that would effectively engage an audience. They would consider the meaning behind the piece and the inspiration and motivation it would give to others.

They need to think of ways to spread their ideas, and they need to consider the media to publicize their art.

Artists need to consider how their art would be portrayed by others in the moment. It’s important for them to understand that different people would have different opinions about their art. Inspirational pieces may come from different people from around the world.

Artists should also think about the big picture and spectrum of art that they will be working with in the long run once their picture is enhanced and presented to the public.

- Sarah and Emma

Artists consider many things including their target audience, cultural ideas, and how their work can influence others.

An artist must be aware of who they are representing as a subject and what objects they are presenting as their work can be interpreted differently among different audiences. An artist must also be aware of different cultures and what can be thought of as offensive towards an otherwise unfamiliar group of people. Finally, it is important for an artist to see how their work can influence others in a positive way, as their art will live on through its influence.

- Rich and Joe
Rebeca is a dancer and choreographer from Columbia. She lives in Brooklyn now. In Columbia, she studied anthropology and theatre arts. She loves nature, and it influences her work. She is the current PASS artist at Snug Harbor and is creating a new dance piece called Jardin Salvaje. During our session, she showed us videos of flowers blooming, a forest changing through the seasons, and vines growing and attaching to different things. Afterwards, Rebeca asked us to close our eyes, think about each video, and try to feel the images going through our bodies. Another exercise we did involved one person walking around with their eyes closed and another person was in charge of protecting them from getting hurt. These exercises were relaxing and gave a sense of escape like you were visiting another world.
What does it mean to be present?
with Rebeca Medina

Being present relates to the ideal of the seeing - not focusing on the past or future and instead feeling in the moment. The idea of a head space re-focuses the mind and can allow a person to access locked away feelings and unidentified movements.
- Joe and Emma

For Cleo, being present is the state of releasing the fears, judgements, and isolation that comes from living in a society that focuses on the movement one makes...what is approved to be socially acceptable, versus that which can be expressed freely to discover one’s true inner approved peace. For Rich, to be present means that you are involved in something physically and mentally. For Richard, to be present means being anti-active and being more focused on certain moment.
- Cleo, Rich, and Richard

To be present is to live in the moment and to make the best out of the situation. It also means to try your hardest in everything that you do and to work hard and make your dreams a reality.
- Flannery and Christina
What states of the body are relevant to become another non-human vehicle?
with Rebeca Medina

All of the body as a whole can be relevant to becoming another living non-human vehicle. Specifically, the unseeable, the mind and the heart. A non human vehicle can be anything relating to movement and poses which represent important ideals.
- Joe and Emma

Being motionless as it pertains to lowering one’s anxiety, inner thoughts, palpitating heartbeat, to reduce one’s thinking to just feeling, hearing, seeing, and absorbing life’s mysteries without much effort. Letting your mind do its own thing and not think about what you’re doing. This with contribute to your body doing its own thing.
- Cleo, Rich, and Richard

To be in a different body is to take in their movement and how they live life everyday.

Also to use different things to inspire you to move a new way and experience different ways of life.
- Flannery and Christina
Artist Profiles:
Maggie Buford
Poet, Zinester, Rug maker

Jenna Snyder
Musician

By Joseph Tesoriero and Richard Zhu

How do your surroundings influence your art?
Maggie: A lot of my poetry stems from overheard conversation, I started writing poetry when I moved here to Staten Island. My grandmothers did fiber arts influencing me to start making rugs.
Jenna: Everything I write is a reaction my experiences within the my environment.

What drives you to make art?
M: Art is the way I process interactions with the environment.
J: When I write a song I try to translate emotions and create a universal way in which people can relate their emotions.

How did you gain the skills required for your job? Through your academic background or through learning on the job?
M: For the rug hooking, I started having class at first, after that, I learnt it myself through the job.
J: I stole my father’s guitar at 11 and I never gave it back, in fact I use it to this day.

Did you ever try any other subject or only stay where you have?
M: I was originally a painter and then branched off into other methods of art like zine-making and now rug-making. This process took years to find out what I wanted to do.
J: Editor in chief of a literary magazine, wood carving, and gardening. I always could not stick to one method of art so as a result, I branched out a lot.
Maggie Buford with her latest rug.

Jenna Snyder in her garden.
Artist Profile: Alyssa Rapp
By Flannery Patterino

Alyssa is the leader of the Teen Ambassadors Art Program, at Snug Harbor. She is a dancer and has written a book along with Raul Barquet called Old Timers New Starts. For four weeks, she has helped the seven teens in the program create a zine about art in the city. She, along with VP of Curation Melissa West and Education Director Susannah Abbate, introduced Snug Harbor's featured 2020 artists to the Ambassadors. The artists talked about where they are from and then lead an activity that inspires the artist's everyday work. Old Timers New Starts is a project that was started a couple years ago. Alyssa and Raul visit small businesses all over Staten Island to give the owner’s a chance to tell their story. Many owners are immigrants who are having trouble getting their businesses started. The project also has business owners who have lived on Staten Island for a long time. These small businesses are restaurants, record stores, clothing stores, etc. It includes pictures of the businesses and details of each shop. This book that Alyssa and Raul have created together helps people’s small businesses grow and hopefully inspires others to create new businesses.
Could you describe your art and motivations? What kind of art are you mainly creating?
I work in a variety of art mediums and experiment with materials quite a bit. I find an idea that I am interested in exploring and create a series, or many series of works. I draw and paint primarily and vary the surfaces I use including translucent fabric, glass, marble, tile, canvas, and paper.

How do your surroundings influence your work?
I have a studio in my home that is light filled and this has affected my colors as well as my choice of materials.

How did you gain the skills required for your job? Through your academic background or through learning on the job?
Both. I graduated from Barnard College with a major in Visual Arts. I also took a lot of Art History courses while at Columbia University. I received my Masters at Pratt Institute. My Art History foundation has been essential in my growth and development as an artist. I have made it a priority to always have a studio so that I can maintain the daily discipline of an artistic practice.
I have had many jobs related to the Arts. I learned a lot about presentation and grant writing when I worked for an architectural firm, and I learned about research and exhibition design when I interned at the Museum of the City of New York and the South Street Seaport Museum. I get many ideas about materials and art processes from teaching with students.

Did you ever try any other subject or only stay where you have?
I have always been an artist, and almost always managed to have jobs in the Art field.

Is there anything you dislike about being an artist?
I don’t like the self-promotion and “business” of Art. I prefer to make Art. Sometimes being in the studio for long periods of time can be a little lonely.
I want to showcase my best work. By best, I mean most representative of my vision and message and aesthetic taste in a particular moment. The process is about finding the spectrum of me’s and showcasing them all.

**What intersections do you face as an artist underrepresented on the island?**
There is not enough people accessing my work even though, as an Italian Queer Nonbinary American, it is so relevant to so many people on the island.

**What is it like being a queer artist in a conservative borough?**
The day to day can be very tough. The Staten Island Ferry can often feel like a cold, cruel place where people are judgmental and generally dissatisfied. As an empath, I try hard to protect my energy while still projecting value into the society. The borough is conservative and also disproportionately resourced. Poor people, homeless people, need more attention and resources on this island. Poor artists definitely fall into that category.

**How can your environment be more inclusive of your artistic growth & needs?**
There needs to be more events produced by people who want to give my voice more visibility. It’s too much work to make meaningful art and then have to produce events and worry about selling tickets and promotion. We need to harness the hard work that defines most of the people on the island towards creating public performance and easily accessible performance around the island a possibility. Artists are here and we need support to bring our work to the community.
Elle May is a singer songwriter and storyteller born and raised on Staten Island, NY. She has experience in community organizing, and her values are often conveyed in her music. Other things she sings about include monsters, hidden treasure, hallucinations, radios, and worker's rights. Elle also has a cat named Onion who she loves very much.

**What is your inspirational process in developing your portfolio?**
I am a songwriter and sometimes a poet and my inspirational process goes all over the place. Sometimes I’ll hear or read a phrase or word that really strikes me and I’ll try to incorporate it into something I’m writing. I am also really into science fiction so sometimes sci-fi themes can make their way into my work, for example I’m currently working on a concept album about time travel. My politics are also a big part of who I am so it is no surprise that I have written many political songs as well. Stories of underrepresented and marginalized people really inspire me too and I try to speak to that in my work as well, such as the songs I’ve written that feature transgender narrators. Musically I get my inspiration from bands that don’t have the most well-polished or marketable sounds or technically talented musicians, including bands from genres such as punk, antifolk, lofi, and even bands the push the envelope on or blur genres.
What intersections do you face as an artist underrepresented on the island?
As a disabled trans woman who leans very left politically I have encountered several issues on the island. For one, I’ve met liberals who have said they want to make music with me only to lose interest after they have heard me talk about my politics. Another is the lack of music venues that aren’t bars on the island, as bars can be hostile environments to LGBTQ people and also the fact that my disability usually causes me significant pain when I have to travel long distances, for example to Manhattan or Brooklyn, to play a show at a venue that is more inclusive than a bar.

What is it like being a queer artist in a conservative borough?
It can be pretty tough. I am misgendered all the time even among people who I have shared my gender identity and pronouns with more than once. People who have known me for years still call me by my old name and either refuse to or can’t be bothered with remembering the name I go by now, no matter how many times I tell them. I recall one time at an open mic, one person after complimenting me on my performance asked my name. When I told them, they said, “No, your real name.” When I said, “That is my real name” they responded with, “No the name on your birth certificate.” Stuff like that happens all the time. All the microaggressions can be really frustrating and tiring.

How can your environment be more inclusive of your artistic growth & needs?
There needs to be more inclusive and non-monetized spaces for events to be held, whether it be libraries, community centers, in public parks, or people hosting shows in their homes. This would increase accessibility to working class people and allow the community to grow, build, and showcase a variety of talent, My partner and I occasionally host shows in our apartment and we make sure to make it an inclusive and safe space for all marginalized people to perform their music and art, and be themselves. It is so important for places like this to exist and more people need to create these kinds of environments.
What is your inspirational process in developing your portfolio?
I think human relationships and their complexities are what compel me to create anything; all of my desire to create is incited by the love, anger, and frustration cause by people I know. Sometimes the pain is shared, such as the pain of witnessing the destruction of our planet, but often it is wholly personal. My art is a reaction to inflicted love and suffering. I am challenged by observing my reflection in others who I am trying to know, who are trying to know me. Trying to know each other is a beautiful thing, but an uphill struggle. I sometimes process the problems that arise with images or song.

What intersections do you face as an artist underrepresented on the island?
I do acknowledge my privilege in the art world as a middle class white artist. On staten island, there are very few places (compared to other boroughs) to enjoy art at all, especially in a gallery setting. There is next to nowhere to to see art made by queer people, besides pockets of very small communities that don’t have much reach outside of exclusive art clique, which is also primarily white. My dream for SI is that local art by women, queer people, trans people, and people of color can become more accessible to all. It is only through exposure to another perspective that the average ignorant Staten islanders can challenge their bigotry.
What is it like being a queer artist in a conservative borough? Sometimes it sucks. Sometimes people don’t even notice or care. My experience is mostly dictated by being a “woman”, as I am assumed to be a “straight woman” by people who don’t know me. That invisibility can be frustrating. I do think if I presented in a less conventionally feminine way I would not be as well-liked. Most older women (like my grandmother) ask me when i’m gunna get married and have kids. They don’t know what I do on weekends.

As a “female” artist, I am able to garner some respect, which I appreciate. As a “female” musician it is super hard to be taken seriously, especially by men in the metal/hardcore scene. Even after they have seen you play, you are assumed to be some dude’s girlfriend.

How can your environment be more inclusive of your artistic growth & needs? We need more opportunities, we need more art space, we need more music space. There are also very few places to rent as studios to make art and music. There are very few venues. Snug Harbor provides so much of this, but it can’t be the only place. And it can’t always be DIY! I think that is the ultimate challenge on the island; artists and musicians need more places to congregate. Without a place to root, how can a flow-er grow?
Eileen Pepel is a teaching artist with a degree in Fashion Design from FIT. After leaving her career as a Fashion Designer, she taught art at St. John Villa High School, Our Lady Queen of Peace School, St. Margaret Mary School, as well as after school programs and classes for older adults. Her HS students have been accepted at top art schools including FIT, Parsons, Art Institute of Chicago, and the School of Visual Arts. Eileen offers sewing classes and workshops in her home studio for kids and adults in small group or private sessions, including classes to help prepare college portfolios.

I always loved fashion. I liked to draw and sew. I started sewing when I was little and made clothes for my dolls. By the time I was in high school I was making myself clothes. My family really couldn’t buy me designer clothes like many of the girls I went to school with had, so I made my own styles. When it came to deciding on college I was torn between studying fine art and studying to become a veterinarian. My grandmother thought I was too soft hearted to be a veterinarian, I would bring all the animals home with me. My father convinced me to study fashion design instead of fine art, because at least I would learn to put up hems! I was a little insulted at the time, but did do alterations for a bit when my kids were little ( thanks Dad). I also got to study fine art later in life.

I had taught people to sew informally a few times, but it wasn’t until I moved after hurricane Sandy and ended up with a space that was perfect for it that I considered having classes. When the IKEA Home Tour group selected my application for a room makeover it was the incentive I needed to start my business teaching art and sewing. And that it happened at the same time St John Villa closed and I lost my job teaching high school art made for perfect timing for me to try something else.
I love meeting new people and helping them discover their skills. Each group is different, but I really enjoy seeing my students pleasure in expanding their skills or discovering a new media. The best is when a student gets something a runs with it, absorbing the lessons, but expanding it and making it their own.

I feel like I have only been making very simple pieces, and often end up using them for examples or workshop ideas. I really enjoy water colors, and I have fabric paints that react much like water colors that I love too. I have been playing with mixed media pieces using paint and embroidery, sometimes on paper and sometimes on fabric.

I think if you are going into the art world you should try everything, and try it more than once. Don’t expect to make every piece a great work of art, accept that we sometimes grow the most from the things that don’t work out the way we planned. Don’t neglect other areas of your life, study, recreation, family it all adds up to enrich your art. If I could go back and tell my younger self anything it would be to have more confidence, everything works out.
Artist Profile: Gregory Perillo
By Emma DeMuro

Gregory Perillo is one of today’s most respected and renowned American Western artists. His powerfully dramatic, emotional depictions of Native Americans and early settlers, as well as Western landscapes and wildlife, have made him one of America’s leading painters and sculptors.

Today, Gregory Perillo’s artwork hangs in hundreds of private and corporate collections, galleries and museums throughout the United States. He uses mediums such as giclee canvas art, lithographs and limited editions collectibles.” No living American artist has enjoyed greater market success. It appears that Perillo’s range is boundless. He paints canvases from miniature size to murals. Sculptures range from six inches to fourteen feet.”

“For the past two decades, Gregory Perillo had dedicated himself to philanthropic work, including donating his time and talents to the New York City Public School system, the Boy Scouts of America, American Parkinson Disease Association, 9/11 charities and many other charitable and humanitarian causes.”

Do you have any advice for someone trying to get started in the art world?
My advice is to take art lessons to understand the basics of art and to find the subject matter that gives you the most pleasure.

Where do you draw your inspiration for new pieces?
I have taken so many trips out West to find my subjects and to see first hand what I am going to paint. Also go to the library and understand/re-search your subject.

What are you working on currently?
I am currently working on a 8 foot Bronze of Geronimo. If you go to P.S. 62 on Bloomingdale Road you will see and 8 ft bronze of mine that I was commission to do for the New York Board Of Education.
On average how long do you work on your artwork to achieve such intricate and breathtaking paintings?
It usually takes me around 40 hours to complete a 24x30 piece

What is your inspirational process in developing your pieces?
I love the Native American people and Americas Landscapes. I want to show the beauty of both. I only paint uplifting paintings.

What advice can you give to young artists/students in finding success?
Follow your dream and listen to your instructors and never give up on your dreams, It is hard and sometimes very discouraging.
Artist Profile: Scott LoBaido  
By Emma DeMuro

For the last 25 years America's Artist Scott LoBaido has respectfully painted thousands of renditions of Old Glory. On schools, homes, fire houses, police stations, cars, and canvases.

Scott's past is rather colorful. His work has been featured in thousands of newspaper articles, TV news programs and radio shows like CNN'S ANDERSON COOPER, FOX'S BILL O'REILLY, AND FOX & FRIENDS, and was named “PERSON OF THE WEEK” ON ABC’S WORLD NEWS TONIGHT.

What made you decide to primarily focus on patriotism in your art?
I’ve been an artist since childhood and I always did wild artwork, abstract, kind of crazy fancy stuff always a little patriotic stuff. I was never really that into it even though I was patriotic because of my community I come from and I wanted to go find myself in the art world in Manhattan in the 90's. I saw that patriotism was kind of taboo, every few generations it fluctuates, like with Vietnam Patriotism took a dive, but then in the 90's because of the Gulf War everyone was screaming no war, burning the flag and I saw this in the art world. We were suppose to create a community who had the most freedoms and were desecrating this flag and the military and everything that is good about America. It punched me in the gut. To find your calling at an young age in your Art is the greatest thing in the world. Some people don’t ever find, but I found it, I'm going to paint the flag: big, old, on the side of buildings, on cars to show what’s good about America. What’s perfect about America is that she’s not perfect, and everyone thinks everything has to be perfect. We're just the puppet on this world stage and we're learning, if I was on a bus in the 60's I would’ve been arrested fighting for her, it's how I was brought up. Whether it was the LGBTQ+ community who were finally able to get married. We’ve come a long way, in America you fight for things, nothing is handed to you.

I’m going to create this flag and I’m going to bring it back to life showing what’s positive, promote her. It was like pulling teeth for the first 5-10 years. Even my friends were like I don't know if I want a flag on my building. Little by little people came around and unfortunately with 9/11 patriotism boomed, and I was the guy that everybody knew to call. Every-day I paint that flag and if I done it 10,000 times tomorrow when I start a new one it'll be just as cool and passionate as the first one I ever made.
What other mediums would you like to one day apply your ideas to?
I sculpt, it’s something I’d like to get into in a bigger form, I do tons of installations with lights and LED lights, in fact I just decorated this tree down on Father Capodanno and Seaview with just 1000’s of blue LED lights on a tree which is a tribute to our men and women of the police department that we’ve lost, that have sacrificed for us. So I work with anything I can, sometimes I make these giant things out of aluminum foil I always need to do something, so it’s not just about painting. I’d like to get into bronze and welding, that’s the next step I’m looking down the road for.

Do you have any major influences who encouraged you to be an artist?
My mom was extremely creative and my dad, he’s great with his hands he can build the Taj Mahal with a Home Depot gift card. My mom was just born with this gift of sketching and sculpting. I got my talent from them, they were a natural inspiration. Throughout history, those I’ve learned from taking art classes in school, Michealangelo, Norman Rockwell, Caravaggio, Picasso because of his diversity, everyone thought he was this crazy cubist arts man, but he was amazing he could sketch a scene like a photograph. My main inspiration is the American flag, if I wasn’t an artist I’d be doing omething else with it, when I’m dead I want to go down as one of the great American patriots.

What advice do you have for a young artist looking to enter into the same field of work as you?
My advice is twofold, being a true artist is blessing and a curse because you see things that you don’t really want to see, everything is visual and you see things you won’t forget. More so than the general population, the blessing is that you can express this through art, because a lot of people see things they don’t like and it stays in their mind and they don’t know how to express it. Advice, especially coming from me, an outsider, because I stay true to my heart, a lot of young people jump on that wagon, they want to successful no matter what it takes. There should be no rules in art, that’s the beauty of art: it’s free. There are so many directions to go nowadays, but to try to be a Picasso. I went that route, it’s the hardest road I’ve ever taken, you sleep in your car, you paint on a piece of cabinet you ripped out of the wall because you had nothing to create with, it’s pain. If you’re a true artist there’s a narcissist aspect to it, it’s about you and your art and everything else comes second. It’s not always pretty, relationships are affected, I never recommend anyone going done my route unless you’re especially passionate. If you’re an artist always make time to create. There’s nothing more that upsets me then when people “get busy”, take an hour, give yourself time to create and everything will come out, the best therapy in the world is if you have the gift to create, to do it.
What’s your inspirational process when putting together a piece?
It’s already happened, I’ll be sitting out to dinner and ask for a napkin and pen and write done my idea. I set up the easel, have some music, have a sip of whiskey and then get going, put on my smock, pants, jeans paint all over me, I love being covered in paint, I hate that I’m clean right now, but I’m going out to dinner, this is not my skin, my second skin is my paint and turpentine and the smell, it all just comes together when you’re one with the painting, if you call me I don’t care if it’s the president I don’t care who’s knocking, no one comes to see the wizard, I’m here that’s all that matters and the inspiration just continues to flow.

How long does it take you on average to create a piece since your pieces are so intricate and breathtaking?
That’s tough, people ask me all the time, I don’t look at any clock, it could be five minutes to five hours, I have one piece I’ve been working on for 15 years and once a year I’ll have to add to it, I have a surreal way about me and the patriotism, almost like a biography. Something like pols and acrylics could take a few weeks, some math involved for patterns, a few hours a day a few hours a night. Some I do in half an hour, speed painting.

Lastly, Hindsight is 20/20, that said what would you tell your younger self knowing what you know now in regard to directions and choices you made in your career; and what changes would you make if any?
Not one.
Artist Profile: Bruce Turner
By Emma DeMuro

Mr. Turner is a current Music Teacher at St. Joseph By The Sea High School. He runs the choir program as well as co-running the musical theater program and art club. His talents are widespread from vocal, to instruments, to photography and pen and paper sketches. Besides running the art club he also teaches Freshman Art and Music, which are both very eye opening and educational courses. Mr. Turner works at two churches when he isn’t working on school related projects, both of which include their own concerts which he both conducts and performs at.

Do you have any advice for someone aspiring to be an artist or musician?
It’s a long road, you have to work hard, learn your craft and have very thick skin. You should treat each audition as a personal game, always do your best and don’t expect to win.

Can you give me a little of your history in the music field?
I’ve been singing since I was really young, I went to college to sing in choirs, and I have sung with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia orchestra, I’ve been all over the east coast, I’ve done everything from Mozart to Beethoven, all great classics for work. I’ve performed at Carnegie hall, as well as all major concert halls on the east coast. Afterwards I did 10 years in opera in Philadelphia, then I came to teaching so I could share what I’ve learned with anyone else whom I could.
Do you write your own music
No, but I’m a good interpreter of other people’s music.

Are you working on any new pieces?
All of the time, I’m learning new music because I sing at two churches and both churches are preparing concerts right now because this is the 150 year anniversary for Beethoven, both are doing large concerts.

What advice can you give to young artists/musicians in finding success?
Work whenever you can, sing, dance, act where you can find a place to do and have fun while you’re doing it. There should be no ego, put your ego at the very last of your whole life because ego is the destroyer of art, you can’t be prideful, you have to be confident but pride will shut you down. The most famous conductors and singers in the world are humble and kind of scared that they not perfect, they’re constantly trying to be perfect even though they’re the best in all of the world.

Arts Professional Profile: Ann Marie Selzer, producer of events in the arts
by Flannery Patterino

What steps did you take to become this type of art professional?
It kind of just happened. My degree is actually in Kinesiology, the scientific study of human body movement. When I moved to NYC, I thought it would be fun to volunteer to meet people. I saw an flyer to volunteer for the NY Underground Film Festival, so I did it. Two years later, I became their Hospitality Director and things took off from there. I have been working pretty steady in the arts for over 20 years now!

Do you have any advice for someone trying to do what you do?
Be flexible and open with your thinking. Build great teams. Learn from your mistakes.

Is there anything you dislike about being an art producer?
I just left a job where I loved the project, but did not like the people or environment I was working in.. Other than that, most of the time, I love what I do.

Is it easy to make enough money for living expenses as an art producer?
YES!
Artist Profile: Nikki Lauren
Actress and Sundog Theatre Teaching Artist
By Flannery Patterino

Nikki Lauren is a member of Actors Equity Assn. with numerous stage/TV/film credits. Ms. Lauren is a former member of Snug Harbor Performing Arts, member of SI Playwright's Collective, co-founder of SI Women's Theatre Project.

What steps did you take to become an artist?
I started very young, in grade school performing. So, I don't know if I was aware of the steps I was taking but my parents nurtured the persistent performer in me. I put on shows for the neighbors on my lawn. I sang everywhere and all the time. So giving me lessons outside of school and exposing me to theater and music as much as they could helped a lot. I landed my first professional acting job at age 16. I was so proud of myself I took a picture of the check.

Do you have any advice for someone trying to do what you do?
Study your craft and never stop. It's a muscle and if you don't use it, you lose it. Be prepared for your auditions. Don't wing it. Develop a think skin. Sometimes you can have a killer audition and not get a call back, or get a call back and not land the role. You never know. Having been on both sides of the desk lots of factors determine casting and I can tell you from experience as an auditor sometimes the most talented person doesn't get the role. That being said, I always advice performers I coach to keep a journal of their auditions. I found it extremely helpful when you are doing lots of auditioning. You can keep track of who you are auditioning for, what you did for them, and how you felt about it. also any comments they may have made. Plus you can make notes if you got a call back or not. Know the difference between a casting director and a talent agent. And if someone asks for money from you for "pictures' or be put in their "book" before you have gotten a job. Walk away. Agents work for you. If you land a job they get commission. You have to be careful.

Is there anything you dislike about being an artist?
Long audition lines and waiting for hours to perform your audition for 60 seconds. I dislike doing extra work on film and TV. I have only done it a few times but its torture to me. Sitting for hours in holding. Waking up at dawn to be ready. And the pay is just ok.

Can you make enough money for living expenses?
No. I know very few artists that can do it alone or without supplemental income. I know two artists now who do it together and that's all they do, but its very hard. However, its not impossible. You never know.
Artist Profile: Stephen Obisanya
By Joseph Tesoriero

How do your surroundings influence your photos?
My work revolves around socioeconomic conditions and issues afflicting individuals and families in small communities; often an indication of a bigger concern that is likely to be prevalent across the country. I spend a lot of my time trying to get a better understanding of what is happening in the world and around me, and sometimes, the people I meet, the stories I read or hear, and the things I witness daily inspire what I choose to focus on documenting as a photographer. In this way, my work is a direct commentary on life as I see it, an opportunity to bear witness to the events and moments—beautiful or ugly—that speak to the spectrum of our condition as human beings.

What do you hope people get from observing your photos?
A true moment of introspect or deep-seated connection with what is presented would be an accomplishment. The works that have inspired me over the years have always pushed me to look inward and challenged me to empathize and see life through the lens of other people’s lived experiences. I believe that is where impact begins.

Do you consider your photos unique?
I don’t think I care for my photographs to be unique. After all, people have been taking photographs for hundreds of years. Themes and styles (in this instance, 35mm black and white film) are bound to repeat. For me, how those photographs are employed to convey a necessary story or an idea is what should be somewhat unique. By telling a story, is the photographer unnecessarily engulfing the voice(s) of his/her subject(s)? If so, how can the photographer give more authority to the subject(s) in focus? Are there novel or non-linear ways of carving out narratives that add to and shape the impact of a story after it is presented? These are the types of questions I’m more concerned with as authenticity, intimacy, and collaboration have become paramount to my process. I believe these are the qualities that ultimately make photographs stand out once we get past the technical elements.
What drives you to take these photos?
I always say that the best thing photography allows us to do every passing day is to remember our humanity. Documenting other people’s lived experience constantly reminds me of my place in the world and the role I can play in it, however minimal, to create a path towards change. For me, photography continuously encourages a path to establishing connection with others in a world where disconnection has become the norm. Additionally, it gives one the permission and courage to intently interrogate one’s own life, to heal scars long-formed and to attempt to reconnect with loved ones in a meaningful way. Over the years, meeting people, listening to their stories and photographing them has revealed to me the crucial importance of family, community and our universal need for belonging. Today I employ photography as an interrogative and a bridging tool, to gain access to limited spaces, experiences, stories untold, and most of all, people whom I otherwise would not feel connected to.

Artist Profile: DB Lampman
By Emma DeMuro

Artis DB Lampman is a sculptor best known for her larger projects as well as video performances. She is also the co-founder of Makerspace in Stapleton. Lampman began with a career in ballet, but transitioned to art in her early twenties which then branched out to the creation of her elaborate fashions. For her shows Lampman prefers to live by the expression “think out of the box” since a lot of her shows are in untraditional locations,” I once did a large piece in Freshkills in a Landfill”. On her website the most common displays are intertwining human expression and models with elaborate “clothing” or sculpture dresses, some of her works include “The Wetting Dress” and “Tom and the River”. “I did this costume piece where I wear that’s had hundreds of tentacles of it and at the end of the tentacles, looked like the crazy tree, and at the ends had hooks on because I had been making these sculptures of big rooms full of twine and fabric and materials and everything would connect, I wanted to make something I could be inside and connect to other things, I did series of videos, one in the desert like a tumbleweed, one in the woods I looks like this crazy tree lady, it took on different meanings in different situations.”

Her current project is a continuation of her large projects, in stapleton waterfront. Lampman’s selected design contains metal strands twisting to recreate the idea of waves. Its purpose is to recreate the “power of the ocean”. This power is a force in which Lampman is “intimately” familiar with considering Hurricane Sandy in 2012 which negatively impacted a multitude of Staten Islanders in that same area. “Viewers are encouraged to interact with it, and let the shape embrace them. At night, the mirrored ends of the strands will reflect the nearby lights, creating a “constellation,” Lampman said.”

D.B Lampman’s final advice to younger artists looking to enter into the same field of work as her is to keep going and personally she has continued by “Just being true to myself and true to my vision”. She encourages younger artists to not be afraid of altering visions, because with growth comes changes as in her art, since her current vision is much different than it was when she began her exploration.
Who inspires you?
I’m inspired by people who share their stories, have passion and something to say. I’m also inspired by music, different types of theater and my students! A love of learning and wanting to better yourself is always inspirational!

What artists have influenced your work?
Directors like Sam Pinkleton (Broadway’s the Great Comet) Baz Lerman, Performers like Alanis Morissette and Cory Cott. But mostly, I’m influenced by my experiences and the people I meet day to day. There’s so much to learn and see just in your interactions with everyday people.

What do you hope people will get from seeing your artwork? What feelings do you hope to reinforce or change?
I always hope that my work as an actor, director or teacher will make my audience or students feel something, Discover something or challenge their thinking. I would love to reinforce the thought that books can’t be judge by their covers and that it’s good to think outside the box and not always conform to the norm.

Why do you work in the mediums you do?
I work in theater because it was where I made a lot of self discovery and found a place to fully express myself. That alone is what makes it so beautiful to me.

Where did you study art?
I have a degree in theater performance from Wagner College and I take voice lessons in the city with Tyce Green.

What was the most important piece of art you have made to date?
I would have to say as a director I feel my most important work to date was Spring Awakening, because it deals with heavy themes like teen sexual experimentation, abortion and the dangers of not educating today’s youth. As an actor, my most important works were telling my story through song and dialogue with two original one-woman shows.
Who do you look up to?
- My mom because she's resilient and hard working

What's the coolest thing about you?
"I can split my nipple"

What I wish I knew? Be yourself, don't listen to the haters.

What's your favorite animal?
Chameleons, Blue Jays, Flamingos

What's your favorite ice cream flavor?
Strawberry

Who's your favorite actor/actress
Julianne Moore, Issa Rae, Freckle
Richard Zhu:

Campus Life

The subject is about life on campus. It interests me a lot because I feel the warmth from those pictures by the light. It allows me to imagine how teachers treat students mildly and the happiness among students. I use merely photographs because I want to record it in an instant and I use nature light because I want to reveal it in reality.

How would you present this subject? Through light and aspects of objects in the pictures.

What would your medium be? Photography.

What technology would you use? iPhone.

Would you use flash or no flash? No flash.
Cleopatra Mizrahi, Christina Casale, and Flannery Patterino:
One Ferry at a time…

What is your subject or issue? Exploring the dynamic lives of new yorkers, and tourists who frequently use the S.I Ferry to explore the big apple. The Ferry brings people together for 30 minutes of their day from all over the world, for various reasons, some to explore the history of this nation via statue of liberty, while natives use this transportation for work.

How would you present these subjects? Capturing the essence of global citizens on a New York commute through the stylage of Polaroid photography to store the intimacy that brings people together through storytelling by sea.

What usage of Flash, Medium, and Technology are utilized? No flash, photography, no crazy editing, we want to make the footage raw inspired by Humans of New York founder Brandon Stanton.

What considerations and choices artists make when representing subjects and presenting objects to the public? Artists often consider in their process making, the meaning behind their message, and hope to invoke inspiration for social change, acceptance, awareness and balancing the scale of the human experience. In a divided world, people often are disassociated from themselves, and the “other” while art exhibitions pierces through political boundaries to create a common conversation that reminds of us of diversity through unity. To further extend the idealism convrey by individual artists and the cultural institutions that caters them, by creating objects that takes us space, stops viewers in their tracks to absorb new ideas, movements, inorganic figures and how it expands their limited view to a ever expansive universe.
I was taking the train in a crowded subway on a typical day to work. I bumped into a woman, who recognized me but didn’t lead me on to how we know each other. I started to ask her what she does for a living, she said I’m a pastor. “Really, Me too!” My son is becoming a pastor, and for years in a church in the Bronx, I was an Elder. She said, I know Helen, its me Dominique, I became inspired to be a Pastor, after being in worship with you as a youngster. I was blown away of this full circle, god is good.
Our Critical Lens, Subject that Matter

Emma DeMuro:
Trapped in Richmond Town

The main purpose of my zine “Trapped in Richmond Town” is to attempt to portray how although time has changed there will always be stagnant principles in life to keep us centered and balanced. Pieces of history such as architecture can always give us a glimpse into the past and even though we couldn’t experience first hand we can still “see” a world in which everything was completely different from our current lifestyle and yet there are noticeable similarities between the citizens who lived it and their creations. All descriptions from Historic Richmond Town Website: https://www.historicrichmondtown.org/

“The Eltingville Store, once located on Amboy Road in Eltingville, is now presented as the Print Shop in its location on Court Place at Historic Richmond Town. It is a small one-room, one-story wood frame building with board-and-batten siding and a wood shingle roof.”

I chose this photo as my first piece because of the vibrant colors of the house, I manipulated the colors to form a flag in the girl’s hand because in the words of Scott Lobaido: “The flag is the greatest work of art with the most meaning.” The concept of patriotism is one that has remained stagnant for decades.

What is your subject or issue?
Old Staten Island, Richmond Town Buildings, history

How would you present the subjects?
Still-motion with editing and overlapping drawing.

What would your medium be?
Photography

What technology?
Nikon P 900
The Edwards-Barton House remains on its original site on Richmond Road at the corner of Court Place, where it was constructed in 1869. The house was built for Webley J. Edwards (1816-1870) and his wife Deborah (Mercereau) Edwards (1823-1888).”

I attempted to portray the ideal of pride of accomplishments, which has also been a stagnant concept in years past, the idea of being confident and proud of something like purchasing your first house is one almost everyone feels.

The house was built for Stephen Dover Stephens (1808-1883), a merchant, and his wife Elizabeth Johnson Stephens (1811-1883). The family resided in Northfield, Staten Island, before building their house in Richmond. In 1837 they purchased the land for their house from Henry I. Seaman, a prominent Staten Islander who in 1836 began to enlarge and develop the village of Richmond.”

Friendship is a stagnant concept, the love you find in friendship is an irreplaceable spot in someone’s heart, friendship brings the greatest happiness one can feel in this lifetime.

“The Colon Store, also known as the Tinsmith’s Shop, is on the north side of Center Street between St. Patrick’s Place and Court Place. Built ca. 1840-1850, the store originally stood on Woodrow Road in Woodrow. Around 1913 it was relocated to Bloomingdale Road in Pleasant Plains. It was moved to Historic Richmond Town in 1969.”
The idea of a significant other is also a prominent ant and stagnant idea in society. Everyone strives to find a “soulmate” one who understands and accepts them flaws and all, for no one is perfect.

Standing on one of the highest points in Richmond, this imposing Greek Revival building was designed to both reflect and inspire civic power and pride. The front (north) wall of the structure is built of rough-faced Staten Island trap rock; the other walls are brick.”

One idea which has greatly been altered is the idea of children's expression.

The ideal that children should be seen but not heard has greatly changed, children growth and expression of interests is usually encouraged in modern day world.

“Public School 28 was one of several new schools built in the years following the 1898 consolidation of Greater New York, when Staten Island became a borough of New York City. Prior to that time, the schools on Staten Island were under the jurisdiction of the Richmond County Superintendent of Schools and the State of New York, and they were known as "common schools."

The idea of female education and rights has become very prominent in modern day world, one of which would have been discouraged in any other century, the fight for rights is one which occurs for everyone in every place in life, “because in America we fight for things, nothing is handed."
Our Critical Lens, Subject that Matter

Richard Gainer and Joseph Tesoriero:
Abandoned Buildings

How would you present this subject?
Through pictures.

What would your medium be?
Photography

Would you use flash or no flash?
Depends on the time of day but primarily no flash to make it more authentic.

What technology would you use?
iPhone
Richard Zhu
Age 16, Staten Island Academy

I am an international student who came from China. I am interested in art, especially pencil sketches. Right now I am taking Advance 2D class in school and I practiced a lot on pencil drawing. I also like theatre. I have attended the play waged by school for 3 years, and I always enjoy performing in the play.

I enjoyed this experience, it definitely got me out of my comfort zone. I learned a lot from the stories of the different artists.

Richard Gainer
Monsignor Farrell High School

I am in the band program there and I enjoy playing percussion. It has been my passion for a number of years and I hope to one day become a professional musician. I also enjoy building large and small scale sculptures using Lego bricks.

This Saturday morning program opened me to different types of art and showed me almost anything can be art. There were different workshops where I experienced different forms of art such as dance. This has been an overall great experience for me.
Joseph Tesoriero  
Age 16, Staten Island  
Although not very experienced with creating art, I have gained a new appreciation of artists and the process that goes into art. I specifically enjoyed making collages with Dr. Reda Abdelrahman. While creating my collage, all of my awareness was focused on the process. I had not been that deeply in tune with something in a while and I appreciate this opportunity for that. In the future, I will explore more art opportunities as this programmed has opened my eyes to potential interests.

This experience gave me more of an appreciation of art and the process that goes along with creating art. Through talking with arts professionals I gained a new perspective on the purpose and importance of art in our society.

Christina Casale  
When I first came into the Ambassadors Program, I was not sure what to expect. After the first few hours of our first meeting, I was feeling “inspired.” Each week, I looked forward to working with our groups. We explored and learned in many creative ways. It was such a great experience and I was so glad to be a part of such an amazing group. I have great respect for all the artists I have met through this program. Thank you Snug Harbor!
Mx. Cleo Mizrahi (She/They & Queen)

is a mixed media artist, writer and media maker who identifies as a Queer Mizrahi transfemme of color living in NYC. As a social practice artist, their portfolio develops by archiving under represented marginalized voices, to be humanized to a varied mainstream demographic. Her themes centralizes on intersectionality, queerness, American culture & the public’s perceptions. Their work has been featured in over 40 galleries in nyc including cultural institutions like MOMA, MAD, Bronx Museum, Tribeca Film Festival, HBO & BRIC media. Mx.Enigma, their artist name, was also a title to one of their first short docs about one’s struggle with gender and religion. Queen has been a finalist at Tribeca Institute’s spring 2018 film fest “Our City, Our Streets.” They made history in Summer 2018 as the first nonbinary host on a American public tv network on Manhattan Neighborhood Network as part of The Youth Channel where they produced the 1st season of Queer Justice! A human rights talk show focusing on Global Queer liberation. They are an alum of the BCI artist residency in Summer 2017, and expected to be a Summer 2020 artist in residency at Judson Memorial Church in NYC. They are currently working in collaboration with Theatre of the oppressed a summer reading of their play production “L’Chaim 2 Dykes” a truthful comedy humanizing the lives of Queer Ex-Hasidic Women who are struggling with their custody battles. To follow more of their work follow them @Mx.Enigma www.behance.net/MxEnigma

Whenever I am presented with an artist opportunity, I am ambitious, engaged and compulsive to create as much as we can in the limited time we share space together. Being a part of the “Rising Elyandtners” Ambassador program at Snug Harbor allowed me to utilize the various resources available at New House Center for Contemporary Art while also being in a hub, that gathers local and international artists and their techniques to inspire a stream of consciousness that will push my artistry into developing the next generation of creative talent in NYC. Who can imagine what 7 artists, strangers before the start of the program, can accomplish in one month.
Emma DeMuro

“Darkness absorbs the masses but light illuminates the truth.”

I like to consider my art technique and layout relative to the idea of space. My work usually reflects people or places that genuinely inspire me. Some of the pieces I am most fond of are society’s influencers who personally speak to me or environments which I had grown up living in. I attempt to focus on realism but I have a recurring style of focusing on a subjects’ eyes and facial structure as the centerpiece. I wouldn’t generally describe myself as having a medium, I’m still young and exploring but I’ve dabbled in very traditional art, with sketching pencils as well as digital, watercolor and more recently photography. My major inspirations as well as major supporters are my parents and grandparents. My parents had immersed me in a world of fashion and photography since I was a small child and grandparents were always quick to help me with my rough sketches or give me words of encouragement to keep a piece going.

At first the idea of an art program frightened me especially since I don’t hold my art to the highest standards compared to others. Not only have I become more educated in the art world as a whole but the artists were not only kind but welcoming. The program has expanded my horizons in the art field, after completing the program I feel more versatile than when I began and I appreciate all the experiences and the people I’ve encountered have opened my eyes to a new world.
Flannery Patterino (She/Her)
Age 16, Wagner High School

I live near Snug Harbor with my parents and two younger sisters. I like theatre and fashion. I like artistic portraits and mixed media collages that use recycled materials. Because #savetheturtles. I like to visit museums. Some museums are more interesting than others. I went to London this past summer and visited the Tate Modern. I like this portrait I saw there of Mrs. Helen Wills Moody by Diego Rivera. It was done as a fresco which is a quick large-scale painting done on a wall. This one was done in San Francisco in 1930. This portrait is simple but it almost looks 3D. The colors he used made it look realistic. I also like how big it is.

Coming into the program, I didn’t know what it was. These past four weeks have made me get my hands dirty in different types of ways. Seeing these different artists come in every week has been enlightening. Learning where they come from and doing what they love has inspired me and the other teens to follow their dreams as well. Hopeful people can see that throughout this project!
In Loving Memory of

Tatiana N. Walton

September 20, 1992
January 29, 2020

Your gentle face and patient smile,
With sadness we recall,
You had a kindly word for each
And died beloved by all.
The voice is mute and stilled the heart
That loved us well and true,
Ah, bitter was the trial to part
From one so good as you.
You are not forgotten loved one
Nor will you ever be
As long as life and memory last
We will remember thee.
We miss you now, our hearts are sore,
as time goes by, we miss you more,
Your loving smile, your gentle face,
No one can take your vacant place.

Scamardella Funeral Home, Inc.
332 Broadway, Staten Island, NY 10310
718-981-6622

#RipTatianaWalton, collage, 10 x 12" by @Mx. Enigma