



Southeast Queens Artists Exhibit at Central

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Notations in Passing

Part of the Inaugural Southeast Queens Biennial

On view March 3 – April 21, 2018
at Queens Central Library

By NLE Lab curators Sarah Fritchey, Corrine Gordon, Rebecca Pristoop, Niama Safia Sandy, and Anastasia Tuazon; and Director of NLE Lab Rachel Gugelberger

This year's first Southeast Queens Biennial features the work of three generations of artists who have strong connections to the area. Inspired by author, feminist, and social activist bell hooks, the Biennial seeks to shift our attention from traditional notions of what is central and focus us on Southeast Queens as a gateway for travel. The area is also known for the movement and connections between its diverse populations. While the Biennial is titled *A Locus of Moving Points*, the exhibit at Central Library takes its title *Notations in Passing* from a 1974 essay by Nathan Lyons (himself a son of Jamaica, Queens). Lyons, a photographer, curator, and educator, was interested in the objects and attributes of everyday life. The artists on display at Central work across media and disciplines, but are

united by their desire to make visible gender and race-based oppression, to explore the impact of environmental crises on humans, and to explore rituals and healing practices.

Notations in Passing includes the work of Salimah Ali, Ify Chiejina, Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess, Renee Harper, Corona Johnson, Rejin Leys, and Lisa Wade, showcasing a range of complex and nuanced perspectives. Ali, Harper, Johnson, and Wade focus on people, family, and neighbors in and around Jamaica. Through a juxtaposition of biomorphic and natural forms, Leys portrays both the 1990s Haitian refugee crisis and current geographic displacement due to climate change. Inspired by her Guyanese heritage and the divine feminine, Abrams's representations of brown mermaids

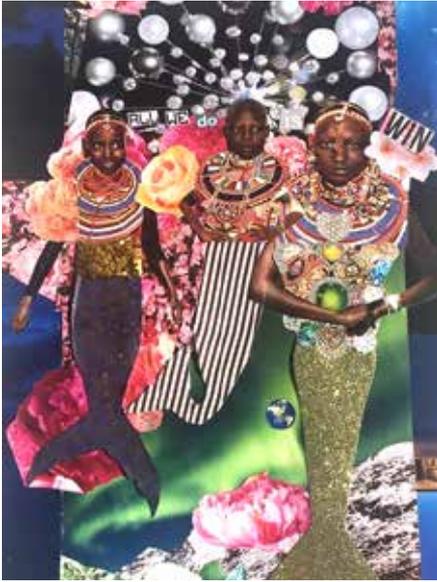
and mermen take on the trauma of enslavement and healing through the sacred practice of adornment. In the series *Dying to Dream*, Chiejina symbolically illustrates the black experience through slavery, colonialism, and racial discrimination.

A public opening reception will be held Saturday, March 17 from 2 pm to 4 pm at Central Library.

The inaugural Southeast Queens Biennial continues at York College Fine Arts Gallery and is accompanied by a series of programs including commissioned performances, poetry, music, artist conversations, and professional development opportunities for Southeast Queens artists and arts professionals.



Art by Ify Chiejina reflects the exhibit's themes: *Dying to Dream, La Perseverancia, Claridad y Fe*, 2015



Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess's unique perspective: *All We Do Is Win*, 2017

For more information visit www.nolongerempty.org or www.seqbiennial.com.

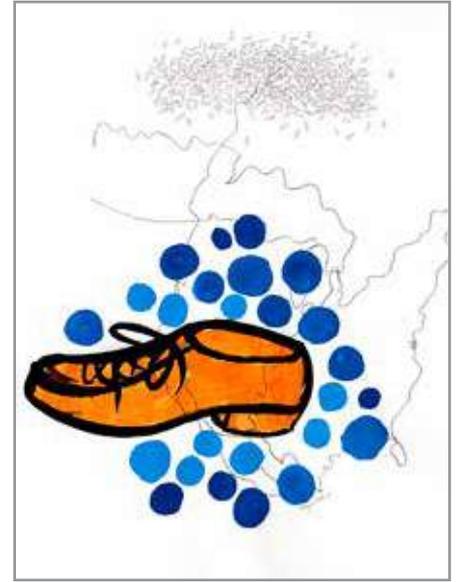
Notations in Passing is curated by the 2017 No Longer Empty Curatorial Lab (NLE Lab), as part of the inaugural Southeast Queens Biennial organized in partnership with York College Fine Arts Gallery. NLE Lab is a professional development program for emerging curators and arts professionals



Children playing, photographed by Corona Johnson: *Nephews at Goose Pond*, 1982

interested in direct experience curating site- and community-responsive exhibitions and programs. The York College Fine Arts Gallery is located in Jamaica, Queens, and is part of the Department of Performing and Fine Arts at York College, City University of New York (CUNY). For more information, visit www.york.cuny.edu.

The 2017 NLE Curatorial Lab is supported in part by the National



Rejin Leys's work is a study in contrast: *Untitled (With Shoe)*, 2017

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The Queens Library Mobile Museum is funded by an Innovation Grant from the Queens Library Foundation.

All photos courtesy of the artists and No Longer Empty. ■



Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess comments on current events while celebrating Native Americans: *Make the Americas Indigenous Again*, 2017