

ICRES **ART**CHIVE EXHIBITION

CURATED BY
KEVELIS MATTHEWS ALVARADO '20 G'21
REI UKON '21
ALISSA FLORES '23
REHAN NAEEM '23

The ARTCHIVE showcases the works created in the "Art as Activism" interactive workshop series hosted by the Institute on Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (ICRES) and the Lehigh University Art Galleries (LUAG) in Spring 2022.

The ARTCHIVE, as a collection, underscores creativity, art, (and performance) as political tools; reminding viewers that activism can take many forms and that not all protests look the same.



Afiwa Afandalo '24

I Am ---

"I am Black.

I am woman.

I am queer.

I am fat.

I am immigrant.

I am first generation.


I am nature.

I am Rich.

I am multidimensional.

I am all the things I can be -

I am here!"



"The Lehigh Experience"
by Kevelis Matthews-Alvarado

the Lehigh experience is trying to teach white peers to stop saying racist shit. is failing to do so.

is spending hours arguing in Rathbone about the existence of racism, explaining why we dont deserve to be killed or why a "higher medium income for Asians' does not equate to the laziness of 'Blacks'

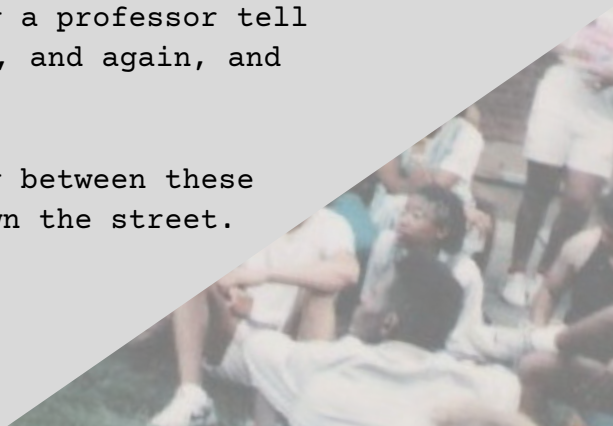
is meeting this aryan guy on tinder and him telling me I was pretty "especially for a black girl" and that he liked the way I dress it was "like ghetto but... nice". is observing the hierarchy that is physically materialized along the mountain, where the wealthy white greeks sit at the top and overlook 'sketchlehem'. is viewing poverty as danger or motive. is blissfully subscribing to the fallacies of bootstraps.


is navigating this campus as a spectacle. is holding the weight of representation. Hyper visibility and invisibility can both be quite silencing. is wondering what east fifth party you learned that white kids will casually sing the n word when they're drunk?

is imagining the type of things that might roll off their tongues when they're all alone. is getting denied entry to a party because of race, associated group ratio, clothing, or body type.

is seeing empty emails from university admin about the latest hate crime; is learning to maneuver this culture and slowly understanding what it means to attend a PWI, one that proudly plays the longest college football rivalry. is having a professor tell you poverty has nothing to do with race. is being profiled—again, and again, and again.

is getting lost in the highly segregated party scene. is moving between these different realms at Lehigh. is being harassed while you walk down the street.





"The Lehigh Experience"

(cont.)

by Kevelis Matthews-Alvarado

is not having to wear school colors because our brown and white
skins are already divided.

is a gryphon perceiving two black students as uncompliant, suspect, and threatening.
is learning to stop counting the number of times they don't think you belong here.


is the 'nigger get out of here' written under the desk. is the chalked up paved
streets. is the skinned deer head on the UHouse stoop and the egged walls years
later.

is the surprise in their voice when they discover you're a Lehigh student ... without
a legacy to lean on but still finding a way through.

racism, sexism, heteropatriarchy be everywhere, in the harmful subtleties. it's
everywhere. framed on walls; it's everywhere. in classroom syllabi; it's everywhere.
in the reactions the administration has to our pain; it's everywhere. in the claims
of isolated incidents; it's everywhere. in the investigations that failed before they
even started, Look around. it's Everywhere.

But the Lehigh experience is also this this "activism" being a part of my being,
never solely a choice like Audre said, this "poetry is not a luxury but a vital
necessity for our existence"

So, my radical poetics is not an option but rather integral to standing
and building together for our survival of 'the Lehigh experience'.



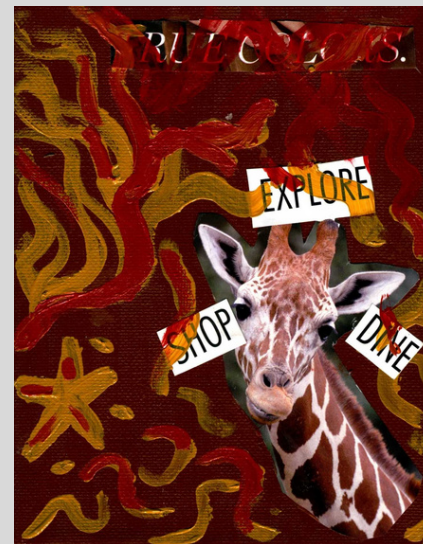


Kevelis Matthews Alvarado
'20 G'21

how many will it kill?



Rehan Naeem '23
Haze



Vicki Jagdeo '21 G'23
True Colors

we sunburnt from grinding
we sunburnt from running
we sunburnt from always working
sunburnt from tryna
chill and be still
for just a moment
just be, but we
still sunburnt

so many lives sacrificed
spirits trapped and left unfulfilled
but their bodies are needed to feed the machine

needed in the (Amazon) warehouses
needed in the factories
needed in the sweatshops
needed in the fields
needed at sea
needed in the streets
needed
and needed...
always needed.

generations stressed out
from turning grapes into wine
and turning blood into gold.

this world seems to be crumbling,
with the richest men looking to abort,
and flee to mars,
like flees,
parasitic to the host---
the earth.

we sunburnt from waiting
we sunburnt from working
we sunburnt from walking
sunburnt from tryna
chill and be still
for just a moment
just be, but we
still sunburnt

"sunburnt"

by Kevelis Matthews-Alvarado

Aren't you frustrated at how some people
can be tourists in any city they tour in
getting the power to choose
what stays within their purview
or what gets cropped from the polaroid,
acting like poor beggars will vanish if you avoid eye contact;
choose to look away.

But I can assure you that the bodies buried
under the rubble will remain even if you look away,

regardless of the burn, we dream.

dreams about the sunshine
dreams about happiness,
dreams about love,
dreams about possibilities
dreams outside of the sunken place
dreams where the earth is respected
dreams where we can live
dreams where we can eat
dreams where we can thrive

dreams
where
we
can
and
realities,

where
we
(still) find
home here.

"sunburnt" (cont.)

by Kevelis Matthews-Alvarado



(above)

Rei Ukon '21

Queer Liberation //

「クィアの人々に自由を！」

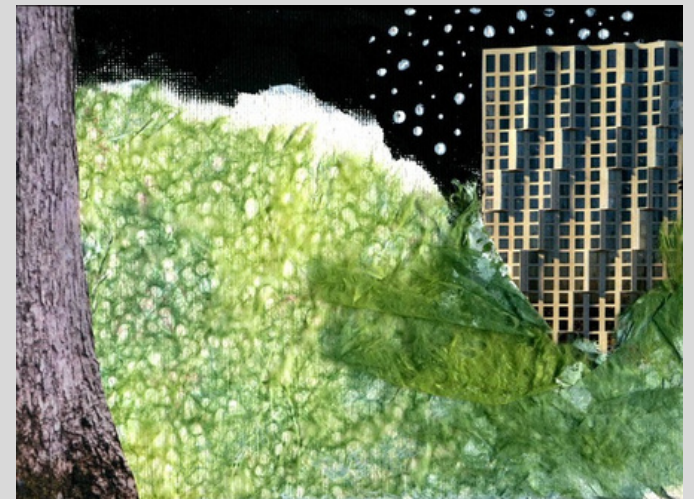
"I've always seen my queer self reflected in lion-dogs, dragons, foxes, and other mystical beings found in Japanese folklore. Their frightening yet beautiful expressions have always reminded me that we, too, are born from the mysterious natural world. I like to think we are protected by these beings, and my path towards becoming wholly my authentic self is guided by this unknown world that we cannot see with the naked eye but is always by our side, watching over us."



Kevelis Matthews Alvarado

'20 G'21

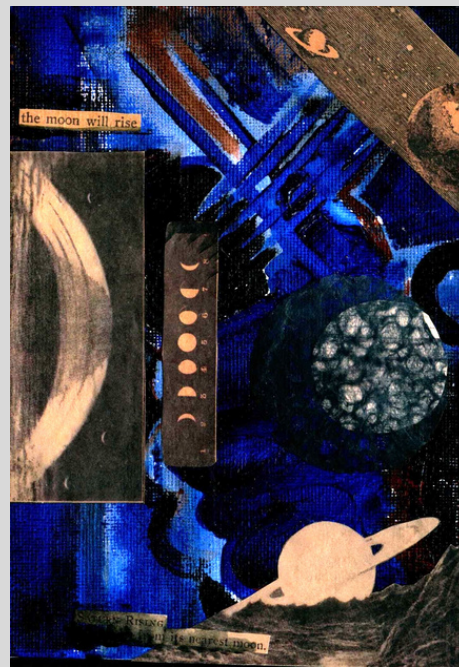
sunburnt



Elise Schaffer

Untitled

(right, pair)
Laura DeFelice '19 G'21
You Will Also Rise



Dannielle Waugh
Conscience

(right)
Afiwa Afandalo '24
In Full Bloom

"This piece is dedicated to myself. It's a reminder that I deserve beautiful things in all aspects of my life and beyond. It's a reminder to allow myself to enjoy those beautiful moments when they present themselves. It's also a reminder to seek and catch the moments I deem beautiful. It's a reminder that I deserve happiness and comfort."





Dannielle Waugh
Golden Hour



Anonymous
Reflection



Anonymous
Untitled

on our way to school
predatory men are awakened by
the sounds of the chains on our bookbags
and they do not cease
until we are out of sight

"one forty-ninth street" (2019)
by Alissa Flores

my teacher tells us to leave our emotions at the door
as if just outside
one forty-ninth street wasn't changing before our eyes

we can see the new juvie from our classroom window
they say they are rebuilding our community
the sound of their destruction disrupts our learning for months

they won't let us forget
the construction shakes our building
while we hold onto our pens
scribble panicked equations into our books
trying to make sense of whatever we could

on our way home from school
we step over needles
and lifeless people
an apocalypse

they were bodies our mayor displaced
he announced it was for us
as if discarding the bodies of our neighbors
could ever benefit us
he knew he was displacing us, too

the next day
my art teacher tells me
he is writing an article for the new york times
on the opioid crisis in our neighborhood
it was never published

so we sing songs, create and make
dance through the hallways and stomp our feet
we let ourselves laugh, engage and play
in and out of spite, because
we knew we'd have our own stories to publish one day

"one forty-ninth street" (2019)
by Alissa Flores


"one forty-ninth street fully encapsulates my experiences during high school on 600 St. Anns Avenue in the Bronx. I thought a lot about what entails a 'typical' high school experience, and the privilege of receiving an education without being in the midst of a gentrifying neighborhood, sexual violence, gun violence, and a drug epidemic. 3rd Ave-149th street is the target of environmental racism, displacement of people suffering from addiction, and the criminalization of Black and Latinx youth[...]"

-Alissa Flores, poet

Kevelis Matthews Alvarado '20 G'21
hues of our resistance



"For me, the project of dismantling white supremacy and heteropatriarchy is non-negotiable, and intrinsic to my survival in this body. For queer and trans black indigenous people of color (BIPOC), our mere existence is disruptive. Thus, our rest and our art are disruptive, are protests, are ways in which we embody resistance. Through radical love and joy we throw bricks at empires. Ultimately, the biggest symbol in this set is the sun because I believe it symbolizes the ferocity of our persistence; no matter the violence, we are here rising like the sun, day after day, in the most beautiful ways."



Days where I feel a little more transparent than usual
A little more vulnerable, out of place, invisible
Some days I forget the work I've done to get right here
Like an impostor in a world that they say was meant for me

It could be the pressure of being the generation that's supposed to do it all
Supposed to be a savior
Supposed to create something
Supposed to prove this was all worth it
But I don't dream of labor
And I don't do so well under pressure
My art is a labor of love, my one exception

On the days I feel a little weaker than usual
I blast the songs of culture in my ears
And it feels revolutionary
It feels like I'm biting back
It feels like I finally have the upper hand

Poetry I never got the chance to write
Poetry drowned out by the need to work hard
To sacrifice
To lose sleep
To take pieces of myself
Make something of myself
To make something of myself
But not my art

Constantly told I need to give pieces of myself to be here
Told myself I need to work hard 'cause I'm here,
Because people worked for me to be here
But I don't wanna lose myself to be here


When I speak to all my friends
Who grew up similar to me
These women tell me familiar stories of
Vulnerability

There's no longer room for our femininity
Alongside any type of safety
We can't leave our homes with any sense of tranquility
But in our art we feel safe
We foster one another in the words we say

"The Process"

by Alissa Flores





And the pictures we paint
We gossip over cafe and mix colors on our canvases
Looking for the 'just right'

We hear one another, we call it sisterhood
The way we can make art in honor of one another's hardship
And beauty
Her aura, a medium between nurturing, divine, unbreakable
You can see it in her art

Yet growing up there was no time to linger
No time to sit and create, make space
No time
The spaces where we could heal
Sing songs, dance, cry, yearn
Use our hands and our souls to make the pieces we hold close
They closed at 6, we had to get on the subway by 5
There's no time


But when I do
When I do get to let my thoughts, feelings, mantras flow
Those mornings where my mother makes her mixtures
To bless the home
And the city streets a little drowsier than usual
Days where I can think, create, concentrate
Forget that the world is moving, and it's hurting
I write

I write like I've been holding back my entire life
I write like this is the way to give my parents back their time
Time they spent in a country that promised them so much
I write like the world is ending and this is my last word
I write like it is my duty to write
Because to me it is
For my grandmother who couldn't
The gentle woman who relies on the stars
Over any figure of authority
When I write, time stops, and I feel her in the wind

And when the world moves again
And time feels scarce
I hop and skip around words in my head
Solving equations to level myself
Making lyrics and counting syllables to find pieces I need for myself
To heal

"The Process" (cont.)
by Alissa Flores






That's the Nuyorican way,
I get on the 5 train, and I jot down notes
I backtrack, I pinpoint, I think about that word I need
On the tip of my tongue
I heal
And even when the universe is begging me to stop
I heal

And when I finally get to my destination
Just for a moment
The pressure of being the generation that's supposed to do it all
Gives me the drive
I needed to make it through the day

Feeling a little less transparent
And a little more like I belong
Feeling a little more healed

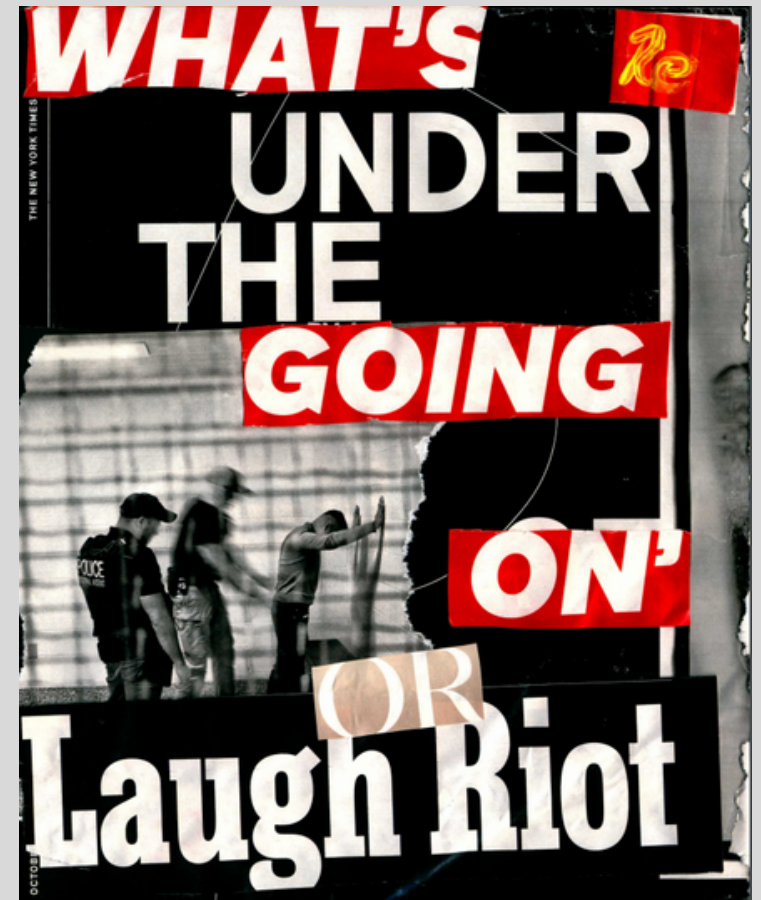
"The Process was written as I reconsidered the role of art in my life, especially as a first-generation Latinx American, and college student. I reconsidered many of the things I was taught to do- romanticize labor, repress my love for art and music, and prioritize appealing to violent institutions that profit off of exploitation. Through this transformation, I learned that my art is my priority above all. My art is what immortalizes the women that come before me, and my sisters who stand beside me."

Alissa Flores, poet





Era Shuaipi '22
Records of mind



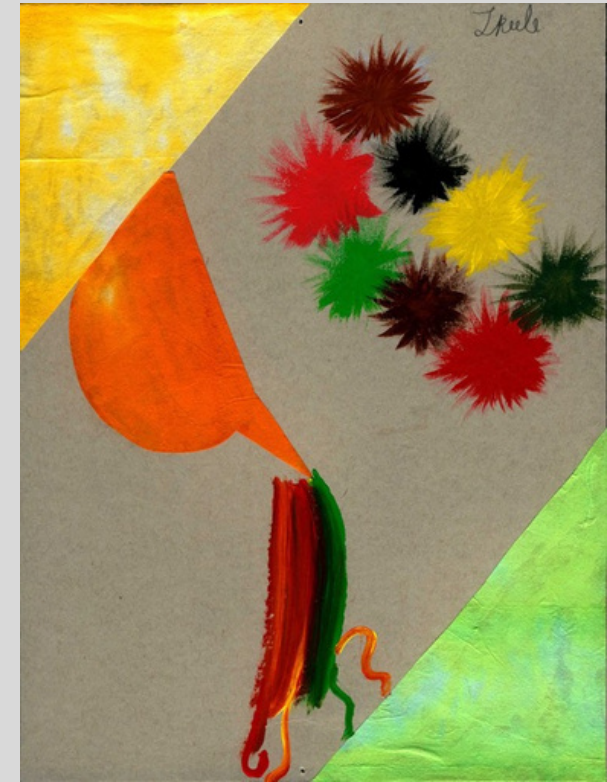
Rehan Naeem '23
What's Goin On'



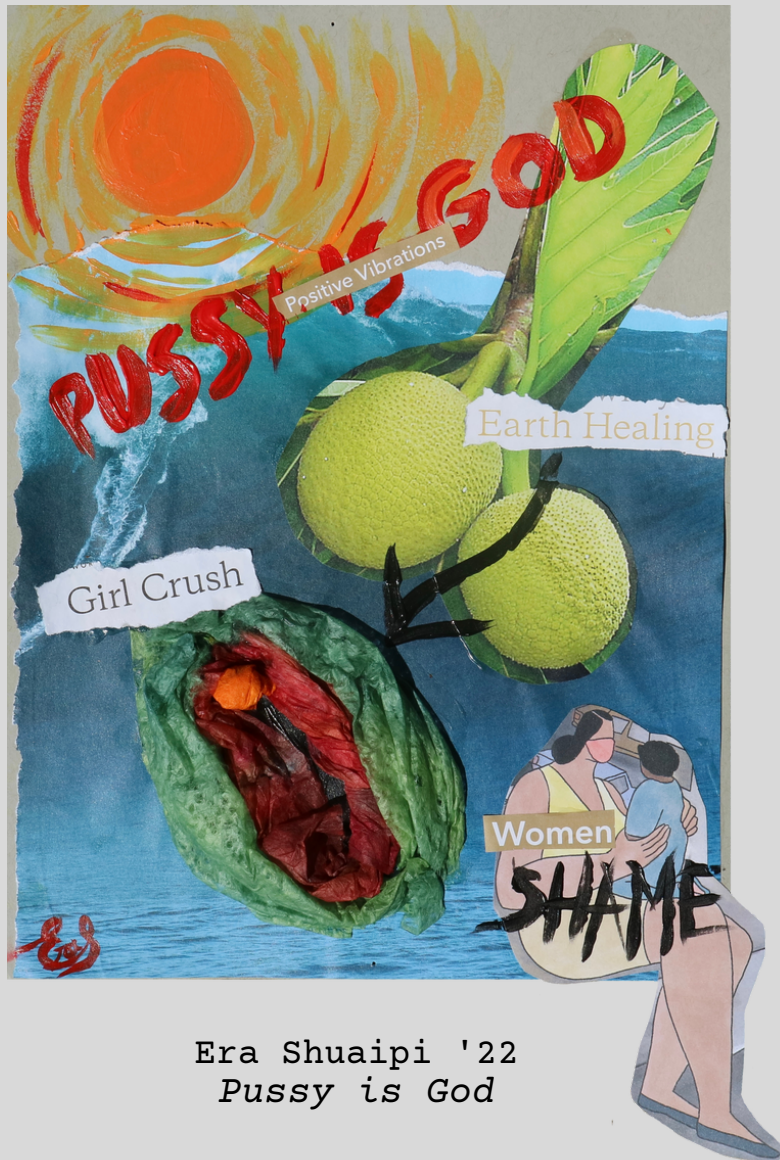
Londyn Keele '22
Tired Ink

"It comes at a time when I feel spiritually exhausted. Pushing the limits of my imagination at a time of an art block."

Vicki Jagdeo '21 G'23
Untitled



Londyn Keele '22
Untitled



Era Shuaipi '22
Pussy is God



Priscilla Duarte
 Mangú
 "Queers who love mangú."



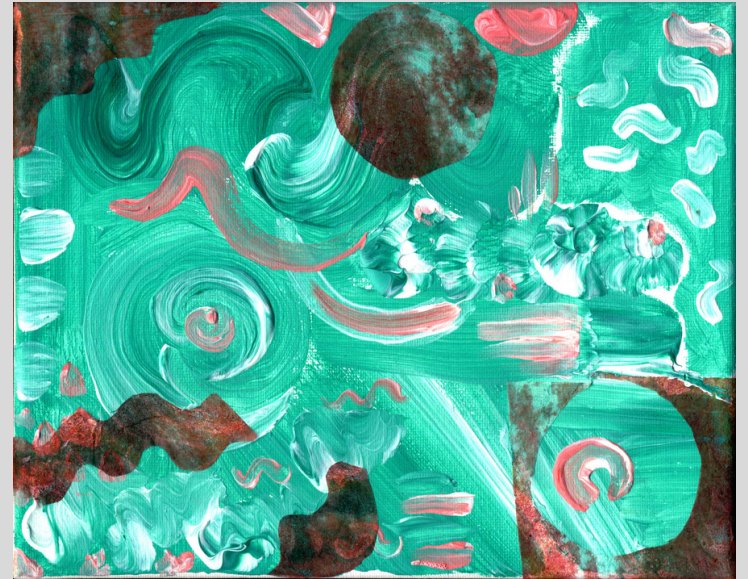
Dannielle Waugh
 Untitled



Anonymous
 Belief



Laura DeFelice '19 G'21
Strawberry Dreams



Laura DeFelice '19 G'21
Dreams of Mint



Anonymous
Untitled