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NEW EXHIBITION EXPLORES THE POLITICS OF RACE AND CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH HAIR



The Plumage of Another

Curated by Michael Palma Mir

Artists: Vicky Charles, Yelaine Rodriguez, Faustino Vidal, Leslie Jimenez, and Jorge Romero

Presented in collaboration with Hamilton Landmark Galleries
Opening April 15, 2021. On view April 15 - May 31, 2021, on the En Foco website, www.enfoco.org.

April 7, 2021 - En Foco, in collaboration with Hamilton Landmark Galleries, presents the virtual exhibition *The Plumage of Another*. This exhibition examines the notion of hair, aka “plumage,” as a social signifier and an expression of individuality. The care, alteration, acceptance of hair portrayed in this exhibit are studies of how attention to bodily hair is used to indicate individual identity and social affiliation. In all its carefully curated variations, hair is shown to be mediated by racial, sexual, class, political, ethnicity and identity, and either promotes or upsets conventional distinctions.

The Plumage of Another is part of En Foco’s ongoing public exhibition program, the Apartment Gallery Series. AGS is an effort to provide underserved communities with access to the arts and acknowledge alternative exhibition spaces’ value. As En Foco continues to provide spaces (physical and virtual) to present and nurture BIPOC photographers, *The Plumage of Another* presents five photographers: Faustino Vidal, Jorge Romero, Leslie Jimenez, Yelaine Rodriguez, and Vicky Charles, space to delve into notions of race and cultural identity through a photographic examination.

Looking to hair as a cultural extension of the human body, this selection of photos examines the root of identity and hair’s function as an object open to self-promotion and communal stereotypes. Be it on the body, face, or head, whether removed, replaced, relaxed, dyed, bound, loose, long, short, curly, straight, or synthetic, hair is inherently inscribed with meaning as a manifestation of personal preference or accepted convention.

About the Artists

Faustino Vidal is a Brooklyn-based image-maker specializing in video and photography. In 2015, Vidal received a Bachelor of Arts with a focus in film and photography from Hampshire College; and in 2018, he graduated from the ICP-Bard Photography MFA program. Prior to this exhibit, his work has been featured in three solo shows.

Jorge Romero is a Dominican photojournalist from New York. He graduated from The New School with a BA degree in Journalism + Design and an MA degree in Media Studies and Management. His work “Pelo Bueno, Pelo Malo” is a photographic commentary about the importance of hair within the Dominican community. The inspiration came from his childhood, where he and his sister were forced to have a certain kind of hairstyle.



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Leslie Jimenez is a Dominican-American artist and educator living in New York. Her work connects experiences of childhood, womanhood, motherhood, education, and life as a Caribbean American in New York. Jimenez creates drawings, site-specific murals, art installations, and prints. This series is about hair within the context of cultural notions of self-display, identity, ethnic awareness, and beauty.

Yelaine Rodriguez is a Bronx-born Afro-Dominican American artist, educator, curator, and cultural organizer. She received a B.F.A. in Fashion Design from The New School (2013) and an M.A. in Latin American and Caribbean Studies/Museum Studies from New York University (2021). "The Political Afro" is a photo narrative of reimagined portraits of the styles of 1960s Civil Rights activists and leaders.

Vicky Charles, based in New York, has a BFA in Photography from SUNY New Paltz. Her work consists of self-portraits that deal with issues about black identity, the body, and relationships with oneself. Charles achieves her visual effects with such procedures as staged studio work and double exposures. Her photography expresses itself without words but by showing.

About the Curator & Venue

Michael Palma Mir is a Harlem-born artist and curator with a BA in English from Columbia University and a Master of Fine Arts from the Hammerstein II Center. As a photographer, Palma Mir has documented cultural life in Upper Manhattan since the 1980s and has curated and participated in various local photo groups. Most recently, he curated a photo exhibit named *Selfless Selfies* at the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance Gallery, a black & white photo exhibit by Upper Manhattan photographers narrating stories about their changing communities. Palma Mir conducts free photography workshops for the Fort Tryon Conservancy and the Montefiore Park Neighbor Association. He is also the resident staff photographer to the Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art and Storytelling and El Museo del Barrio.

About Hamilton Landmark Galleries

Originally conceived as an artist cooperative, Hamilton Landmark Galleries opened its doors in the autumn of 1997. Its mission is dedicated to the presentation of fine art, the development of contemporary artists, and the documentation of fine art collections. HLG has presented more than seventy contemporary artists from the Americas, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Europe, including painters, ceramists, sculptors, printmakers, muralists, graffiti, mixed media artists, and photographers. Periodically, HLG also presents readings from poets and playwrights, and live musical concerts. The gallery is in a landmark building erected in 1886, among a group of buildings completed between 1886 and 1890. It represents one of the oldest structures in the district, a picturesque block in the village of Harlem's Hamilton Heights historic district.

This exhibition is supported in part by public funds from the [New York City Department of Cultural Affairs](#), in partnership with the [City Council](#), [New York State Council on the Arts](#) with the support of [Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature](#), Ford Foundation, The Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Joy of Giving Something, Inc., and private contributions. Member of the [Urban Arts Cooperative](#).