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CONTACT: Midori Yamamura | Co-Curator, *UnHomeless NYC* | myamamura3524@gmail.com

UnHomeless NYC: Exhibition at Kingsborough Art Museum Visualizes Housing Crisis and Alternative Possibilities for the Future

Brooklyn, New York – Thousands of low-income New Yorkers behind on rent are now at risk of losing their homes as the pandemic-era moratorium on evictions ends. Fifteen percent of CUNY students report being homeless – and more than half have unstable housing. A new exhibition at Kingsborough Community College’s (KCC) [Kingsborough Art Museum](#), titled ***UnHomeless NYC***, brings together 15 artists and artist groups to examine how the fundamental human right to housing has been eclipsed in this city since it first emerged in the late 1970s. Through artwork that highlights research, statistics, and activism, the exhibition offers a forum to better understand New York City’s housing crisis and think about our future as we emerge from the pandemic.

Curated by Maureen Connor, Jason Leggett, Tommy Mintz, Rob Robinson, and Midori Yamamura, the exhibition runs from March 7 through April 14, 2022. It is divided into three sections: 1) Systemic Contradictions, 2) Interactions with Life on the Street, and 3) Prospective Futures. Funding for the exhibition was provided in part by the Mellon/ACLS, Humanities New York, SPCUNY, and PSC-CUNY.

SYSTEMIC CONTRADICTIONS:

- **Martha Rosler’s *If You Lived Here ...*** (1989) was a reaction against then-Mayor Ed Koch’s infamous call: “If you can’t afford to live here, mo-o-ove!!” It used statistics and artworks produced by over 200 artists, activists, writers, community groups, and local school groups at Dia Art Foundation in SoHo to poignantly capture the beginning of the housing crisis in the city. The KCC exhibition builds on the original, juxtaposing the original statistics from 1989 with corresponding recent data to heighten visitors’ awareness of the worsening housing crisis.
- **Miguel Robles-Durán and *Cohabitation Strategies***’ (CohStra) documentary video, ***Uneven Growth*** (2014), compiles interviews with academics, activists, and journalists to explain how the system created a situation where there were three times more vacant apartments than the homeless population in 2014, due to the lack of affordable housing. Eviction became a recurring tactic for landlords, using rezoning policies and gentrification in order to convert low-income housing into profit-generating units.

- Critical urbanist **Manon Vergerio's *Anti-Eviction Mapping Project*** (2014-) provides an opportunity for visitors to view eviction data on an interactive city map and listen to recordings of evictees' personal stories.
- **Dominique Paul's *Median Income Dress*** (2015), made of programmable LED strips, changes colors in correspondence to an online census map. As Paul walks through parts of Brooklyn and Manhattan, the dress illuminates the link between income inequality and the racial makeup of a particular location.
- **Dread Scott's *On the Impossibility of Freedom in a Country Founded on Slavery and Genocide*** (2016) reminds viewers of how the uneven development of the city's geography connects to the history of civil rights activism in the United States, pointing to a foundation of inequality and calling for institutional change.
- In ***Three Facilitated Workshops*** (March-April 2022), the artists collective **BFAMFAPHD**, which bases its work on radical pedagogy, focuses on the impact of food and housing insecurity on the well-being of students at Kingsborough Community College.

INTERACTIONS WITH LIFE ON THE STREET:

- **Michael Rakowitz's *paraSITE*** (1997) galvanizes a do-it-yourself spirit by providing a set of instructions for creating a portable inflatable homeless shelter.
- **Bill Beirne's *Priority Seating*** (2017-) initiates change by asking gallery visitors to advocate for preferential seating for homeless people by placing priority seating signs on public benches and other support structures.
- Amplifying the messages of these seminal pieces is **William Baronet's** display, ***We Are All Homeless*** (2022), a selection of signs he has been purchasing from homeless people for over three decades. Baronet is collaborating with **Michael Corris** to create ***Incidents on the Street: A Workbook*** (2022), a 'zine which gives readers the opportunity to respond to images of the signs with questions that might provoke a rethinking of some of their preconceived notions about homelessness.
- **Hope Sandrow** and **The Artists and Homeless Collaborative's** historical video, ***Making Art, Reclaiming Lives*** (1993), demonstrates the value of collective artmaking by documenting the creation of a mural by homeless women living at the Lenox Hill Women's Mental Health Shelter at the Park Avenue Armory, as they worked together with several New York artists. The show also features Sandrow's ***Shelter News*** and ***Resumé***, two projects that provide a deeper understanding of homeless people's situations.
- Hospitality is the subject of artist **Nancy Hwang** and chef **Heidi Thomas's *Outdoor Dining*** (2021). The duo provided discreet and extraordinary dining experiences for eight homeless people at Madison Square Park in October 2021.

PROSPECTIVE FUTURES:

- Capitalism typically employs destruction as a means for development, devastating existing communities, cultures, and the environment. The artists and urbanists in this section suggest alternative possibilities for the future of our city beginning with **CohStra's 2021 Venice Architecture Biennale** piece, ***How to Begin Again: An Initiation Towards Unitary Urbanism***, which introduces transformative, environmentally, and socially just urban design possibilities.

- Considering the unique clothing needs of homeless individuals, **Sachigusa Yasuda** reimagines modes of production and distribution with her anti-capitalist clothing line, **UpCycle, UpLift**. Altering recycled clothes to suit the requirements of those who live on the street, Yasuda invites the public to discuss the possibilities of circulating her fashion brand within a regenerative economic system.
- In ***Ignea: an exchange about nestling technologies*** (2021-), **Bibi Calderaro** considers different models for habitation and community in the age of climate change. She invites us to rethink humanity's relationship with "fire, energy, and consumption" by holding a talk around a bonfire to discuss possible ways to inhabit the planet while considering scale, interdependencies with others, and temporalities.

UnHomeless NYC LISTING INFORMATION

Location: Kingsborough Art Museum

Arts & Science Building

2001 Oriental Blvd., Brooklyn, NY 11235

On view: March 7 — April 14, 2022

Hours: Mon. – Fri., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sat. by appointment (to coordinate a campus visit, email: myamamura3524@gmail.com)

Opening Reception Schedule: Wednesday, March 9, 2022, 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

4 p.m. – 5 p.m., Opening remarks, **Rob Robinson** (housing activist and professor at The New School)

5 p.m. – 7 p.m., **Bibi Calderaro, *Ignea*** (2021-)

The show and all events will be accessible online: <https://kccartmuseum.org/>

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Planning on visiting the campus? Visitors to Kingsborough Community College must request approval for entry via the Cleared4 Visitor app at least **three business days prior** to the date you wish to visit the campus: <https://www.c4wrk.com/7imS7GZKqSumBNbv9>. The app will ask for your vaccination date(s), so please have the information handy. Once approved, you will be sent a QR code that must be presented to the officer at the main gate of the campus.

We need to register your name. Please email: myamamura3524@gmail.com

Notify us that you are visiting the show!

UNHOMELESS NYC EVENT SCHEDULE	Written in red: Not finalized
<p>March 9, 3–7 p.m. Public Event In person OPENING RECEPTION</p> <p>Program:</p> <p>3–4 p.m. GATHERING</p> <p>4–5 p.m. OPENING REMARKS Curators: Thomas Mintz Jason Legget Maureen Connor Midori Yamamura</p> <p>STUDENTS WHO NEED HELP Hattie Elmore</p> <p>KEYNOTE SPEECH “The Right to Housing ‘Overcoming Homelessness-- a Social Issue vs an Individual Problem’ “ Rob Robinson, Housing Activist</p> <p>5-7 p.m. IGNEA: AN EXCHANGE ABOUT NESTING TECHNOLOGIES Bibi Calderaro</p> <p><i>Ignea: An Exchange About Nesting Technologies</i> gathers audiences around a built fire to talk about possible ways to inhabit the planet, taking into account its scale, interdependencies, and temporalities. It proposes to rethink humanity’s relationship with fire, energy, and consumption.</p> <p>Bibi Calderaro is an artist and educator who engages in transdisciplinary practice in order to</p>	<p>March 16, 3–4 p.m. Public Event</p> <p>TALK TITLE Young Invincibles Zoom</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Young Invincibles (YI) was founded by a group of students in the summer of 2009, motivated by the recognition that young people’s voices were not being heard in the debate over health care reform. YI provides the facts about barriers young adults face in affording quality health insurance, shares peer stories, stands up, and makes young people’s voices heard. Ever since YI has expanded to a national organization with offices across the country. YI takes on issues related to health care, higher education, and economic security, committed to expanding economic opportunity for young adults ages 18 to 34 and making sure that young people’s perspective is heard wherever decisions about their collective future are being made.</p>

<p>expand her audience's perceptual capacities to foster reciprocal, diverse, and ethical relationships among life forms. Her work aims at building ecological solidarity within and beyond humanity.</p>	
<p>March 16, 2–7 p.m. PUBLIC EVENT UPCYCLE, UPLIFT Sachigusa Yasuda In person</p> <p><i>Upcycle, Uplift</i> proposes a utopian solution to the current housing crisis by developing a line of recycled clothing created in workshops and remodeled based on the needs of homeless people. The participatory project invites the public to engage in deep listening with homeless people, opening themselves up to the complex issues that drive people to the street beyond the stereotypical assumptions. By designing and creating clothes that meet the needs of unhoused people, <i>Upcycle, Uplift</i> helps to restore dignity to those living on the street. Yasuda further tries to establish <i>Upcycle, Uplift</i> as a clothing brand and discusses concepts with college students and faculty members for an alternative economic system that can distribute profits in more egalitarian ways.</p> <p>About Sachigusa Yasuda Born and raised in Japan, Yasuda moved to New York City in 2009 and has been creating artworks from the worldview of a woman and an ethnic minority.</p>	<p>March 17, 10–11 a.m. Public Event WHAT IS HOME? Willie Baronet Kingsborough Art Museum In person, artist talk and signage-making workshop</p> <p>March 17, 1:30–3 p.m. Public Event SIGNS OF HUMANITY 2017 Willie Baronet Art & Science Building, 163 In person, film screening and director's talk</p> <p><i>Signs of Humanity</i> is a documentary film that explores interrelated themes of home, homelessness, compassion, and humanity. Willie Baronet has purchased more than 2,000 homeless signs over the past twenty-seven years. He uses this collection to create installations to raise awareness about homelessness. During the month of July 2014, Willie and three filmmakers drove across the country, interviewing more than 100 people on the streets and purchasing over 280 signs. <i>Signs of Humanity</i> is a film about that trip.</p> <p>March 17, 3–4 p.m. Public Event HOME IS A JOURNEY Willie Baronet Starting from Kingsborough Art Museum</p> <p>In this event, each participant will hold</p>

	<p>one homeless sign and march on campus to show their support for homeless people. https://www.facebook.com/events/306775864624572/</p> <p>About Willie Baronet After a prolific career in advertising design, Willie Baronet began creating art out of homeless signs to raise public awareness on housing insecurity. Since 1993, he has purchased more than 2,000 signs from the homeless as part of a long-term art project titled, <i>We Are All Homeless</i>.</p>
<p>March 24, 1:30–2:30 p.m. Public Event Art / Activism / Context / Surveillance Bill Beirne Zoom</p> <p>This lecture traces the development of Beirne’s activist art and performance practice in relation to some precedents in modern art history.</p> <p>The artist will present selections from his work since the early ’70s that address political and sociological concerns. Also, Beirne will discuss the genesis and implementation of <i>Priority Seating</i>, his participatory work created for the <i>UnHomeless NYC</i> exhibition, with special attention to surveillance.</p> <p>Bill Beirne currently lives and works in New York City. For more than four decades, Beirne’s conceptual art has examined public space, communication, interactivity, and sociological concerns through public performances. In addition to exhibitions in the US and in Eastern and Western Europe, he was commissioned by the Madison Square Park Conservancy’s public art</p>	<p>March 25, 2–4 p.m. Invite Only WORKSHOP #1 BFAMFAPhD Zoom (link will be sent after RSVP) Participants: 10 Administrators / Staff and 10 Faculty To register, please RSVP to Susan Jahoda susan.e.jahoda@gmail.com. Indicate which workshop(s) you will be attending.</p> <p><i>Three Facilitated Workshops</i> focus on the impact of food and housing precarity on the well-being of students at Kingsborough Community College. The first two workshops use Intergroup Dialogue, a deep listening practice that highlights similarities and fosters understanding among different groups. The third workshop will be open to the public.</p> <p>BFAMFAPhD is a collective that formed in 2012 to make art, reports, and teaching tools to advocate for cultural equity in the United States. The work of the collective is to bring</p>

<p>series, Madison Square Art. In his video installation and performance <i>Madison Square Trapezoids</i>, Beirne, as “The Vigilant Groundsman,” performed absurdist lawn maintenance tasks within the boundaries of live surveillance-monitored areas of the park.</p>	<p>people together to analyze and reimagine relationships of power in the arts. Among the group's core members are Susan Jahoda, Agnes Szanyi, Vicky Virgin, and Caroline Woolard.</p>
<p>March 29, 1:30–2:30 p.m. PUBLIC EVENT THE ANTI-EVICTION MAPPING PROJECT AND OUR METHODOLOGIES Manon Vergerio Zoom</p> <p>In this talk, critical urbanist Manon Vergerio will give a brief background on the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (AEMP), a web-based interactive mapping project that personalizes eviction data through the evictees’ stories of struggle and resistance. She will discuss how the multimedia collective uses oral history and mapping for housing activism. Participants will listen to a few short clips from the AEMP’s oral history archive and reflect on them through a series of prompts as a way to learn about displacement, housing, and organizing.</p> <p>Manon Vergerio is an organizer and a critical urbanist whose practice draws across disciplines to illuminate and organize around urban justice issues. Vergerio is a co-founder of the NYC chapter of the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (AEMP).</p>	<p>March 31, 4 PM - 5 PM PUBLIC EVENT HOW TO BEGIN AGAIN: AN INITIATION TOWARDS UNITARY URBANISM Miguel Robles-Durán (Cohabitation Strategies) Zoom</p> <p>CohStra’s Venice Architecture Biennale piece, <i>How to Begin Again: An Initiation Towards Unitary Urbanism</i>, is a response to the question curator Hashim Sarkis posed, “How will we live together” in the midst of global crises like climate change, wealth inequality, mass migrations, political polarization, and now pandemics? The current state of global, neoliberal urbanization exploits communities, cultures, and the environment. <i>How to Begin Again</i> is a 4-step initiation to a new awareness about alternatives for the future of urban design. It centers on the concept of unitary urbanism, which CohStra redefines as “an anti-capitalist and transdisciplinary practice that attempts to bridge popular and scientific knowledge to co-produce social and environmental justice in cities.”</p> <p>In 2008, the urbanist Miguel Robles-Durán, together with his work partners Lucia Babina, Emiliano Gandolfi, and Gabriela Rendón,</p>

	<p>founded Stichting Cohabitation Strategies (CohStra), an international nonprofit cooperative for socio-spatial research and development based in Rotterdam and New York City. CohStra focuses on conditions of urban decline, inequality, and segregation within the contemporary city. The group developed and designed over a dozen transdisciplinary urban projects in Europe, Asia, North America, and South America, utilizing different methodologies to structure frameworks that catalyze grassroots-led transformations.</p>
<p>April 5, 4–5:30 p.m. THE ARTIST & HOMELESS COLLECTIVE Hope Sandrow (artist) Discussant, Nina Felshin (editor of <i>But Is it Art? The Spirit of Art and Activism</i>) Zoom</p> <p>In the early 1990s, conceptual artist Hope Sandrow founded the Artist & Homeless Collaborative, an innovative New York City public art project. Combining elements of grassroots activity with media techniques, she worked with homeless women living at the Lenox Hill Women’s Mental Health Shelter at the Park Avenue Armory and several New York artists, exploring the transformative potential of art in public and private life. Together with volunteers from the art world and activist groups including the Guerrilla Girls, Women’s Action Coalition, and Visual AIDS, the women residents called attention to their experiences through exhibitions, published work, and activist poster projects. Sandrow will discuss her project with Nina Felshin, the editor of <i>But Is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism</i> (Seattle, WA; Bay Press, 1995).</p>	<p>April 6, 2–4 p.m. (in person) April 8,* 2–4 p.m. (Zoom) *Alternative date if, for some reason, the in-person event cannot be held WORKSHOP #2 BFAMFAPhD Location: KAM, Kingsborough Community College Participants: 5 Administrators / Staff, 5 Faculty, ideally from workshop #1, and 10 Students To register please RSVP to Susan Jahoda susan.e.jahoda@gmail.com Indicate which workshop(s) you will be attending.</p> <p><i>Three Facilitated Workshops</i> focus on the impact of food and housing precarity on the well-being of students at Kingsborough Community College. The first two workshops use Intergroup Dialogue—a deep listening practice that aims to highlight similarities and foster understanding among different groups. The third workshop will be open to the public. BFAMFAPhD is a collective that formed in 2012 to make art, reports, and teaching tools to advocate for</p>

	<p>cultural equity in the United States. The work of the collective is to bring people together to analyze and reimagine relationships of power in the arts. Among the group's core members are Susan Jahoda, Agnes Szanyi, Vicky Virgin, and Caroline Woolard.</p>
<p>April 7, 11 a.m.–4 p.m. PUBLIC EVENT UPCYCLE, UPLIFT Sachigusa Yasuda In person</p> <p><i>Upcycle, Uplift</i> proposes a utopian solution to the current housing crisis by developing a line of recycled clothing created in workshops and remodeled based on the needs of homeless people. The participatory project invites the public to engage in deep listenings with homeless people, opening themselves up to the complex issues that drive people to the street beyond the stereotypical assumptions. By designing and creating clothes that meet the needs of unhoused people, <i>Upcycle, Uplift</i> helps to restore dignity to those living on the street. Yasuda further tries to establish <i>Upcycle, Uplift</i> as a clothing brand and discusses with college students and faculty members concepts for an alternative economic system that can distribute profits in more egalitarian ways.</p> <p>About Sachigusa Yasuda Born and raised in Japan, Yasuda moved to New York City in 2009 and has been creating artworks from the worldview of a woman and an ethnic minority.</p>	<p>April 8, 3 p.m.–4:30 p.m. PUBLIC EVENT ROUND TABLE WITH JESSICA KATZ, NYC HOUSING COMMISSIONER, ROB ROBINSON, HOUSING ACTIVIST, AND TOM ANGOTTI, PROFESSOR EMERITUS, HUNTER COLLEGE In person</p>

April 14, 3–4:30 p.m.

Public Event

WORKSHOP #3

BFAMFAPhD

Zoom (link will be sent after RSVP)

To register please RSVP to Susan Jahoda

susan.e.jahoda@gmail.com

Indicate which workshop(s) you will be attending.

Three Facilitated Workshops focus on the impact of food and housing precarity on the well-being of students at Kingsborough Community College. The first two workshops use Intergroup Dialogue—a deep listening practice that aims to highlight similarities and foster understanding among different groups. This final **WORKSHOP #3** will be a public event on Zoom and will create a dialogue with other projects included in the *UnHomeless NYC* exhibition.

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