

HERCULES ART STUDIO PROGRAM

**For Immediate Release
September 26, 2018**

**Press Contact:
Amy Hau: amy@herculesart.com**

HERCULES ART/STUDIO PROGRAM, A NEW MODEL FOR AFFORDABLE ARTISTS' STUDIOS, WELCOMES SIX NEW ARTISTS TO ITS FACILITY IN LOWER MANHATTAN

New York, NY -- The Hercules Art |Studio Program

HERCULES welcomes six gifted young artists who will be taking up two-year subsidized residencies in Lower Manhattan. A selections exhibition, "*The Artists are In*" opens October 3 in the Hercules facility at 25 Park Place, 3rd floor, with an opening reception and open studio from 6:30 -9 PM. The exhibition will remain on view through November 18th. Viewing hours are Saturdays & Sundays, 12-6pm; and by appointment (email: HerculesArtStudio@gmail.com)

The six were selected from a group of 86 artists who were invited to apply to the program from almost 400 thesis projects from seven MFA programs that were reviewed in 2017 and 2018. Jurors were: Andrea Woodner, Hercules Program Director; Jennifer Boysen, a Los Angeles-based artist, and Mark Yoes, a principal of WXY architecture + urban design www.wxystudio.com

The artists were drawn from three New York MFA programs.

From Columbia University:

Cati Bestard uses photography and sculpture to explore the architecture, history and elements of the spaces she inhabits. Catì is from Mallorca, Spain and received her MFA from Columbia University in 2018.catibestard.com

Phoebe Osborne A choreographer and visual artist based in New York City, Osborne employs performance, video, installation, and sound as means to examine the relationship of bodies and environments in their imminent negotiations. Osborne holds a BA in Dance from University of California, San Diego, an MFA in Visual Arts from Columbia University (2018) and is a part-time resident artist at DAS Choreography in Amsterdam. phoebeosborne.com

From Hunter College:

Madhini Nirmal (b.1992) is a painter and printmaker from Chennai, India. In her mixed-media prints, non-human animals bring form to issues of power, caste and class. She is a 2018 recipient of the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Award from the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts and Scholarship from the Manhattan Graphics Center. Nirmal received her MFA from Hunter College in 2018, and BVA in Painting from Stella Maris College, India. www.madhininirmal.com

Sujung Chang was born and raised in Seoul, South Korea and moved to New York in 2014. She makes video that appropriates a theatrical style. She received an MFA from Hunter College in 2017 and was a participant of Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2017, as well as a BFA from Ewha Women's University, Seoul, South Korea in 2013. sujungchang.com

Pablo Diaz (b. 1983, Camagüey, Cuba) is a mixed media painter living in New York. He received a BFA from The Cooper Union School of Art in 2006 where he currently teaches drawing and mixed media courses in the Outreach Program. Additionally, he is head technician for the school's Letterpress Studio, and is the acting director for the Summer Art Intensive Program. In 2016, he received the Kossak Travel Grant to study fresco painting in Pompeii and at the Convent of San Marco. In 2018, he received an MFA degree from Hunter College.

From The New York Studio School:

Manny Padernos Padernos' current work draws on his diverse background and personal history exploring themes of migration, labor, and a sense of place and belonging. Padernos completed his MFA at the New York Studio School in 2018. While at the NYSS he received scholarships from Milton and Sally Avery, Jonathan and Barbara Silver, and the Ramapo Trust. He attended residencies at Wassaic Project, Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, Vermont Studio Center, Chashama North and Chautauqua Institution School of Art. www.padernos.com

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

Named after the landmarked loft building in which it is situated ("The Hercules Seating Co.") HERCULES was called into being by co-founders Claire Weisz and Andrea Woodner on the conviction that New York City needs artists as much as artists need the city, and that high rents are a barrier to retaining artists. Woodner owned the property and allowed the rent subsidies, and together with Weisz they both envisioned the environment and designed the facility. Woodner directs the program.

HERCULES recognizes that the critical time to assist a dedicated artist is at the launch of their professional career, when they leave the rich resources and somewhat sheltered environment of a Masters program to establish a foothold in the competitive New York art world. The program situates studio practice within a physical space and ethos that encourages engaged dialogue and provides a supportive environment with peers. HERCULES artists enjoy 24/7 access to individual private studios with full amenities. The studios open onto two large open shared spaces (2,100 sq.ft. total) that are utilized for artist-curated exhibitions and artist-run critiques or discussions, as well as project space.

Each year, selectors review MFA thesis exhibitions in and around New York, and invite artists to apply for admission every two years. An invited jury makes the final selection from the selectors' short list. The next admission will be 2020.

Five of the inaugural 2016 Hercules group are continuing together as Hercules Artists in leased space in Long Is City at the invitation of Co-Founders Weisz and Woodner, who call this group "HERCULES NEXT". Weisz and Woodner dream of seeing other commercial property owners join in creating something of a movement to bring affordable studio space back to New York, and hope to convince the City to offer tax relief to help sustain the effort, in recognition of the value added to the cultural life of the city. *"But for now",* says Woodner, *"Eleven artists is a lot...our eleven, not just any eleven!"*

#####