

OCT–NOV 2026 NYC

IDENTITY CARD

THE
IMMIGRANT
ARTIST
BIENNIAL

Opening Reception x El Salón: Text as Territory

Presentation, Roundtable, and Potluck

Curated by Eva Mayhabal Davis

October 10, 5–8 PM

Nguyen Wahed, 504 E 12th St, New York, NY 10009

Layqa Nuna Yawar

Lucía Reissig

National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC)

Taking the form of a PechaKucha-style presentation—a Japanese format consisting of a set number of images shown for 20 seconds each—followed by a roundtable discussion, Layqa Nuna Yawar, Lucía Reissig, and National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) will explore how literary references, books, poetry, and philosophy shape their artistic practices. Moderated around the theme of identity, the conversation will examine how language functions not only as a source of inspiration but also as material in performative, painting, and installation practices, highlighting how artists use text as a mirror of interpretation, documentation, memory, and cultural reference. The discussion will also consider the politics of language and censorship, asking how artists respond to the suppression, erasure, or control of words, histories, and cultural narratives through their creative practices. Censorship is rife, even in the United States; therefore NCAC will also speak on, promote, and show us their specialized guidebook to support artists, *The Artist's Guide to Defending Artistic Freedom*.

Each artist/collective will present 10 slides on their practice, focusing on the relationship with *Identity Card*, describing which literary works are tied to their practice; what underlying text lives in their work; and how identity is extracted and reinterpreted from words into visual and performative elements.

Marking the opening week of the biennial, this festive event is presented as part of *El Salón*, curated by Eva Mayhabal Davis, guests are invited to bring food, and the talk will be followed by a moment to break bread together, extending the series' emphasis on conversation as a form of collective knowledge-making and warm exchange. A guided reading list will be produced and shared as a result of the event.

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El Salón is hosted by **Nguyen Wahed**, a gallery specializing in computer-, and code-based art with a residency program hosting artists engaging in other boundary breaking technological innovation.

About the Artists

Layqa Nuna Yawar (b. Cuenca, Ecuador) is a multidisciplinary artist based in the unceded lands of the Lenni-Lenape, current-day Newark, New Jersey. His practice explores the intersection of migration, decolonization, and the reclamation of public space. Layqa treats the public square as both a canvas and a sanctuary, with his name itself—a self-constructed reclamation of his Kichwa-Kañari heritage—serving as a blueprint for his mission: to peel back the layers of colonial history and reveal the vibrant, subaltern history underneath.

Layqa is best known for his large-scale public commissions that transform architectural surfaces into monuments for silenced narratives. In 2023, he completed a landmark 350-foot mural for Newark Liberty International Airport's Terminal A, reimagining the airport as a site of invisible transit and labor. By elevating the portraits of everyday workers and migrants to a heroic scale, he challenges the traditional semiotics of power and the whitewashing of history.

His work has been exhibited and commissioned internationally, spanning projects in the Americas, Asia, and Europe. Recent institutional highlights include commissions for MoMA PS1, Public Art Fund, the United Nations' World Food Program, and a residency with Monument Lab. Awards include a Moving Walls Fellowship from the Open Society Foundations, an Artistic Impact Award from the Newark Museum of Contemporary Art, and an Art Change Maker Award from the Visual Art Center of New Jersey. Layqa's practice bridges the gap between the institution and the street, cementing his role as a voice in the global decolonization movement.

[@layqanunayawar](https://layqa.info/) | <https://layqa.info/>

Lucía Reissing is an Argentinian-Guatemalan sculptor based in NYC whose work examines how bodies and objects become repositories of memory through practices of care, domestic labor, informal economies, and food politics. Informed by feminist theory and strategies of abstraction, she creates sculptural works that blur the boundaries of the domestic sphere. Her recent practice centers on casting and repetition, both as method and metaphor, often returning to containers and vessels as carriers of memory.

Reissig trained in artist-run spaces before completing the Artist Program at UTDT. She later attended Escuela Incierta at Lugar a Dudas in Cali, Colombia, and received her MFA in Sculpture from Bard College in 2024. Her collaborative projects span feminist archival

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IDENTITY CARD

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publishing, queer food politics, community-based pedagogy, and the spiritual aspects of domestic labor.

In 2021, she published "Pisos pegajosos" with the Chilean publisher Hambrehambrehambre. She received the Kenneth Kemble Young Artist Award (2018), the Premio en Obra at ArteBA (2019), and, in 2025, the inaugural Jonathan and Barbara Silver Foundation Grant for Sculpture. In 2026, she received an Emergency Grant from the FCA and is currently a 2026 NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellow.

National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) Founded in 1974, NCAC is a first responder in protecting freedom of expression, a fundamental human right and a keystone of democracy. Representing over 60 national non-profit education, civil rights, publishing, and arts organizations, NCAC provides direct support and resources to people experiencing censorship, including students, artists, teachers, curators, librarians, and leaders of cultural institutions. The Coalition engages in public education, legal advocacy, and youth programming in the service of free expression and to fight censorship in all its forms.. [@ncacensorship](https://ncac.org/news/artists-guide-defending-artistic-freedom-2) | <https://ncac.org/news/artists-guide-defending-artistic-freedom-2>

About the Curator

Eva Mayhabal Davis, the Bailey Coleman Co-curator, (b. Toluca, Mexico) is a cultural advocate and curator, collaborating with artists and creatives in the production of exhibitions, texts, and events. Recent projects include the Indigenous Practice Studio (IPS) at the Queens Museum and co-curating *Bronx Calling: The Bronx 5th Biennial* at The Bronx Museum of Art. She is a co-director at Transmitter, a collaborative curatorial initiative in Brooklyn. Her work in advocacy and equity is rooted in Indigenous and diasporic dialogues. She is a founding member of El Salón, a creative meetup based on a soulful potluck. In 2018, she was a fellow at the Art & Law Program, in 2019, she was a fellow at the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures Leadership Advocacy and the New York Foundation of the Arts Leadership Boot Camp, and in 2020, she completed the Artistic Freedom Initiative Art & Cultural Heritage Law Certificate Program. Davis is a guest working from the occupied territories of the Munsee Lenape and Canarsie. | [@evamayha](https://www.instagram.com/evamayha)

PARTNERS

The Amplification Project: Digital Archive for Forced Migration, Contemporary Art, and Action is a crowdsourced, community-led virtual archive that preserves and shares art and

OCT–NOV 2026 NYC

IDENTITY CARD

THE
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ARTIST
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cultural productions whose practices speak from and about displacement and refugeedom. Founded in 2019 by an international group of artists, curators, and an archivist, it stewards a growing collection of visual art, literature, photography, and moving image from contributors in more than a dozen countries and territories.

Matka is a Polish vodka made to bring people together. Handcrafted from organic spelt and inspired by our fearless immigrant grandmother, it is exceptionally smooth, full of character, and just as good sipped neat as it is mixed into a cocktail. We donate 100% of our profits to organizations helping refugees and immigrants survive and thrive, including Emma's Torch, RefugePoint, and World Central Kitchen. Na zdrowie, "cheers" in Polish, to pouring with purpose.

Rethink Food is a chef-led nonprofit on a mission to create a more sustainable and equitable food system.

THE BIENNIAL

The Immigrant Artist Biennial is a nomadic platform that presents the work of immigrant artists across diverse formats, including exhibitions, public programs, and publishing. It engages broad national and international audiences while maintaining a strong presence in New York. Through its multi-venue and interdisciplinary approach, the biennial creates space for dialogue, visibility, and exchange, amplifying immigrant voices and fostering connections between artists, institutions, and the public. Founded in 2019 by Katya Grokhovsky, TIAB has showed more than 175 artists including Bianca Abdi-Boragi, Blanka Amezkua, Felipe Baeza, Marcelo Brodsky, Esperanza Cortés, Linnéa Gad, Maria Kulikovska, Raul de Lara, Jiaoyang Li and Jinjin Xu, Anina Major, Ana Mendieta, Coralina Rodriguez Meyer, Anna Ting Möller, Yali Romagoza/Cuquita the Cuban Doll, Nida Sinnokrot, and Tariku Shiferaw.

theimmigrantartistbiennial.com | [@theimmigrantartistbiennial](https://www.instagram.com/theimmigrantartistbiennial)

RSVP info@theimmigrantartistbiennial.com.

VISIT The full program for The Immigrant Artist Biennial 2026: *Identity Card* will be released in September 2026 on our website. Everyone is welcome.

PRESS INQUIRIES Anna Mikaela Ekstrand, info@cultbytes.com. [All presskits](#).

SUPPORT the 2026 biennial, donate through [please donate](#).

IMAGES All courtesy of the artists and The Immigrant Artist Biennial.