

Stephanie Syjuco



PORTLAND ART MUSEUM

## MARVELS

May 11 – July 8, 2018

NotMoMA by Stephanie Syjuco and Portland area youth artists

Marvels.presents Stephanie Syjuco's notMoMA, a work of social practice art engaging local high school students. With this work, conceptual artist Syjuco investigates how museum collections are accessed and how museums shape notions of value and originality. NotMoMA asks students to remake artworks from the Museum of Modern Art (New York) collection by studying them on MoMA's website. Their task is to reproduce the work to the best of their ability with the resources available to them. With notMoMA, Syjuco questions: What happens when young art students are tasked with refabricating famous artworks—works they have never seen in person? Do the aura of famous artworks still exist when remade by others?

To begin the project, guest artistic director Libby Werbel asked curators from three independent art spaces in Portland—Melanie Flood Projects, Una Gallery, and c3:initiative—to select works using MoMA's website that they would like to see on view at the Portland Art Museum. From this selection students from Jefferson High School, Gresham High School, and Reynolds High School chose pieces to study and recreate.

Dozens of students have fabricated artworks for the installation in the Jubitz Center for Modern and Contemporary Art. The fully handmade show aims to bridge gaps in the students' understandings of "high art" by inviting them to access the works via their own do-it-yourself vision. Whether considered copies,

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translations, or even mis-translations, all resulting works are unique expressions in their own right. To accompany *Marvels.*, c3:initiative will host a satellite exhibition featuring documentation of the process to realize this version of *notMoMA*, as well as portraits of the student artists and further inquiries into community engaged art forms.

*NotMoMA* is the first social practice work to enter the permanent collection of the Portland Art Museum. The work was acquired through a collaboration between the museum's Education department and Portland State University's Art and Social Practice MFA program. It was selected during a public event in 2015 where several works of socially engaged art were presented, debated, and voted upon by attendees. The Art and Social Practice faculty and students have been active with the Museum for several years, including in the multi-year *Shine a Light* series.

*Marvels.* is a truly community-created Modern Art Museum exhibition, with support and collaboration from: Teachers and students of Jefferson High School, Gresham High School, and Reynolds High School; Melanie Flood of Melanie Flood Projects; Mercedes Orozco of Una Gallery; Shir Ly Grisanti of c3:initiative; Emily Fitzgerald and Erica Thomas of Works Progress Agency; Portland State University's Art and Social Practice MFA program; and Stephanie Syjuco.