



**Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning (JCAL)
Announces the Launch of an Online Exhibition:
*Community and Culture***

On View at JCAL.org, May 20 - June 28
Artist Talk: Thursday, June 4, 6-7PM via Zoom.
[Register here.](#)

May 20, 2020 -- Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning (JCAL), in partnership with Queens College, proudly presents *Community and Culture – An Online Exhibition of Artworks by Queens College Art Education Graduate Students*. Originally designed to be an on-site and interactive exhibit in the community, the pandemic crisis and subsequent lockdown took this exhibition on an unexpected turn.

However, as the Queens College graduate students continued to develop their work while isolated at home, they explored their connections to their immediate communities in creative ways. Yinshi Huang, for example, created photo collages of clay animals dressed in World War II-era garb in Levittown, Long Island, as a nod to local animal lovers. Other artists tackled

current social issues, such as Ana Castro, whose printmaking work expresses her layered experience of being a person of color in a predominantly Caucasian town; and Ivana Ng, whose mixed-media pieces are a meditation on identity and migration in diverse Flushing, Queens. The students utilize a wide range of styles and techniques, from comic book and architectural illustration to portrait painting -- some even incorporating contributions from their own students and family. Their work provides an opportunity for all of us to reflect on the health of our own neighborhoods in these uncertain times and offers a different lens to explore how we define community.

“JCAL is proud to host this timely exhibition online. Although our physical space is shut, our desire to communicate with our audiences and to continue presenting arts remains,” says JCAL Executive Director Cathy Hung. “Arts and culture are more essential than ever in a difficult time, and we are happy the technology has filled the void so we can remain focused on our mission.”

This online exhibition features individual projects created throughout the spring semester from students in *Community and Culture: Historical Perspectives in Art*, a graduate course taught by Jamerry Kim.

Kim describes the project and the course in the exhibition statement:

The artwork for the exhibition, *Community and Culture*, was based from a series of projects and field work that explored the notion of a community and how a place can be a site for amplifying art, community building, and self-reflection....

As the students were turning the lens to their own community consisting of neighborhoods in Queens, Long Island, and Rockland County, the class was disrupted by COVID-19. It was as though the external circumstances forced us, individually and collectively, to redefine our definition of a community and our roles within it. It became a community that transcended physical space and time: the students' art addressed themes that expanded from family migration, language, historical site maps, and belonging.

What started as a continuation of the course's theme on community and culture has since emerged as a timely and an important exercise on intimacy, care, and mindful reflection of one's existence.

Artists featured in *Community and Culture* are Maria Brownsell, Ana Castro, Taylor Foerster, Yinshi Huang, Ivana Ng, Beata Szyszkowska, Tom Travers, and Emily (Xiaolei) Wang. There will be an **Artist Talk** on **Thursday, June 4, 6-7pm** to discuss the projects in more detail. The event will be held via Zoom. [Register here](#).

This exhibition is part of JCAL's Building Equity Project, funded in part by the New York Community Trust. The course is a partnership between the Queens College Secondary Education and Youth Services Department and the Queens College Art Department.

#

Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning (JCAL)

Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning (JCAL), founded in 1972, is a multidisciplinary urban arts organization based in the diverse community of Southeast Queens. Since its founding, JCAL has supported the creation and presentation of local, emerging and established artists. JCAL is devoted to its mission to offer quality visual, performing and literary arts, arts education and diverse artistic programs to encourage participation in the arts. JCAL operates two city-owned landmark buildings owned by the City of New York, the Jamaica Arts Center (161-04 Jamaica Avenue) and Jamaica Performing Arts Center (153-10 Jamaica Avenue), is partially supported by public funds.

JCAL receives ongoing general operating and program support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs with support from Mayor Bill de Blasio, Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, the Queens Delegation of the New York City Council, New York City Council member I. Daneek Miller, Councilmember Barry Grodenchik, Councilman Rory Lancman, Councilman Donovan Richards, and Councilwoman Adrienne Adams. JCAL also receives funding from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA); foundation and corporate support from the New York Community Trust, Jerome Foundation, Booth Ferris Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Colgate Palmolive Foundation, Harkness Foundation for Dance, Con Edison, Resort World Casino New York City, and Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, and individual contributors.