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For release July, 26 2024.

The Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts 2024 Artist in Residence Alejandra Cuadra Examines the Meaning of Belonging in Residency Project

Boston, MA

The Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts 2024 Artist in Residence Alejandra Cuadra is a proud Latina, a citizen of the world, and most importantly a human being. Cuadra embraces clay, wood, video, steel, and objects of abundance to weave, braid, and knot together her history—what was, what is, and what is to come. Feeling neither from here nor there, she seeks to reconnect to her roots in Peru while threading together notions of identity, displacement, traditions, belonging, and a desire for freedom.

Cuadra's current work reflects her quest for what it means to belong within the body, soul, community, and the rooted valleys of the earth. Her residency project, *The Preciousness of the Everyday: Vessels of Belonging* will create spaces for reflection and connection around those questions. During a month-long intensive, Cuadra will practice the art of slowing down and honoring the preciousness of the everyday with her talented Artist in Residence Assistant Elian Feliz and teen Artist in Residence Interns, Olive Allen, Jacob De Palm, Aaliyah Levy, Carlos Serret, and Neela Willeke, as they create and decorate small house-like vessels, which Cuadra calls *Casitas*, to express their collective sense of belonging. The design of the *Casitas* is based on Mexican *ofrendas* (altars) and Peruvian *retablos* (devotional paintings), both commonly found in Latinx homes.

Cuadra, with the Artist in Residence Assistant and Interns, will cover the *Casitas* with thoughts and imagery that represent their unique relationships to belonging. The project also invites the community to participate by holding additional workshops with Sociedad Latina's summer youth program, Mudflat Studio in Somerville, and the Codman Square Branch of the Boston Public Library.

Cuadra chose to investigate belonging through vessels because she sees each human as a metaphorical vessel for spiritual, mental, and physical matter. So, it is appropriate that through the act of creating literal vessels the artists participating in her project will radiate what lies inside of them, through their surfaces, and into the spaces where things can be felt and heard.

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The project will culminate in the *Vessels of Belonging* exhibition at [Piano Craft Gallery](#) from **August 2-18** featuring the work of the Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts 2024 Artist in Residence Alejandra Cuadra, Artist in Residence Assistant Elian Feliz, the Artist in Residence Interns, and community participants. Their artistic voices coming together to create a choir of freedom, belonging, and remembrance is not to be missed. Join them and the wider Eliot School community in celebrating their artistic accomplishments and growth at the exhibit's [Opening Reception](#) from 6-8 PM on August 2, or the [Closing Reception](#) from 6-8 PM on August 17.

Piano Craft Gallery is open Fridays from 6-8 PM and Saturdays & Sundays from 12-5 PM. The gallery is located at 793 Tremont St, Boston, MA 02118.

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The Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts inspires lifelong learning in craft and creativity for all. They offer classes to people of all ages in woodworking, sewing and yarn, fiber arts, book arts, drawing, painting, photography, and other crafts and fine arts. They reach thousands of people each year from Boston and beyond.