



136-17 39th Avenue, Ground Floor
Flushing, NY 11354
Telephone: (212) 359-4333 | www.crossingart.com



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Preview: Wednesday, November 12, 2pm – 3pm
Opening Reception: Friday, November 14, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Exhibition Dates: November 14 – December 13, 2014

Featured artists: Karen Cintron (Brooklyn, NY), Antonietta Grassi (Westmount, QC, Canada), Inguna Gremzde (Latvia), Rumi Hara (Brooklyn, NY), YK Hong (Brooklyn, NY), Kyoung eun Kang (Brooklyn, NY), Per Pegelow (Hamburg, Germany) and Merrill Steiger (New York, NY)

Crossing Art, in conjunction with the Queens Library Foundation is pleased to present, “The View Over Here: Constructing Cultural Identity,” an International Juried Exhibition to support the Queens Library Foundation. The opening reception and fundraising event will take place on Friday, November 14 from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at Crossing Art. A portion of the proceeds from the opening will be donated to Queens Library: International Commons, a new borough-wide initiative which will expand the Library’s award winning programs and services for new Americans and promote cultural activities that celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Queens residents. Tickets are \$10 and include entrance to the reception where wine, beer and hors d’oeuvres will be served. To purchase advance tickets, please visit: foundation.queenslibrary.org.

From an international pool of artists, 8 were selected by jurors to be featured in this inaugural exhibition. “The View Over Here: Constructing Cultural Identity,” is composed of artworks that range from paintings and videos, to installations and photography, created by selected artists, **Karen Cintron, Antonietta Grassi, Inguna Gremzde, Rumi Hara, YK Hong, Kyoung eun Kang, Per Pegelow and Merrill Steiger**. Highlighting and celebrating the interactions of different nationalities, and expounding upon the use of art as a way to express one’s origins, the finalists create overlapping visual dialogues that juxtapose human interactions, family traditions and new experiences in both familiar and foreign environments. Whether relating to the past, present, future or thematically, each artist individually addresses and explores contemporary meanings of identity in our ever-changing global landscape.

In an effort to investigate her South American ancestry, artist **Karen Cintron** experiments with different mediums and methodologies that express the historical, cultural and technical aspects of traditional Peruvian crafts. By creating work that requires a high level of handcraft, focus and precision, such as *The Persistence of Patience* which was created over a year and a half long period with dyed breaded tissue paper, she embodies the “chosen women” or in Quechua the “Aclla Cuna,” who during the Inca period were celebrated for their artistic talents. Although she sees herself as being distanced from her ancestry, she aims to create pieces that both express Peruvian culture and her American upbringing. Artist **Antonietta Grassi’s** work presents cultural identity in an abstract light as her pieces reflect the tension between order and collapse, while conveying a sense of fragility and loss. Her work activates architectural references to invoke an emotional state of instability. Pieces such as *The Dismantling* are reflective of her experience packing her late parent’s house after their death and echo the empty shells of physical structures as a way to process vulnerability, dislocation and loneliness. In a more literal approach to exploring our global community’s relationship to the environment, **Inguna Gremzde** interprets our society’s alienation from nature as a result of our consumer lifestyle. Work such as *Landscape for Subconscious Need*, is comprised of miniature landscape paintings placed in standardized plastic bottle caps to depict scenes without national restrictions. By not showing any trace of human presence, the scenes juxtapose our contemporary lifestyle with man’s historically romantic

relationship with nature. Also exploring nature, and the cultural communities connected to it are **Rumi Hara's** series of watercolors from her book, *Borderland*. Through visual storytelling, she enlivens forgotten or hidden stories, and challenges the divides between the past and the present, and the here and there. *Borderland* integrates watercolor illustrations, hand-inked comics, and photographs to tell a story about the present landscape of the Sea Islands along the Georgia coast. Emphasizing the characteristics of the region as an in-between space of Africa and America, land and water, and reality and imagination, her narratives take the viewer on a dreamlike journey through different memories.

Artist **YK Hong's** series *WanJaMeun* utilizes techniques derived from the traditional Asian art of woodblock carving, which compare the negative and positive spaces between the carved and uncarved lines, as well as show the process of creation through each individual mark. These works serve to illustrate how we exist in the present, but also look to our foundations and the history of our traditions. **Kyoung eun Kang** through video art and installation strives to capture the subtlety of human nature by observing situations that question how humans form bonds and attachments. She examines the small gestures that bridge the gap between continents to create a connection between couples, families, communities, and even strangers. She creates transitory happenings such as *Islands* which rely on nothing more than her own body, people and a handful of props and objects. She juxtaposes Korean stones, care packages, and other objects from her childhood with new environments to question the meaning of heritage, culture, and family. Artist **Per Pegelow** in his installation piece *P.A.U.L.A.* reminds viewers that the boat, often seen as a traditional carrier of equipment and as a vessel for migration and immigration was one of the earliest forms of globalization. Seen here within the white walls of the gallery, *P.A.U.L.A.* is viewed as a projection which bridges the gap between the natural environment of the vessel with our current era of hypermodernism. In **Merrill Steiger's** series, *Dreamland*, she embraces a range of individual anthropological references from diverse cultures and combines them with scientific imagery which includes magnified views of cells and geological and cosmic structures. *Dreamland*, named after the Aboriginal practice in which the dream and spiritual life is interpreted visually by using a pointillist technique is explored through the landscapes of caves and rock totems dotted throughout the Aboriginal dream world. By combining existing elements in different ways, Steiger re-imagines that which nature has already created.

Crossing Art and the Queens Library Foundation both believe that art can serve as a cultural unifier, and that by building upon common ground to heal wounded or distant relationships we can promote new affiliations and build stronger communities. Although the finalists vary in their techniques and approaches, together these selected artists have the power to influence and to inspire viewers to better understand both individual and collective experiences while celebrating the continuity and uniqueness that creates every community.

An extended thank you to our esteemed jurors: John Hatfield, Executive Director, Socrates Sculpture Park; Larissa Harris, Curator, Queens Museum and Catherine Lee, Managing Director, F&T Group and Queens Library Foundation Board Member.

For questions or additional information, please contact Rebecca O'Malley at rebecca@crossingart.com
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