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For Immediate Release

Ele Eme Takes up (Teaching) Residency at the Staten Island Museum

Spring and Summer Family workshops kick off with Staten Island artist at the helm

(Staten Island, NY – May 1, 2018) This weekend kicks off “Ele Eme” season at the Staten Island Museum. Starting **Saturday, May 5** artist Lina Montoya A.K.A. “Ele Eme” will lead monthly Family Art workshops where she will share her inspiration and techniques as guests discover different materials and concepts found in her work. Each workshop explores a unique theme in the artist’s practice from found objects and collaborations to textile art and indigenous culture.

“My objective is the beautification of public spaces through artistic interventions, using paint, everyday objects, plastic bottles, recycled material and found objects to transform public spaces and show to the participants that you too can make it! The urban environment is the perfect stage to have my artwork in direct contact with the public all the time, and to invite them to create the pieces with me. The community involvement brings to the artwork its own chapter of the story and ends up being a major component of the creative process,” said Ms. Montoya in her artist statement, Improject.org

“My art is a graphic ‘playlist’ that sings a story about migration, how my journey can take me to explore and reflect about the dualism of my world as an ‘Immigrant Artist,’ it celebrates bilingualism and cultural diversity,” she continued.

Workshops take place on the first **Saturday of the month from 1:00pm to 3:00pm (unless noted)**, are free with Museum admission, and open to all ages. Advanced registration is recommended by visiting the event section of StatenIslandMuseum.org.

Family Art Workshops are supported in part by the Lily Auchincloss Foundation and Richmond County Savings Foundation.

May 5: Cross Stitch (Special time – 11:00am – 1:00pm)

Lina Montoya uses fencing as fabric for her public art. In this workshop, participants will explore the creative potential of everyday objects to create works of art in the textile tradition of cross-stitching. Participants will learn how to grid a design and then weave colored fabrics and notions to create a finished piece. [Register here.](#)

June 2: Bottle Flowers

Originally from Colombia, Montoya said this project was inspired by her home country's annual Festival of Flowers, in which townspeople carry baskets of flowers through the street. For the installation at New World Prep, more than 5,000 recycled plastic bottles transformed a Port Richmond sidewalk into a sea of flowers, thanks to the work of 250 middle school students. Participants of this workshop will be guided through the techniques used to create these unique “bottle-flowers” calling for environmental justice through beauty. [Register here.](#)

July 7: Mariposas Amarillas (Yellow Butterflies)

La Isla Bonita (The Beautiful Island) is one of Montoya’s recurring public installations which seeks not only to beautify urban environments but also to connect with the local community. Mariposas Amarillas is part of this

series and is inspired by music. Using the monarch butterfly as an icon of migration, this project pays homage to all those who have flown away from their beloved land. Guests will work with motifs and techniques used in the development and installation of Mariposas Amarillas, in order to participate in the ongoing conversation around the utopias, dreams, ideals, and aspirations that inhabit the collective minds of different communities. [Register here.](#)

August 4: Mola

The mola is a handmade material that forms part of the traditional outfit of the Guna, an indigenous people of Panama and Colombia. Molas have their origin in body painting. However, after colonization by the Spanish and contact with missionaries the Guna start to transfer their geometric designs to fabric, first by painting directly on the fabric and later by using reverse appliqué. In this workshop, families will paint on fabric/use paper and collage techniques to explore the geometric patterns, themes, and colors traditionally associated with molas. [Register here.](#)

About the Artist:

Lina Montoya, A.K.A. “Ele Eme”, has been a Staten Island-based artist since 2010. A passionate, creative, and rising graphic artist and designer born and raised in Medellín, Colombia.

Montoya has an extensive background in graphic design, web, and advertising working with several clients and agencies worldwide. Recently, because of her community-based creative work, she has been developing her career as muralist, teaching artist, and community organizer. She has experience working with public agencies and community based organizations around New York City.

As a vehicle to express her talents, share her migratory experience and celebrate multiculturalism, she founded the “Ele Eme Project” in Colombia, before she moved to the United States in 2010. It is an artistic initiative developed between New York City and Latin America that intends to exchange “Magical Experiences” through socially engaged art for public space beautification and landscape transformation.

She has been working since 2013 on two on-going series of public art: “La Isla Bonita Series,” as a tribute to Staten Island and New York City’s beauty and diversity and “MusiCalls Series,” that intends to beautify as many places as possible along the Americas from North to South.

There are several pieces on display around Staten Island where she has participated. In addition to all the temporary art-making activities she leads around the five boroughs and the murals she has painted in Colombia, Panama, and Mexico. Montoya is a granted artist by the Department of Transportation (NYC DOT), Staten Island Arts (COAHSI), the Wagner College Port Richmond Partnership, City Parks Foundation (CPF) and UNIQLO Arts Expressions Grant 2017 by the Department of Parks and Recreation New York City Parks. Mentee of the Immigrant Artist Mentorship Program of the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA). Teaching artist for the Police Athletic League (PAL) and Groundswell Community Art Project.

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About the Staten Island Museum

Founded in 1881 and celebrating its 137th year, the Staten Island Museum engages visitors with interdisciplinary exhibitions and educational programs that explore the dynamic connections between natural science, art, and history based on its diverse collections. Staten Island Museum is owned by the City of New York and benefits from public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. For current exhibits, visit StatenIslandMuseum.org.