

# HYPERALLERGIC

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ART

## 9 Highlights From Bushwick Open Studios 2019

We've selected gems from the 13th edition of Bushwick Open Studios, from elegant gouache depictions of domestic scenes to cheery dioramas of Sears build-your-own-home kits.

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Works by Sam Bates and Andrew White at Indie Studios off Broadway. (photo Hrag Vartanian/Hyperallergic)

Over the last 13 years, Bushwick Open Studios (BOS) has been a decidedly mixed bag. Yet among the hundreds of open studios, there's generally been something for everyone. This year's edition, though laudable for its community-centered programming and emphasis on longtime residents, offered fewer opportunities to see exciting work, largely due to irregular hours, a not so reliable map, and a slightly underwhelming selection of work on view. Perhaps there's also the general

gravitational shift of artists moving elsewhere due to rising rents to contend with, but this year's Open Studios left us wanting for a bit more.

Still, we did come across a few gems in the bunch. Here's a round-up of our personal favorites.



“Dream Homes” inside the studio of Emily Bicht at 505 Johnson Avenue (photo by Alissa Guzman/Hyperallergic)

## Emily Bicht

“Sickly sweet” is the best way to describe the studio of Emily Bicht. A small shelf of cheerful ceramic Bundt cakes compliments meticulously rendered, small-scale paintings of pre-war “Dream Homes.” Sears home building kits, sold between

1908 and 1940, have become artifacts of camp. Bicht recreates these as Hallmark-like dioramas, which sit atop her series of daily drawings inspired by the book *Mother's Encyclopedia* from 1969. Entrenched in a century-old culture of feminine perfection, her work is saccharine and anything but nostalgic. It's hard not to relate, as the country battles once again over antiquated notions of women's bodies, rights, and roles. —*Alissa Guzman*



A painting by Galeana Fraiz, on view in her studio at 1717 Troutman St. in Ridgewood (photo by Dessane Lopez Cassell/Hyperallergic)

## Galeana Fraiz

Navigating through a web of densely packed studios, I found myself drawn to the rich emerald tones of a painting by Galeana Fraiz. A smiling woman wearing sunglasses, poses amid a swathe of greenery, radiating a sense of bliss as she

emerges from the foliage. Across the narrow studio, Fraiz displayed another eye-catching (and equally large) work, this one depicting a slumbering couple entwined on a narrow bed, their faces and limbs nestled against each other in a manner that highlights the pleasurable intimacy of the mundane. Rendered in rich caramel tones, their skin seemed to almost glow, much like the face of the artist herself, who radiated warmth and excitement as she greeted each passing visitor. Originally from Venezuela, Fraiz's paintings evince the bright hues of a childhood spent in Miami after immigrating to the US at age seven. She described her paintings as tender portraits of a life she's trying to preserve, and her expression darkened slightly as she described the disconnect she feels with the volatile state of affairs in her native country. Among her myriad inspirations, Fraiz points to the Venezuela she remembers, as well as to her family, ancestors, and familiar foods (elsewhere in her studio, ceramic corn husks painted in bright hues adorn a low standing table like offerings on an altar). —*Dessane Lopez Cassell*



Space 776 Gallery (photo by Hrag Vartanian/Hyperallergic)

## Space 776 Gallery

Space 776 Gallery is pretty unorthodox. They have a space in Seoul, South Korea, and another in Brooklyn. Jourdain Jongwon Lee is the founder (pictured center) and he chose to open the space for a wide array of artists to exhibit; they show a lot

of international artists, which is a treat in Bushwick. Thumbs up to the gallery's embrace of the community — much needed — and they even have a residency (current resident Rosetta DeBerardinis is on the right). Also pictured here is gallery manager and artist Dasha Bazanova. I will be paying more attention to this unique space. —*Hrag Vartanian*



“Pain Relief” on display at the studio of Joanne Ungar at Active Space Studios (photo by Alissa Guzman/Hyperallergic)

## **Joanne Ungar**

In this psychedelic expression of consumer culture, Joanne Ungar's 2D wax pieces reminded me of industrial block glass windows, thick and murky, where individual parts make up a whole. Unfolded cosmetic boxes, like abstract geometric shapes, are embedded within layer upon layer of brightly colored wax. Ungar's latest series “Pain Relief” uses everything from “Johnny Walker Black,” to the packaging for Botox injections, highlighting the products we use to cover and transform. Like abstract landscapes or time capsules for the future, the work represents our culture of excess and consumption in feel-good blocks of wax. —*AG*



A row of gouache paintings by Sarah Lubin, on view in her studio at 1717 Troutman Street in Ridgewood (photo by Dessane Lopez Cassell/Hyperallergic)

## Sarah Lubin

Another artist who centers the mundane to delightful ends is Sarah Lubin (coincidentally, I encountered her work around the corner from Fraiz's). Working in gouache and oil paint, Lubin's compositions exude a quiet, meditative elegance. Most eye-catching to me were a row of small gouache paintings focused on domestic scenes, each rendered in muted tones with just a pop of color here and there (an aspect the artist described as a nod to the "playfulness" of the scenes she likes to capture). While mostly figurative, Lubin's attention to color and texture also yields small pockets of rich abstraction within her compositions. Her highly stylized figures recall elements of Alex Katz's paintings, and various art historical texts on her bookshelf nod to the influence of art history on her practice. Lately, she's been particularly drawn to the "stillness" of Renaissance paintings, and the statuesque compositions of Indian miniatures. —*DLC*



Dustin Yager (photo by Hrag Vartanian/Hyperallergic)

## Dustin Yager

Dustin Yager's ceramics scream fun! Yet with their art, pop, and internet culture references, they also mesmerize you as you get lost in the flurry of words and images. His website, called ceramics + theory, explains the crux of his interests. One chalice on display was scratched with the words "cum slut." For a moment I smiled imagining a whole table setting of these pieces and the hilarious conversation that would ensue. There were other very talented ceramic artists on display during Bushwick Open Studios, but Yager's work stood out and made me want more. —*HV*



“Blanketed 16-011” in the studio of Peter Gynd at 41 Varick Avenue (photo by Alissa Guzman/Hyperallergic)

## Peter Gynd

The photography at Peter Gynd’s studio reminded me of a lecture I once attended at the New-York Historical Society, where explorers came together to discuss their extreme journeys into gritty urban undergrounds, the harsh terrain of the Arctic, or the altitude of Everest. Gynd’s portraits capture a similar sense of self-exploration, as the unrecognizable silhouette of the artist, shrouded head-to-toe in traditional textiles, playfully (or stoically) poses in unadulterated landscapes. With the anonymity of an explorer, the work becomes about the combination of the figure, the landscape and the journey. From places of worship to the white sands of atomic bomb testing sites, questions of identity, culture, and local history are raised. —AG





Visitors testing out some of the equipment at Negativeland during Bushwick Open Studios (photo by Dessane Lopez Cassell/Hyperallergic)

## Negativeland

Film-aficionados, look no further — Negativeland, a relatively young film lab has recently started extending access to its Super 8mm and 16mm processing facilities to the public. For the last year, what was originally a small artist-run space that emerged to preserve discarded analog equipment has gradually become more open to the public (funnily enough, commercial interest in analog processes has been growing, enabling a bit more financial stability for the facility).

Now, for only \$15 an hour, filmmakers, artists, and general enthusiasts alike can access hard to find equipment such as an optical printer, a Steenbeck editing table, splicers, and multiple darkrooms (an added bonus: you can even process expired moving image stock in the darkrooms). Negativeland also boasts a Lasergraphics film scanner, which can transfer super 8mm and 16mm footage to high-quality digital scans (though access to this is restricted to trained staff). New to all of this? Not a problem. As co-founder Josh Lewis mentioned, “if you have no idea what you’re doing, we offer a two-hour training for \$75.” Given the cost of living in

New York (and what it costs to even see a movie these days), I can't think of a better deal for both aspiring and more established filmmakers. —*DLC*



“Animal” sculptures on view at M. David & Co at 56 Bogart in Bushwick (photo by Alissa Guzman/Hyperallergic)

## **Daniel John Gadd**

The sculptures and relief works of Daniel John Gadd are full of contradictions. They are tough and industrial, with wire and steel jutting out from the wall, and simultaneously fragile and anthropomorphic, dangling delicately like a mobile from the ceiling. Materially ugly, like extruded guts or discarded parts, the sculptures are formally satisfying: balanced yet full of subsections and intrigue.

The opposite of the minimalist-inspired sculpture I saw at other BOS studios, the series aptly titled “Animal” feels like the detritus of a world gone wrong. —AG

Bushwick Open Studios *took place in various locations around Brooklyn, from Sept 20–22. The annual event is organized by Arts in Bushwick.*

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