

VISUAL STUDIES  
**WORK  
SHOP**

**Salon Review  
Spring 2024**

# Visual Studies Workshop Spring 2024 Salon Calendar



**January 25:**  
*OR119* with **Peggy Ahwesh** and **Jennifer Montgomery**  
film screening + discussion\*



**February 8:**  
*SLUDGE* screening I  
16mm film mashup

**February 22:**  
*The World Like a Jewel in The Hand: Unlearning Imperial Plunder II* with **Ariella A'isha Azoulay**  
film screening + discussion (in-person and online)



**March 14:**  
**Open Studios with Sophie Schwartz and Robert Doyle**  
Artist Talks with Project Space Residents

**March 28:**  
*In Dialogue: Mara Ahmed*  
film screening + discussion\*



**April 11:**  
**Open Studio with Rianna Jade Parker and SLUDGE** screening II  
16mm film mashup

**April 25:**  
**Pop up Arcade with Barnyardia Collective**  
Experimental video games\*



**May 9-16:**  
*In Dialogue: Sarah Friedland*  
Media installation\*

\*artist(s) in attendance

# Project Space Residents Spring 2024

**Peggy Ahwesh**  
January 10 - February 7



**Robert Doyle**  
February 21 - March 24



**Sophie Schwartz**  
February 21 - March 24



**Rianna Jade Parker**  
March 27 - April 24



**Sarah Friedland**  
May 1 - May 29



**Željka Blakšić**  
June 5 - July 3



**Barbara Justice**  
July 10 - August 7



**Sonja Thomsen**  
August 14 - August 30





# Salon Review • Spring 2024

## Contents

Page 2 [Spring 2024 VSW Salon Calendar](#)

Pages 5-21 [VSW Fall 2023 Salon Review](#)

Pages 23-29 [Project Space Fall 2023 Residents](#)

Page 30 [In This Moment 2 Review](#)

The VSW Salon is a bi-monthly engagement in the VSW microcinema featuring film screenings, artist talks, Community Curator events, performances, photo presentations and conversations. VSW Salon showcases the work of local and national artists, and invites them to present their work in an intimate “microcinema” equipped to show 16mm, Super 8, digital photography and video on state of the art equipment.

VSW Salon events generally take place the second and fourth Thursday of the month in the VSW Microcinema. Most VSW Salon events begin at 6pm with a 1 hour Open Studio with the current VSW Residents, followed by the featured event at 7 pm. All events are in-person unless otherwise indicated, with limited seating.

VSW Salon events are offered on a sliding scale price structure. The suggested price is \$10 but you may choose the price that is right for you. ASL interpreters will be made available upon request at least two weeks before the workshop. Please email [accommodations@vsw.org](mailto:accommodations@vsw.org) with any accommodation requests or accessibility inquiries.

This issue of the VSW Salon Review documents the Fall 2023 events and residents.

**Front and Back Cover Images:**  
**Stills from *La memoria de las frutas* (2023), 16mm film**  
© Claudia Claremi. Courtesy of the artist.

## Visual Studies Workshop: Non-Conforming since 1969

This year will be one of change for VSW. 2024 will encompass the last cohort of graduates of our MFA program, celebrations of our storied history, and a relocation to bolster the work of Visual Studies Workshop for decades to come. We are excited to share details with you as this momentous year unfolds.

Our refreshed mission has roots in our history and hope for the future: to nurture experimental and expansive approaches to photography and media arts, and to build community among artists and the public through exhibitions, publications and residencies.

At VSW, we believe that art is essential, and we envision a society that values the human need to create and share ideas. The recent and upcoming Salon seasons show our commitment to supporting artists and our communities. We are able to do this work because of you – our members, patrons, supporters, artists from around the world, and the Rochester community. Thank you.

Jessica Johnston,  
Executive Director, VSW



Visual Studies Workshop programs are supported by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the New York State Legislature, the ArtWorks program of the National Endowment for the Arts, Monroe County, the Farash Foundation, Joy of Giving Something, and the Phillip and Edith Leonian Foundation.





**In Review**

**A Tribute to Kenneth Anger**

9.12.23

experimental film screening

On September 12th, a full house gathered in the VSW microcinema to honor the life and legacy of Kenneth Anger, one of the most influential artists of underground cinema, who died in May at the age of 96. Anger began his filmmaking career as a teenager in the late 1930's, rising to fame with his 1947 homoerotic masterpiece, FIREWORKS, which he later described by saying, "This flick is all I have to say about being 17, the United States Navy, American Christmas and the Fourth of July."

Anger was one of the first openly homosexual (a term which he preferred over "gay") filmmakers of the American avant garde, and his early films were banned almost as soon as they were made - which did not stop him from showing them. Fueled (and fueled) by controversy, Anger continued to create seductive films saturated in powerful imagery drawn from his interest in the occult, mythology, celebrity gossip, subversive subcultures, symbols, sigils and all things sacrilegious. Anger could be found at the cutting edge of counter-culture movements throughout his 70+ year career, often featuring his friends, lovers and fellow occultists in his films.

Perhaps as memorable as his images are the soundtracks to Anger's films, which include doo-wop, Opera, Rock and Roll and the Glagolitic Mass, providing a lyrical counterpoint to the provocative imagery of the work. The evening's program highlighted some of Anger's most iconic works, including two prints from the VSW Film Collection (Kustom Kar Kommandos and Scorpio Rising) and an altar outside the microcinema for offerings from his adoring fans.

Rest in peace - and a little bit of chaos - Kenneth Anger

Kenneth Anger (February 3, 1927 - May 11, 2023) was a prolific underground experimental filmmaker who explored ritual, the occult, and queerness in his decades spanning career.

**FILM PROGRAM: THE TRANCE-INDUCING PUCE MOMENT (1949), KUSTOM KAR KOMMANDOS (1965), AN "ONEIRIC VISION OF THE AMERICAN PHENOMENON OF THE HOT ROD," SCORPIO RISING (1964), "A DEATH MIRROR HELD UP TO AMERICAN CULTURE," and INAUGURATION OF THE PLEASURE DOME (1954), INSPIRED BY A REAL-LIFE BACCHANAL MASQUERADE IN WHICH ARTISTS AND OCCULTISTS WERE INVITED TO "COME AS YOUR MADNESS."**



## In Review

### *¡Pa'Lante! Moving Forward*

10.12.23

Puerto Rican history in Rochester

## Henry Ignacio Padrón-Morales

has been an energetic force in Rochester's community organizing scene for over 40 years. As a founding member of Spanish Action Coalition, Salmorejo Poetry and Percussion Ensemble, Puerto Rican Youth Development and Resource Center, National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights and the Rochester Latino Theatre Company – and current owner of Hipocampo Books – Henry has been motivating and celebrating the local Hispanic community for decades. As a VSW Community Curator, Henry selected a program of films and videos that feature the arts and culture of Rochester's Puerto Rican and Lantinx community for the past 5 decades. In celebration of National Hispanic Heritage month, this program examined the Puerto Rican Festival's role in showcasing the aspirations and challenges of the Puerto Rican community, and how the community has continued to thrive through the arts over several decades.

### Excerpted tapes include:

**P'al Festival (1976)**, Original format: 16mm film; Luis Villalon. **Puerto Rican Festival (1971)**, Original Format: 1/2" EIAJ open reel; Portable Channel, Ray Santiago. **Learning the Spanish Speaking Community in Rochester (1972)**, Original Format: 1/2" EIAJ open reel; Portable Channel, Chuck Alvarez. **Nydia Padilla at the Monroe County Jail (1986)**, Original Format: 8mm video cassette; Common Threads, Nancy Rosin. **Interviews at the Rochester Public Market with Nydia Rivera (1994)**, Original Format: Hi8; Nancy Rosin. **Puerto Rican Festival (1990)**, Original Format: 8mm video cassette; TV Dinner. **Spanish Channel in Rochester and Mt. Carmel Culture Class (1972)**, Original Format: 1/2" EIAJ open reel; Chuck Alvarez and the Street Academy Trainees. **No Pasaran (1985)**, Original Format: 3/4" Umatic; Leah Warnick, Henry Padron, and the Rochester's Women Action for Peace.



Above:  
still from  
**P'al Festival (1976)**

Right:  
Posters, newspapers,  
magazines, and other  
ephemera from Henry  
Padrón's personal  
archive installed in  
the VSW Hallway  
Gallery.





**In Review**

***New Utopia, Light Fracture: Slides by Luther Price***

10.26.23

book launch + 35mm slide screening

# Luther Price

**(January 26, 1962 – June 13, 2020)**

was a prolific artist whose work explored the deepest, darkest corners of the human experience. Working in film, performance, sculpture, photography and mixed media, his haunting images were often composed from found elements, thickly layered with ink, paint, glue, tape and bodily fluids.

On October 26th, VSW Press launched the most recent volume in the Film Art Book Imprint: *Light Fracture and New Utopia* by Luther Price. This unique book uses imagery derived from Price's hand painted 35mm slides, along with excerpts from texts and emails Price sent to VSW Press Editor Tate Shaw in the early stages of planning the book, before Price's untimely death in 2020. To celebrate the book release, we exhibited both the *Light Fracture* and *New Utopia* series of 35mm slides as a dual projection in the microcinema. VSW Curator and Assistant Editor of VSW Press, Tara Nelson, gave the introduction, excerpted at right:

"This project started in 2017, when I invited Luther Price to conduct a five day workshop at VSW on Handmade Film as part of our Summer Institute. But my relationship with Luther began well before that. I first saw a Super 8 film of his called CLOWN in 2005, and felt completely and utterly exposed by it: a Super 8 selfie close up of a clown on a windy beach, laughing directly at me for 13 minutes. I was so shaken that I decided to go to graduate school to make experimental films, and made my way to Massachusetts College of Art to take a class called HANDMADE FILM taught by Luther Price. His class was mostly like a hang-out, sitting in a screening room watching film after film and listening to Luther tell stories about his adventures and experiences in the art world. We became friends, and the hang-outs continued.

When I began teaching I realized that his work was hard to find and many people hadn't seen it at all, so I would show it whenever I could. Shortly after I came to VSW in 2014, I showed Luther's films, and in 2017 we brought him to do a week-long workshop. He brought the slides we are going to watch tonight, and we decided to make a book with them right away. What I didn't realize when I invited him here was that his health had declined, and he was struggling with pain as a result of a lifetime of injuries and afflictions. He wasn't himself, and our students met a person none of us felt very safe with. His departure from the building was tumultuous, and the last time I saw Luther, he was sitting on the front steps of VSW, alone. I never spoke to him again. I regret that very much.

*I hope this book will shed some light on Luther, who was a complicated, dangerous, and beautiful human being."*





Text and image excerpted from  
*Light Fracture and New Utopia* by Luther Price,  
VSW Press (2023)

**On Dec 4, 2018, at 7:47PM,  
Luther Price wrote:**

**Subject: The after shcololl.love story**

**For ever and ever . men have loved  
each other. We are real... And perfect .**

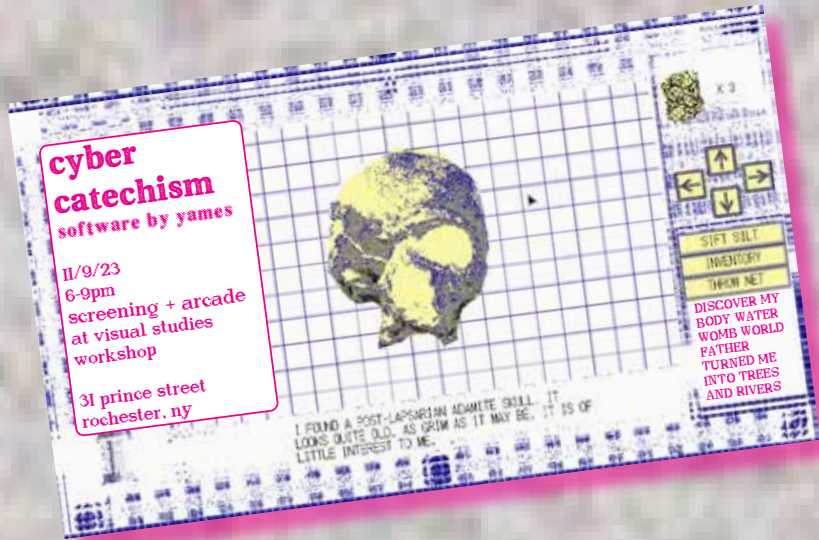


**In Review**

**cyber catechism: software by yames**

11.09.23

experimental video game arcade



cyber catechism was an interactive exhibition featuring short, playable computer games by media artist Yames, live performances, and expanded cinema derived from medical films found in the VSW 16mm Film Collection. Participants were invited to engage with the media installation/arcade before the screening, and stay for the arcade afterparty.

Yames is an independent computer game developer whose experimental games explore the relationships between biology and belief, and the atavistic nature of horror. Their games are available at [pantagrue.itch.io](http://pantagrue.itch.io).



Aha! You've discovered the injection site.



Still from *Discover My Body* by Yames



I think the aim in my games is to be transportive, to move the player into a space of feeling so intense and different they forget they had even entered it, like a weird dream. I have very intense interior feelings that there are invisible places that I'm somehow reaching out to. There is some overlap with a sense of religiosity or the mystical, and I have felt an intense mystical quality, overabundant feelings of eternity. I don't know if this is real at all...

I am interested in the ambiguity encountered at the limits of things or the breakdown of the barriers of these things. A Self that begins leaking out into the World, or a World leaking into the Self. Conceptually there are pretty common junctures where these things happen: death, family, religion, love, sex.

- Yames

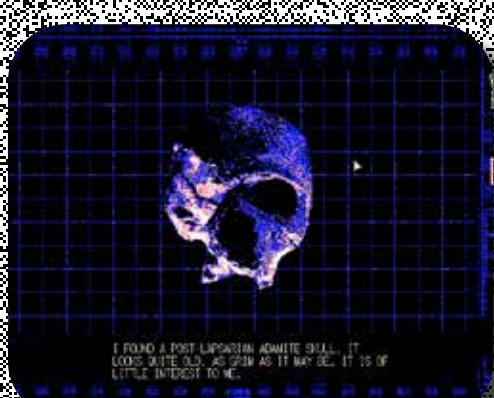
**DISCOVER MY BODY**  
 CONTROLS: mouse, Confirm with E  
 In the year 2040, human beings look for increasingly strange solutions in hopes of finding connection and community.



**THE MOON IS THE OCEAN'S BRAIN**  
 CONTROLS: mouse, WASD, Confirm with E  
 "I often dreamed I was not myself. I was something deep in the cavity of my skull."



**GROWING MY GRANDPA!**  
 CONTROLS: mouse  
 Growing My Grandpa! is a narrative-driven point-and-click horror game with virtual pet elements. The entity known as your Grandpa needs to be fed and educated! Keep Grandpa content and it will have much to offer you...



**WATER WOMB WORLD**  
 CONTROLS: mouse, Confirm with E  
 A short (about 15 minutes) horror game. Explore the sea floor, catch fish, sift through silt to find objects, study in your lab, try to find Eden.

I first played Yames' game Discover My Body early in the COVID pandemic. It felt appropriate, an exploration of the human body, a yearning to both move out of and deeper into the body. As we collectively sat at our computers, our linked minds obsessively watching the hate-filled US political system shudder live on twitch.tv, a jagged virtual union formed during 2020 for games and games adjacent communities. Discover My Body made so much sense to me then, social connection as body-horror, difficult connection, the question of loss of self as a solution (???). This thread continues to evolve through each of Yames' games.

Every piece of software is a ritual toward a bigger picture, a framing with unknown borders. This is an abyss, but also a refuge of hope or faith. Video games are all about the verbs that happen to bodies, digital and otherwise, and with Yames, the focus on the body in space is heightened. Sometimes this emerges as humor, and almost always as horror - but often, too, with a deep sense of longing, anxiety for an atavistic connection, something primordial -- I guess this could also be understood as a desire for "love."

- nilson carroll, vsw assistant curator





## In Review

### *Spirit of the Archive*

12.08.23

media installation + holiday gathering



*Spirit of the Archive* is VSW's annual holiday celebration, featuring exhibitions and installations of our most unique media collections.

Until the solstice arrives and the days start lengthening, the only seasonal spirit I acknowledge is a deepening of the dark themes begun in autumn. Our daily lives become most like those of the objects of our archives and collections, kept in the still and dark and cold, and it feels like a perfect time to bring our collection out for sharing. Just a spark of light wakes them up, and stirs our own memories of who and where we were when we first encountered them.

In this year's *Spirit of the Archive* installation, guests walked among images beaming from 11 hot carousel projectors, hundreds of 35mm slides made at, by, and for VSW itself, records of 30 years of VSW daily life and values. Old exhibits were restaged, students back at work, a hundred versions of the buildings in every state, revealed.

For the screening, I asked friends of VSW to remember a film from our 16mm collection that 'haunts' them, for better or worse -- a film that struck a chord of memory and recognition and continues to linger, in honor of the season and as a celebration of the medium itself.

- Mary Lewandowski, VSW Curatorial and Research Associate

#### Films:

Magic Beauty Kit (1973)  
Where the Wild Things Are  
(1973),  
Willow Point (1972)  
Peanut Butter and Jelly (1976)  
Help! My Snowman Is Burning  
Down (1964)  
Neighbours (1952)  
Georgie (1956)





**In Review**

**A History of Photography in Indonesia presented by Brian Arnold**

12.14.23

**Brian Arnold** is a photographer and educator whose research studies in Bali introduced him to a wide range of photography communities creating their own contemporary art histories in Indonesia. *A History of Photography in Indonesia: From the Colonial Era to the Digital Age* is a collection of essays from Indonesian and international artists, curators, and scholars that expound upon the country's distinct relationship to the invention of photography.

To the right is an excerpt from Brian's lecture at VSW on his book, his work in Indonesia, and on the vibrant communities shaping photographic histories there:



From *A History of Photography in Indonesia: From the Colonial Era to the Digital Age*. Jim Allen Abel, from the series, Tut Wuri Handayani. C-print mounted on aluminum 110cm x 165cm, 2009. Abel is a founding member of the Indonesian photo collective, MES 56.

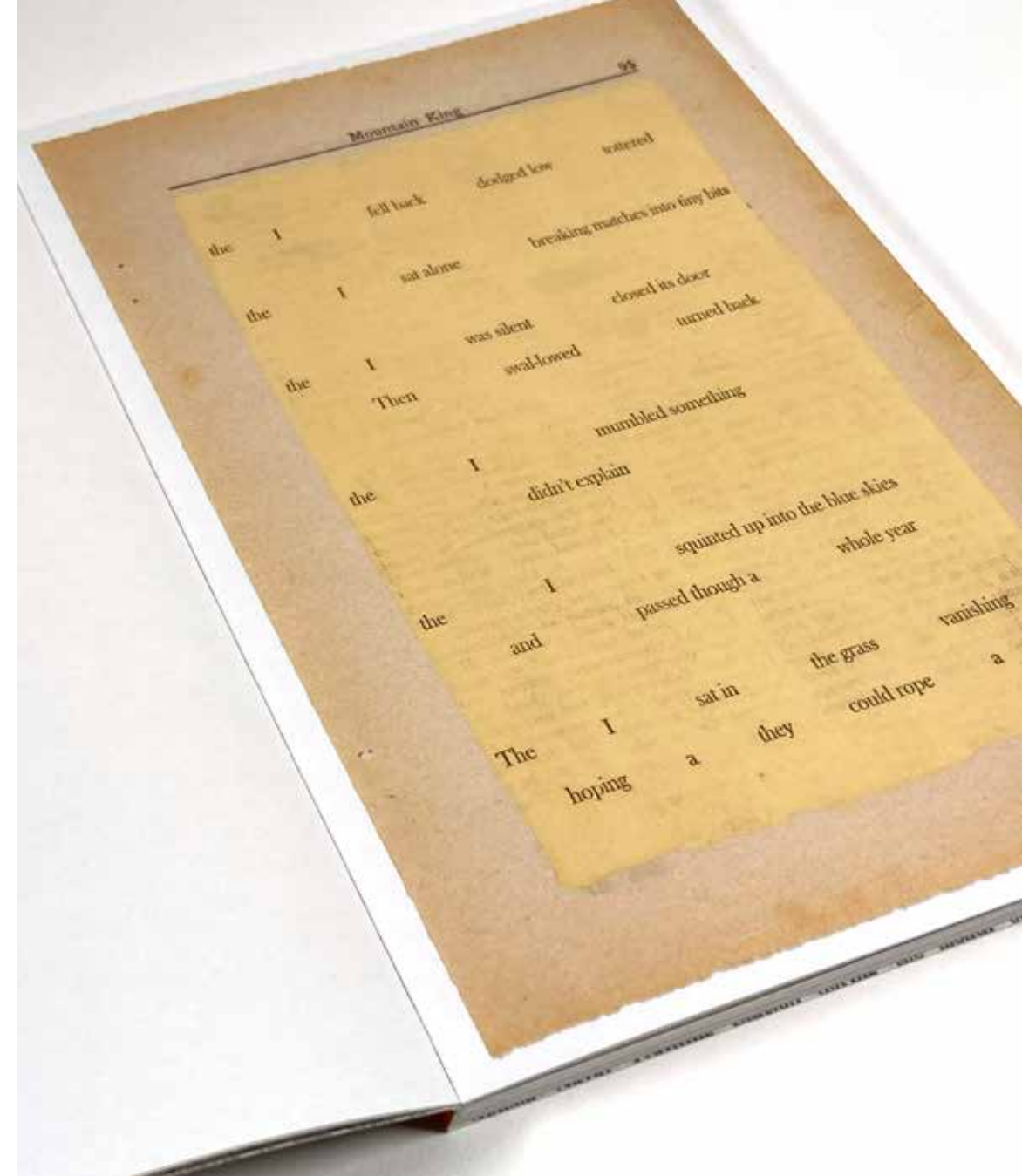


**Watch Brian's lecture on the VSW Vimeo**

*When I first met the MES 56 photographers, they were really considered the first artists working in photography in Indonesia. And if you take that idea that I presented about photography being born from performance and video and installation, that's exactly how they made pictures, right? So, in the email that [VSW] sent out about this presentation, there's that photograph by Jim Allen Abel with this guy wearing a mask that's made out of flora and fauna. And to me, all of that early MES 56 work was really just performance art, just done for a camera instead of an audience. I think that's changed a lot. When I taught photography there in 2014, part of what was so stimulating and gratifying about it for me is that there was a lot of young students who really wanted to learn about photography but had little or no access to resources about critical traditions and whatnot. And as that has changed, I think photographic works probably homogenize more and probably looks more like what's coming out of every place else, right? They're all reading the Martin Parr books on the photo books. And I was actually at the launch of this book. I was at the Jakarta International Photo Fest in September of 2022, which was a really cool experience in a lot of ways.*

*There are a few things that if I were to do this book over that I would change, or if there's another edition, there might be things that I include. And one of those things is about contemporary photo journalism and documentary photography in Indonesia, where there's really, really amazing socially conscious work going on.*

*If you remember, in 2022, the grand prize winner for Aperture at the Paris Photo Festival was a Javanese photographer, Sumatran photographer actually, Muhammad Fadli, who did a whole book about nutmeg, which was a large part of why Indonesia was colonized. And I think that's really indicative of a lot of the work that he and his peers are doing. If you get to the more serious and public professional practitioners, they might be using more traditional lexicon, photographic lexicon, than MES 56 photographers, but starting to look more in depth at those histories.*



**Missing Department**  
by Ligia Bouton and Matt Donovan  
VSW Press (2023), 6.5x9", 124 pages,  
digital offset, first printing edition of 250

Available now at [bookstore.vsw.org](http://bookstore.vsw.org)



## Fall 2023 Project Space Residents In Review

**VSW's Project Space** is a studio residency open to regional, national and international artists working primarily in photography, film, and media art. Our Fall 2023 cohort consisted of residents who are making work that is challenging, compelling, and in stages where they could make use of the residency to facilitate their progress.

The Fall 2023 residents were Asli Narin, Claudia Claremi, Louis Chavez, Colleen Mullins, Michael Darcy, Saint Piñero and Le'Andra LeSeur.



The **Project Space Residency podcast** series engages artists in conversations about how residencies work in their practice and provides an opportunity to share their ideas and processes with a larger community.

### Season 2 Out Now

- Episode 1: Aspen Mays and Dan Boardman
- Episode 2: Anna Kipervaser with Tara Nelson
- Episode 3: Meredith Davenport
- Episode 4: Ana Paula Estrada with Tate Shaw
- Episode 5: Eduardo Rivera

Listen at [vsw.org/podcast](https://vsw.org/podcast) or find us on Apple Podcasts.

## Asli Narin Indianapolis, Indiana July 19 - August 16, 2023



Asli Narin (center) during Open Studios. An installation of her project, *Hand In Hand*, a fictitious work about her ancestral history and the cycle of immigration in her family from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey, through vernacular photography and writing.

*The residency time gave me a better and narrowed-down perspective on my project and helped me understand what to focus on while finalizing it. - Asli Narin*



## Claudia Claremi

Madrid, Spain

September 6 - October 4, 2023

Claudia Claremi in her Project Space studio. While at VSW, Claudia continued to work on her project *La Memoria de las Frutas*, and experimented with new ways to exhibit her films.



Louis Chavez in the Project Space studio. Louis worked on a book layout of their series, *New Intimacies*, a photographic study situated in environments known for gay cruising and public sex.

## Louis Chavez

Rochester, New York

September 6 - October 4, 2023







Michael Darcy (third from left) during Open Studios. Michael used his time in residency to experiment with mobiles, books and quilts to interrogate his personal struggles with unhealthy over-productivity.

## Michael Darcy

Rochester, New York

October 11 - November 8, 2023

*I thought about and practiced rest during my residency in an effort to examine my work-life balance. The first day I built a bed so I could take naps while at the studio. - Michael Darcy*

## Colleen Mullins

San Francisco, California  
October 11 - November 8, 2023

Colleen Mullins used inherited ephemera, archival images, and her own photographs to begin sequencing an artist book on the studio walls in the Project Space.





## Saint Piñero

New York, New York

November 15 - December 17, 2023



Saint Piñero in their Project Space studio. Saint printed, edited and sequenced images from their growing archive of the photographs they make of their queer communities in New York City, New Orleans and Pennsylvania.

## Le'Andra LeSeur

Jersey City, New Jersey

November 29 - December 13, 2023



Le'Andra LeSeur in her Project Space studio. Le'Andra mined the VSW archives for images and films pertaining to Black spirituality, baptism, and African religious practices to create an image collage on her studio floor.



## In This Moment Chapbook Series

The *In This Moment* chapbook project pairs 10 teams of Black writers and photographers with 10 Black leaders from across the city of Rochester resulting in the publication of a series of 10 chapbooks. The project offers vital learning opportunities and reflection for all students and community members. The ITM chapbook series is curated by Amanda Chestnut, coordinated by Jeanne Strazzabosco and published by VSW Press. The following leaders were featured in the second season of *In This Moment* throughout 2023:



**Reverend Myra Brown**



**Dr. Ian Wilson**



**Renah Golden**



**Timothy J. Johnson PhD**



**Melanie Funchess**



**Dr. Linda Clark**



**Anita Cameron**



**Joshua Rashaad McFadden**

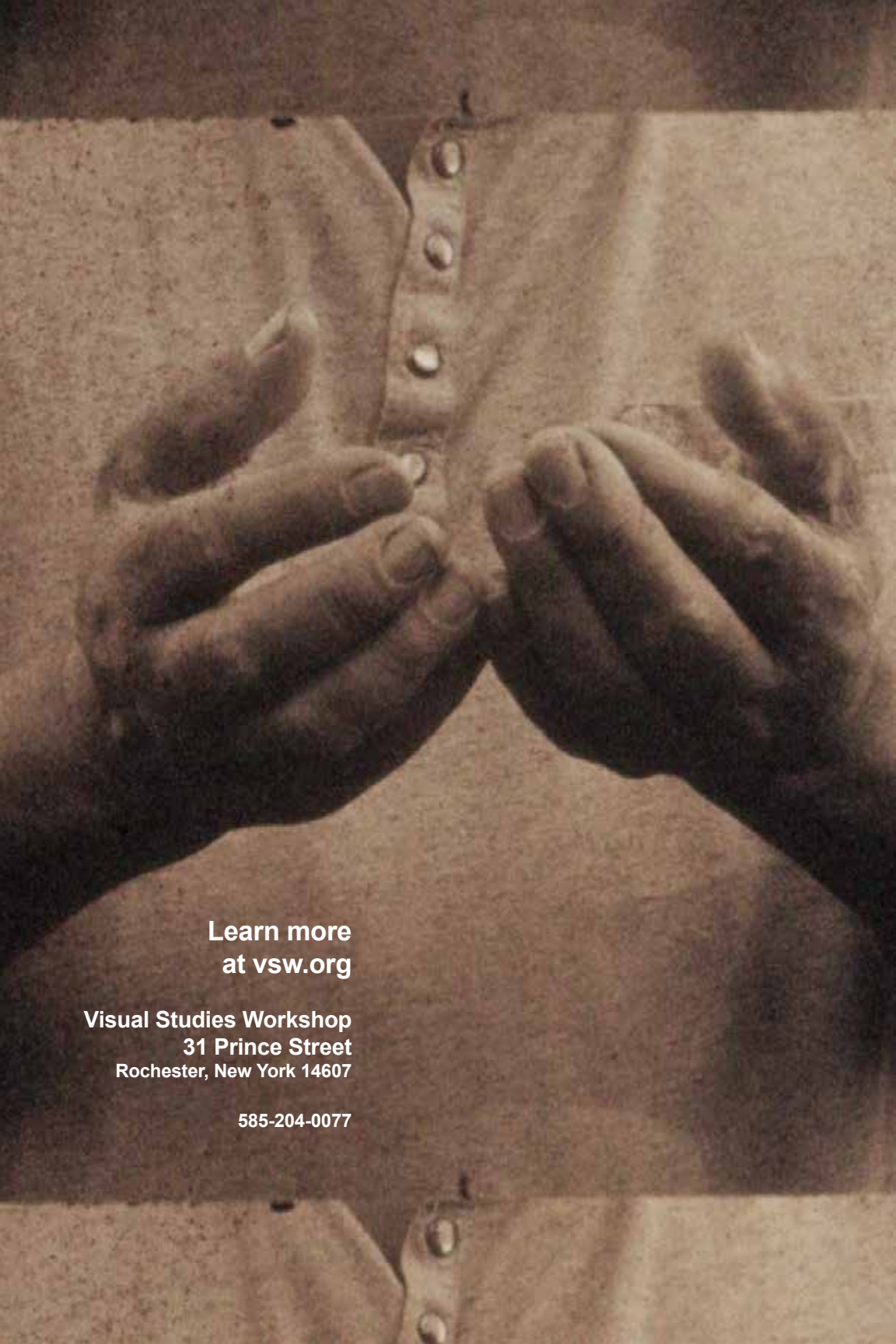


**Dr. David Paul**



**Shaun Nelms EDD**





**Learn more  
at [vsw.org](http://vsw.org)**

**Visual Studies Workshop  
31 Prince Street  
Rochester, New York 14607**

**585-204-0077**