

Somewhere Inside: ISCP and the Studio

ISCP celebrates thirty years with an exhibition that explores the magic of the artist's studio
September 17, 2024–January 20, 2025

Opening Reception:
September 17, 2024
6–8pm

Gallery Hours:
Monday–Friday
10:30am–5:30pm

Commemorating ISCP's thirtieth anniversary, *Somewhere Inside: ISCP and the Studio* offers a focused look at the ways that five artists—Martine Gutierrez, Daniel Guzmán, Joiiri Minaya, Sophie Tottie, and Frank WANG Yefeng, all alumni of the program, find inspiration from the materials and imagery around them in the studio.

The mystery of the artist's workspace is deeply rooted in the public imagination. Traditionally seen as a sacred place of refuge, the modern studio has adapted and evolved, taking myriad forms: a solitary retreat, a collective workshop or factory, a community setting, an office or a kitchen table, an exhibition or performance venue, and even a portal within the artist's mind. The artists in this presentation have distinct practices, yet they all approach the studio as a nourishing and exploratory space where they can develop and mine their own creative archive—one enriched by a porous connection to the outside world.



Joiiri Minaya, *Emergence I*, 2020, archival pigment print, 36x24 in. Courtesy of the artist

Somewhere Inside takes its title from the words of Bruce Nauman, who playfully interrogated the activities of the studio: “It’s always interested me how one does any work in the studio at all, what it’s supposed to be about, how you get things started or make any sense out of the process. Even though the work is coming from somewhere inside, you can’t put your finger on the source.”

Curated by Melinda Lang, ISCP's Director of Programs and Exhibitions, *Somewhere Inside* reflects on the alchemy of the studio that fuels artistic experimentation. The works included in the exhibition highlight different strategies for accumulating and making use of what the artist holds within their studio—source material from books, magazines and online searches, sketches, costumes and props, earlier artworks, and other collected objects. For each artist in *Somewhere Inside*, the studio contents also serve as an archive of materials, imagery, and ideas, and it is from this archive that they often make discoveries and produce new artworks.

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For **Daniel Guzmán**, the studio is a vehicle for tapping into a world of wildly eclectic references and archetypes drawn from comic books, rock music, science fiction films, and Aztec motifs. In the artist's ongoing series of drawings *El hombre que debería estar muerto* (*The man who should be dead*) (2020–), surreal characters, emerging from fractured interiors and landscapes, take part in a mysterious creation myth connected to the history and culture of Mexico and the artist's own life. These depictions also allude to ideas of transformation and metamorphosis, themes often associated with artistic production and the studio itself.

Using three-dimensional animation, **Frank WANG Yefeng** turns everyday objects from the studio into strange anthropomorphic characters in *The House of the Solitary* (2020), a series of videos he made while stranded in Berlin at a residency during the pandemic lockdown. The ordinary stuff around the studio—a Kinder egg, an espresso pot, a pack of cigarettes—gradually inflates and deflates alongside poetry, written by the artist, and on-hold music from commercial airlines. Yefeng’s characters come to life across a multichannel video installation, evoking a humorous yet anxiety-ridden landscape.

Joiri Minaya’s documentation from her *Containers* performance (2017) highlights constructions of femininity and Caribbean identity. Inspired by a Google image search for “Dominican women,” Minaya created “tropical” patterned bodysuits for her performers and asked them to pose against ostensibly natural landscapes. Pinned onto the wall, the performance photographs and related scripts take the format of a storyboard, a visualization exercise that is integral to the artist’s process. In another work evolving from this series titled *Emergence I* (2020), a woman pulls off her fabric encasement, suggesting a reclamation of agency—an idea that Minaya continues to explore in the studio today.

With an eco-conscious mindset, **Sophie Tottie** avoids buying new materials and recycles earlier work that takes up space in the studio or in costly storage units. Rather than continuing to store *Public Act* (2007), a large-scale installation that stirs up various existential questions, she cuts it up to make new works that take entirely different forms. Another site-specific work, which was first made in Milan in 2016 (during a heightened discussion around the planet’s increased temperature) is created anew for the exhibition at ISCP. Titled *The Tipping Point (New York)* (2024), this installation uses the old technique of metal-point and makes visual the many kinds of metal we regularly dispose of, highlighting the environmental precarity of the world and its relationship to the artist’s studio practice.

Lastly, a photograph from **Martine Gutierrez**’s celebrated self-made magazine, *Indigenous Woman* (2018), captures some of the many costumes, accessories and props she created in her ISCP studio. During her residency, her practice involved a process of self transformation as she dressed as different characters before photographing herself around ISCP’s industrial East Williamsburg neighborhood. While questioning conventions of beauty and identity, the work in the exhibition—an image of Gutierrez in front of a nearby tire repair shop—also speaks to this routine of moving fluidly between the studio and the city as a critical part of making art.

The studio environment is the lifeblood of ISCP. Established in 1994 with the goal of fostering an international community of artists in New York City, ISCP emerged as a visual arts residency at a time when affordable studio space in Manhattan had become increasingly scarce. Now in an old printing factory in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn, ISCP continues to provide individual studios as well as opportunities for support and exchange to artists and curators from all over the world. Today ISCP plays a vital role in bridging divides, championing diverse viewpoints, and creating a more inclusive and dynamic artistic community in New York City and beyond.

About the artists:

Martine Gutierrez (b. 1989, Berkeley, California; lives and works in New York) subverts pop cultural tropes in the exploration of identity—personal and collective and intersectional to race, gender, class, indigeneity, and culture. Using a range of media, from billboards and episodic films to her iconic magazine, *Indigenous Woman* (2018), she exploits the very conduits of advertising that sell the identities she disassembles. Simultaneously acting as artist, muse, and subject, she asserts control over her image by producing each stage of the creative process herself including staging, lighting, costuming, modeling and photography.

Gutierrez was an artist-in-residence at ISCP in 2017. Her residency was supported by the New York Community Trust’s Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund.

Daniel Guzmán (b. 1964, Mexico City; lives and works in Guadalajara, Mexico) creates drawings, paintings and installations that synthesize a wide range of influences including diverse sources such as comic books, Star Wars films, punk rock and heavy metal music, literature, poetry, Mexican mural painting and Pre-Hispanic motifs. With wry and at times grotesque humor, Guzmán’s works reflect on ideas around death, resurrection, and immortality while exploring Mexican culture and history.

Guzmán was an artist-in-residence at ISCP in 2000. His residency was supported by the Mexican-American Cultural Foundation and the Mexican Cultural Institute of New York.

Joiri Minaya (b. 1990, New York; lives and works in New York) destabilizes historical and contemporary representations of the Dominican Republic, where she was raised, and the larger Caribbean region. Through photography, video, installation and performance, Minaya interrogates tropical motifs and reveals how they have been used to exoticize Caribbean women. Referencing and subverting floral patterns, botanical illustrations, and stereotypes of an imagined tropical identity, her colorful and playful configurations uncover colonial legacies persistent in Western culture.

Minaya was an artist-in-residence in 2021 with support from ISCP's Vision Fund. From 2022 to 2024, she returned to ISCP for the Ground Floor Residency Program designed for New York-based artists.

Sophie Tottie (b. 1964, Stockholm; lives and works in Stockholm) makes drawings, paintings, objects, installations and videos that subtly take up questions related to philosophy, politics, science, psychology and the environment. Tottie's seemingly elusive, minimal abstractions stem from an interrogation of drawing and extend to larger questions around the systems that define our everyday lives. She often turns to ordinary forms such as circles, rectangles, squares and lines, which evoke measuring devices related to existential issues. Currently, Tottie recycles her own earlier artworks or discarded materials as a strategy for reflecting on global crises such as climate change.

Tottie was an artist-in-residence in 1994, ISCP's inaugural year. Her residency was supported by The Swedish Arts Grants Committee's International Programme for Visual Artists (IASPIS).

Frank WANG Yefeng (b. 1984, Shanghai; lives and works in New York and Shanghai) makes work that spans video installation, 3D animation, writing, painting, and drawing. Yefeng's work explores the experience of "in-betweenness" that arises from his own nomadic transnational experience. Interweaving physical and digital realms, Yefeng critically examines fixed identity formations, the history of racialized others, and the alienation of people and objects in dominant cultural and technological narratives.

Yefeng was an artist-in-residence at ISCP in 2021 and his residency was supported by the Rhode Island College Faculty Scholarship Major Grant. He will return to ISCP in fall 2024 as this year's recipient of the ISCP Alumni Residency.

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About ISCP:

Founded in 1994, ISCP is the fourth-largest visual arts residency program in the world and a global leader in the field of visual arts residency programs. ISCP supports the creative development of artists and curators, and promotes exchange through residencies and public programs. Housed in a former factory in Brooklyn, with 35 light-filled work studios and two galleries, ISCP organizes exhibitions, events and offsite projects, which are free and open to all, sustaining a vibrant community of contemporary art practitioners and diverse audiences. Over 2,000 artists and curators from more than 100 countries, including the United States have undertaken residencies at ISCP.

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