



WAVE HILL SUNROOM PROJECT SPACE

August 31 - October 13, 2024

JORDANY GENAO

Espíritu de sabor

JORDANY GENAO

Born in Santiago de los Caballeros,
Dominican Republic
Lives in Queens, NY

Detail of *el futuro bohío*, 2024, silk organza,
larimar beads, silk chiffon, guava leaves,
glazed ceramic, digital fabric print on cotton,
seashell beads, logwood thread, digital fabric
print on silk. Courtesy of the artist.

Jordany Genao's interdisciplinary practice is deeply rooted in the precolonial history of the islands of Boriken (Puerto Rico), Ayiti (Dominican Republic and Haiti), and Kubanakan (Cuba). Their work is a unique exploration of the visual and theoretical connections between Indigenous Arawak-Taino cosmology, Caribbean botanical practices and queerness. Genao's art is a profound tribute to nature and her wisdom, with a heavy emphasis on the relationships between land, history and culture. For the Arawak-Taino, the cemi (or zemi) deities and spirits represented natural elements. In their exhibition *Espíritu de sabor (Spirit of taste)*, Genao integrates clay, natural fibers, beads, leaves, shells, rock and other natural by-products to create two-dimensional and sculptural works that build on Taino belief systems.

At the heart of Genao's exhibition is *el futuro bohío (retrato de Ana Valerio y Genaro Augusto Valerio)*, 2024, a sheer fabric portrait that serves as a poignant commemoration of their grandparents, who are surrounded by an aura of plants amidst a composite image that recalls the house in which Genao grew up and Taino caves on the island. The Taino considered these caves to be the birthplace of humans, spirits and the cosmos, serving as sites for rituals, sanctuary and the visualization of their creation stories through petroglyphs and pictographs. *el futuro bohío* (future home) is embedded with larimar beads, guava leaves, seashells and a musical notes stitched in hand-dyed thread, signaling touch, sound and silence.

Interspersed through the Sun Porch are references to lizards and frogs—creatures of profound significance in Taino cosmology for their capacity to undergo metamorphosis—as well as ceramic forms bearing ear gauges that represent the practices of caciques (Taino chieftains) who worked with plant medicine. Weaving historical and cultural references and the senses into their work, Genao creates a personal cosmology that includes the arch of history from Saladoid culture (Indigenous Arawak who lived in the Caribbean and Venezuela 500 BCE to 545 CE) to our current moment, punctuated by reflections on the impacts of colonialism and its destruction of indigenous sovereignty. Genao's objects are not just symbols of a past, but vessels of a living continuum. Their materials serve as both an affirmation, and veneration of the ways the natural world intertwines with Arawak-Taino spirituality, ceremony and political power, inseparable from the universe.

Jordany Genao's work has been presented in group exhibitions at Riverfront Art Gallery, Yonkers, NY; Turley Gallery, Hudson, NY; and 205 Hudson Gallery and Flux Factory in New York, NY. They earned a BA from the School of Visual Arts and an MFA from Hunter College.

PUBLIC PROGRAM: Meet the Artists: Sun, Sep 15, 11 AM, Dario Mohr; 12 PM, Jordany Genao; 1 PM, Soeun Bae. Fall Exhibitions Reception: Sun, Sep 29, 2:30 – 4:30 PM.

Organized by Curator of Visual Arts Rachel Raphaela Gugelberger, the Sunroom Project Space provides an opportunity for emerging artists in the New York City area to develop and present a site-specific project as a solo exhibition. The 2024 season features Tao Leigh Goffe, Katherine Sepúlveda, Roger Ferney-Cortés, Soeun Bae, Jordany Genao, Dario Mohr, and Stephanie Beck consecutively.

THE SUNROOM PROJECT SPACE IS SUPPORTED BY THE MILTON AND SALLY AVERY ARTS FOUNDATION; NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS; AND POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS PROGRAM IS PROVIDED BY THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS; NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR AND THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE; RUTH FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS; AND BY THE CATHY AND STEPHEN WEINROTH COMMISSIONING FUND FOR THE ARTS.



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Curator of Visual Arts:
Rachel Raphaela Gugelberger
Design: Melanie Roberts
Printing on recycled paper:
Prestone Printing