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Buffalo Arts Studio Presents two new solo exhibitions opening January 22, 2021
Justina Dziama, *A Millimeter of Space*
Felipe Shibuya, *Black Cherry*
January 22 – March 6, 2021

Virtual tour and artist talk via Facebook Live Event
6:00 pm, Friday, January 22, 2021
Part of M&T Fourth Friday @ TriMain Center



BUFFALO, NY— Buffalo Arts Studio will present two solo exhibitions in January 2021 as part of the National Endowment for the Arts funded *Activism in the Arts* project. *Activism in the Arts* reflects the belief that artists and curators can effect change through purposeful collaborations that balance community needs, artistic insight, and educational impact. This series intends to not only display powerful visual statements, but also to communicate ideas involving social, economic, environmental, and representational justice in meaningful and accessible ways, all while inspiring action within diverse communities.

“It is our hope that these exhibitions will bring communities together, in person when possible and virtually when not, around these important topics. We welcome community engagement in the arts at every level,” says curator Shirley Verrico.

Justina Dziama (Buffalo, NY) is a 2019 graduate of the International Media Architecture Master Studies Program at the Bauhaus Universität Weimar in Germany and the Masters of Architecture Program at the

State University of New York at Buffalo. Dziama is the **2020 Activism in the Arts Artist-in-Residence** at Buffalo Arts Studio where she is preparing a new body of work, *A Millimeter of Space*, to be exhibited at Buffalo Arts Studio January 22–March 6, 2021. Dziama is a 2019 graduate of the International Media Architecture Master Studies Program at the Bauhaus Universität Weimar in Germany and the Masters of Architecture Program at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

For the residency, Dziama is researching the economically distressed East Side neighborhood that surrounds the Tri-Main Center, a former factory that houses Buffalo Arts Studio. Dziama's artistic practice approaches the post industrial landscape as sites of material agency in which the exterior surfaces of a building, exposed to the elements, demonstrate the types of material transformations that take place with a lack of human intervention and upkeep. Her work captures layers of surface deterioration on industrial buildings, religious structures, and domestic spaces to represent the conditions of neighborhoods and communities. Deindustrialization and disinvestment of the 20th century hit Buffalo's East Side neighborhood especially hard, ravaging many of the structures. As a result, these buildings exhibit the temporal qualities of dilapidation and decay. Dziama's hyperphysical castings fabricated from latex vary in color and texture, all the while remaining reflective of human scale. Once removed, the castings form palimpsests that bear the physical traces of continuously changing social, environmental, and economic conditions of a neighborhood in distress. The topography of this decaying architecture serves as a metaphor for the cultural and community blight caused by the loss of manufacturing jobs as well as discriminatory economic practices.

Felipe Shibuya (Buffalo, NY & São Paulo, Brazil) studied Ecology and Nature Conservation at the Federal University of Paraná, Brazil, where he earned his Ph.D and is currently an M.F.A. candidate in Studio Art at the University at Buffalo, working at the intersection between biology and art. The black cherry (*Prunus serotina*) is a robust tree, native to the forests of North America. It supports diverse populations of insects, birds, and mammals. Considered a "pioneer species," the Black Cherry is responsible for preparing the forest floor to nourish new organisms in search of a home. This installation, titled *Black Cherry*, is designed to recall that natural arboreal habitat, using cut sections of a felled Black Cherry arranged across the gallery floor, each sprouting a graceful metal rod supporting a transparent IV bag. The juxtaposition of the natural and the man-made creates a jarring image of a forest in distress.

Black Cherry is based on carefully researched data and each element has both a metaphorical and a quantitative meaning. The size of each tree section is related to the physical size of each of the 50 United States.* The height of each rod is related to the number of people born in each state based on data extracted in November of 2020 from the United States Census Bureau database. The volume of liquid in each IV bag represents the number of immigrants residing in each of the states based on data extracted in November of 2020 from the United States Census Bureau database and estimates by the Center for Migration Studies. *Black Cherry* uses the data extracted from United States censuses to create a parallel between the forest and the immigration process, showing that diversity is also an important engine to keep both people and place alive. Together, the elements of the installation serve as a metaphor for the importance of living in the midst of diversity; a forest survives because of each individual organism inside it, and much like a community, flourishes when the diverse inhabitants can work together in a network of support.

*The District of Columbia and Puerto Rico were not included due to lack of available data.

Activism in the Arts is made possible, in part, by the support of the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional exhibition support provided by Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation, Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo, Erie County Cultural Funding, John R. Oishei Foundation, M&T Bank, the National Endowment for the Arts, Rigidized Metals, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.



Buffalo Arts Studio is a not-for-profit arts organization whose mission is to provide affordable studio space and regular public exposure for regional, national, and international artists through exhibitions, and to enrich the community with art classes, mural programs, and public art. Buffalo Arts Studio is located at 2495 Main Street, Suite 500, Buffalo, NY 14214. The gallery is open Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m and Saturdays 10 a.m.– 2 p.m.

High resolution images available upon request.

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