

# CHRISTINA DELGADO

educator, culture worker  
& artist

[www.tolasroom.com](http://www.tolasroom.com)



**Christina Delgado**, a Baltimore-based multidisciplinary artist and curator, delves into the intricacies of self and identity through her work. As a Nuyorican transplant from New York City to Baltimore, her lens captures the fusion of cultures and the evolution of personal narrative. Delgado's portfolio reflects a profound reverence for family and homeland, showcasing how these elements can be both sources of pain and avenues to healing and self-affirmation.

At the heart of her creative journey lies *Tola's Room*, a sanctuary for Puerto Rican heritage nestled in Northeast Baltimore. Named after her daughter, Omotola, this immersive museum and cultural space stands as a beacon of representation in the city.

Delgado's commitment to arts equity extends beyond her own endeavors; she serves as an advisor, mentor, and teaching artist, fostering creativity and inclusivity in the community. With a seat at the table of numerous advisory groups and boards, Delgado continues to shape the cultural landscape of Baltimore and beyond.

01

RELIQS OF  
MY FATHER



*An Offering.* Digital Photograph. 24x20 inches. 2014

***Relics of My Father*** is an evolving photography & culture project Christina Delgado uses as a form of art therapy after losing her father suddenly in 2013. Having to sort through all the “relics” he left behind was like opening a time capsule, memories of the past flooding through her mind. She learned so much about him and she also learned much about herself.

Her father's death in essence gave Christina life, allowing her confidence, pride, and a renewed perspective into her own cultural experience, her lineage, and what being a Puerto Rican from NYC really means.

*La Bandera.* Digital Photograph. 20x24 inches. 2014

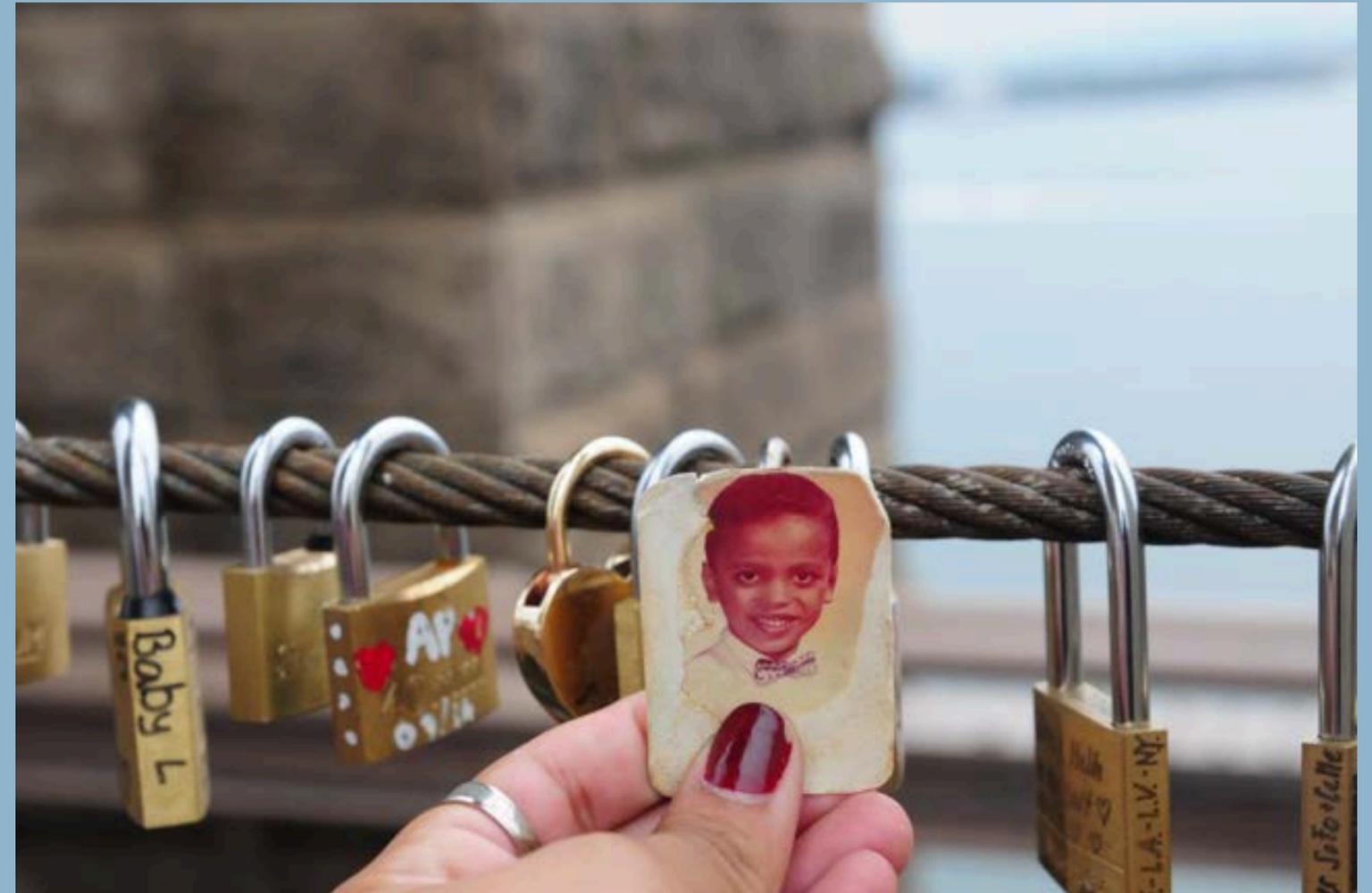




*El Indio*. Digital Photograph. 24x20 inches. 2014



*Brooklyn Bridge.* Digital Photograph. 24x20 inches. 2014



*Daddy Baby.* Digital Photograph. 24x20 inches. 2014

*“our homes are our first museums.”*

– Dr. Martha Morena Vega

culture

noun cul·ture \ 'kʌl-ʃər \

Christina Delgado

ICA Fellowship Final Paper

June 15, 2018

Dr. Martha Morena Vega mentioned, amongst many other things in her conversation, that it's imperative to know your history and your people, their evolution and how they have changed over time. She also said that it's a form of erasure, oppression, and enslavement to not understand yourself—to not know your power. When I spoke with Kamu Ware, originator of The Black Gotham Experience, and I asked him for a solution, his reply was, we have to change the culture, before we break the system. Rosa Clemente stated many times throughout her lecture the importance of preserving and documenting the legacy of our people. Carlos Aponte touched on culture many times during our interview, but what stood out most to me, was how he was working to break a negative culture construct of our people; the obesity epidemic. Gonzalo Casals, of The Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art brought up aspects of building a strong organizational culture. He spoke on social development and social equity, and how valuable that is in the workplace, especially within cultural institutions—they must practice what they preach. Sami Abu Shumays's take on culture was a bit more dismal, but still very relevant to the work. He spoke about the inequities and sterilization of culture in New York City due to massive development and how the city uses the arts as a guise for developer takeover. It's the exposure to these remarkable leaders and their work that really spoke to me. It's from this, that I can begin making the connections to understand myself more closely, to start understanding others differently, and to take on a leadership role in a more aware and culturally centered way.

My strategy is rooted from my questions about broken people and broken systems, and how to deconstruct that perpetual cycle of oppression and disinvestment. I also must give credit to Dr. Vega, because her words helped me to make clarity of the big idea I had floating in my brain. She said, “reimagine what investment looks like. Humans are the largest investment—larger than financial investment”. Regarding institution building, her advice was to either be a part of or build an institution that reflects who you are and your intentions as a cultural leader. The most important and pivotal remark that truly brought it full circle for me, was “our homes are the first museum”.

My vision, The Neighborhood Museum, is to build on human capacity and community reinvestment through education of history and culture true to all people, but more importantly to highlight

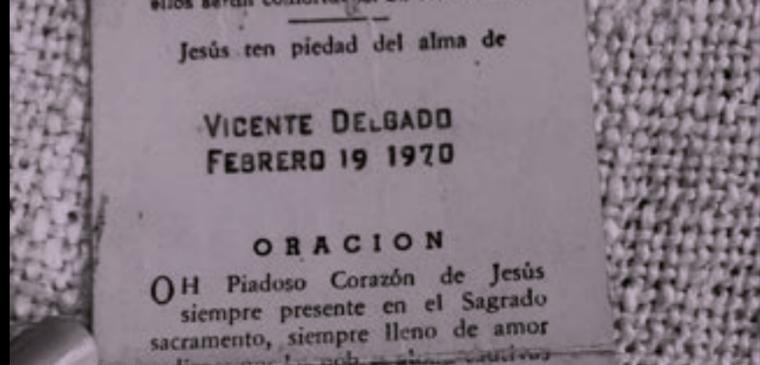


Photo documentation & digital collage courtesy of the artist. 2024

# 02 TOLA'S ROOM



**Tola's Room**, located in Baltimore City, is a vibrant hub of Puerto Rican heritage and culture, blending personal narrative, historical exploration, and community engagement. Founded in 2018 as an art therapy project following the passing of Christina Delgado's father, it now honors Puerto Rican and Nuyorican experiences through exhibitions, workshops, events, and collaborations that foster connection and belonging.

Rooted in honoring ancestors and preserving local Puerto Rican histories, Tola's Room safeguards cultural heritage while inviting future exploration of how the Puerto Rican community can continue to thrive in Baltimore. Through immersive exhibits and intimate gatherings, visitors are empowered to connect with their identities and histories in the comfort of a home-like setting.

As Baltimore's only Puerto Rican home museum, Tola's Room is both a sanctuary for cultural reconnection and an open invitation to the Boricua community to consider it a second home. It embodies the resilience of the Puerto Rican diaspora, enriching the cultural and artistic landscapes of Baltimore and beyond.



### ***The Shrine***

Tola's Room Basement  
Installation. 2021



### ***Daddy's Den***

Tola's Room 3rd Floor  
Installation. 2022

*"The Shrine,"* part of the 2021 *"Relics of My Father"* exhibition at *Tola's Room*, honored Delgado's father, Edwin Delgado, with personal artifacts and a reflective altar space.

In 2022, Delgado's second exhibition, *"A Series of Love Letters,"* transformed her daughter's former bedroom into *"Daddy's Den,"* featuring her father's belongings, family photos, and a short film, *"Daddy, A Love Letter,"* projecting family videos and reflections since his passing onto a photo of the final Bacardi bottle he drank from.

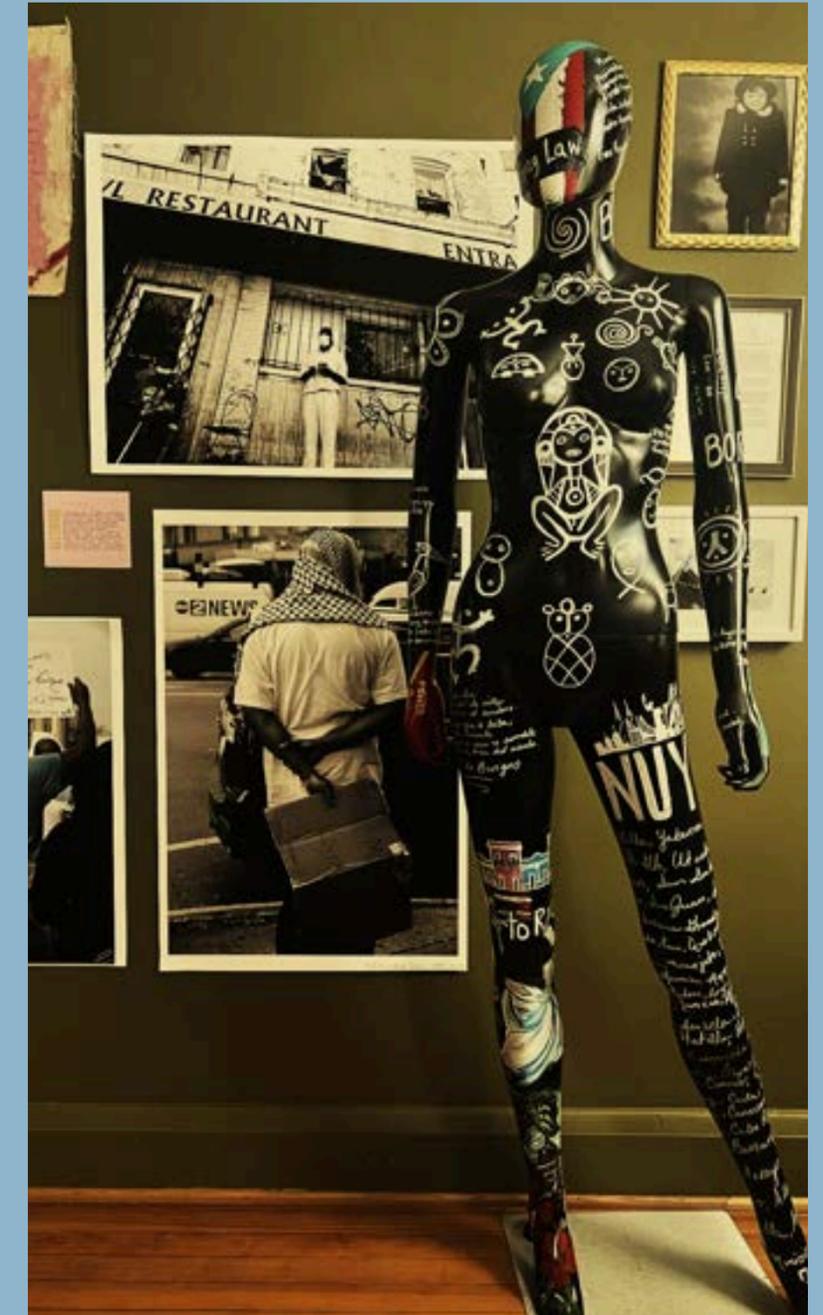
*Tola's Room* initiated the *#BmoreBoricuas Project* a cultural archiving initiative documenting the experiences of Puerto Ricans in Baltimore from the 1800s to today. Since its launch in 2021, the project has gathered oral histories, artifacts, artworks, and cultural stories, offering a comprehensive view of Baltimore's nearly 200-year Puerto Rican presence.

By preserving these narratives, the project highlights the extensive diversity of Baltimore's Puerto Rican community—a perspective too often overlooked in the mainstream, both locally and nationally.



### Chesca Stein Interview

2021



### Felicita's Legacy

Plastic bodice & acrylic paint. 72" x 28". 2023

A gift by Dina Tillman.

...PACA ST.

...pharmacy in San Juan... was professor in one of... of that city, and Mr. ... of Ponce. Their object in... more is to perfect them... English language. They pro... here for several years. ... yesterday: "In Puerto... fever is now at its height. ... talking politics, and the... full of it. Up to this time... Republicans have won in... the Federals have usually... The Puerto Ricans have... up the crumbs of autono...

...important to them is their... tion. The failure to give... market for her products has... ful than was the great hur... the situation is relieved... difficult to say what the re... en now the situation is ap... the cession of Puerto Rico... Spain were closed to her, ... markets were not opened. ... Puerto Rico's goods have... in the country. The con...

...for 35 years, and he is mu... the fate of the Puerto Ric... w in the hands of Congres... gentlemen came to Baltimo... ancoso del Valle, of Puer... here, and also to call up... of the Baltimore Puerto Ric...

...ld last night to a represent... n that native Puerto Rica... glad to escape from the o... of Spain to the friend... Sam, but that the prevall... nents had almost made the... y did what they did. ... great deal that the Islan... o, which is one of the mo... world, has to try to find... goods in Cuba, which she... nt. We ought to have fr...

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...reaching destination that have... been closed for many years. People... are tired of being treated like... second-class citizens." ... He and other activists say the... needs of the problem are many, rang... ing from economic insufficien... cy to racial and gross underrep... resentation in government to a host... of environmental disadvantages, in... cluding educational backwardness... and poverty in the outer districts of... the new wave of immigrants, and... slums and polluted harbor areas. ... Mr. Rosendo explains the health... situation of what 10 would already... have been working that time of day... he said. He worked as a gardener in... Virginia for \$5.50 an hour. But he... was too afraid to go out — afraid of... getting caught up in more riots. ... ahead of the curve, ahead of being... closed for all the trouble, ahead of a... lot of things. ... The 20-year-old Bahamian re... turned said he had never been educa... ted — he could not even write his... name — but he had at least been... able to earn a living in 20 Bahamian... dollars last year. ... He starts a single sentence with... an exclamation in a neighborhood re... sponding for \$5.50 an hour, he said, if... it weren't for two houses and sev... eral neighborhoods from their two... Bahamian lodgers, they would not...

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...To HER HEALTH

Advertisement for Dr. Rosendo's health services. Includes a photo of a woman and text describing her medical expertise and services.



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**TORRES, Salvador**  
SALVADOR TORRES, age 83, of West Grove, PA, formerly of Parkville, MD, passed away on Tuesday, July 28, 2015, at his residence. He was the Husband of Edith Saylor Torres, with whom he shared 60 years of marriage. Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, he was the son of the late Pedro Torres and Adela' Aponte. Salvador served in the U.S. Army from October 2, 1953 thru September 30, 1955, during the Korean War, and was Honorable Discharged. Also earned the National Defense Service Medal and Good Conduct Medal. In 1957, Salvador joined the Baltimore City Police Department as the first Native-born Puerto Rican. He retired in 1987 as a Lieutenant. He was an avid fisherman, and enjoyed boating, the outdoors, playing guitar, long-time Baltimore Orioles fan, helping people and being with his family and friends. In addition to his wife, he is survived by two sons, Salvador Torres and his wife Joann of Waterbury CT and Anthony Torres and his wife Rose of West Grove, PA.



...and four grandchildren (Joshua, Justin, Marlene & Lianne). He was predeceased by one brother, Ramon Torres and one sister, Angela Ocasio.

A table with multiple columns and rows, likely a schedule or a list of names and dates. The text is small and difficult to read.

...The Bahamian re... turned said he had never been educa... ted — he could not even write his... name — but he had at least been... able to earn a living in 20 Bahamian... dollars last year. ... He starts a single sentence with... an exclamation in a neighborhood re... sponding for \$5.50 an hour, he said, if... it weren't for two houses and sev... eral neighborhoods from their two... Bahamian lodgers, they would not...

**Puerto Rican at JHU to swim in Olympics**  
by JOHN W. STEWART  
Mario Mack, an 18-year-old Johns Hopkins University student, is 1 of 3 women named on the Puerto Rican Olympic swimming team. She will enter the 100-meter and 200-meter butterfly events at Montreal. Mack has competed in the two most recent Pan-American Games, but this will be her first Olympic competition. Four years ago, there were 8 top candidates for 4 places on her country's team to compete at Munich, but when the Puerto Rican committee could not agree on the 4, it decided to send none. It is a different situation this time, since 18 spots were available and Mack has been one of the Caribbean nation's leading swimmers. There has also been dramatic mental and physical improvement during the last year. "I was so negative about swimming after the Pan-Am, and I was having trouble adjusting to college. It was a rough fall," Mack said the other day. Mack did not like Hopkins last fall because, she said, it seemed everyone studied all the time and "I felt everyone was different from me." Practically everyone was different in at least one respect — each speaks English fluently. "The freshmen had a language barrier to surdle, but the presence of her brother Carlos, a junior who went through the school's pre-med program to three years, was a



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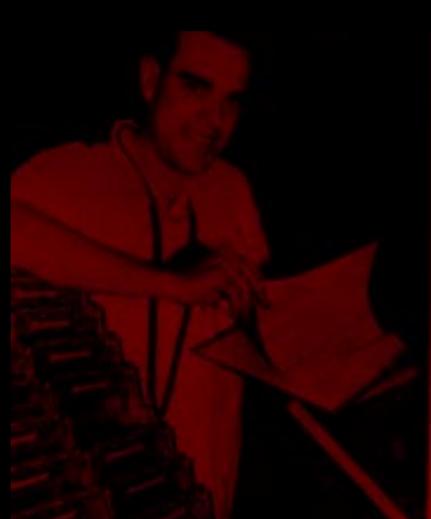
**Puerto Rican Honored**

**Puerto Rican Awarded Hopkins Fellowship**  
The Johns Hopkins University is awarded its new Charles Hopkings Fellowship to Dr. Gabriel de la Haba, a young Puerto Rican biologist, university officials announced yesterday. Dr. de la Haba is doing research in the field of trace elements.



SENORITA ZAHIDE TORRES She's produced a plaster tooth.

**Young Girl Student Knocks Out Her First Tooth—In Plaster**



Carlos Torres, son of Puerto Rican swimmer Mario Mack, is shown here reading a book.

**Baltimore Is Training Center For Group Of Physicians**

BmoreBoricua Elites. 2025

03

Documentary  
Photography





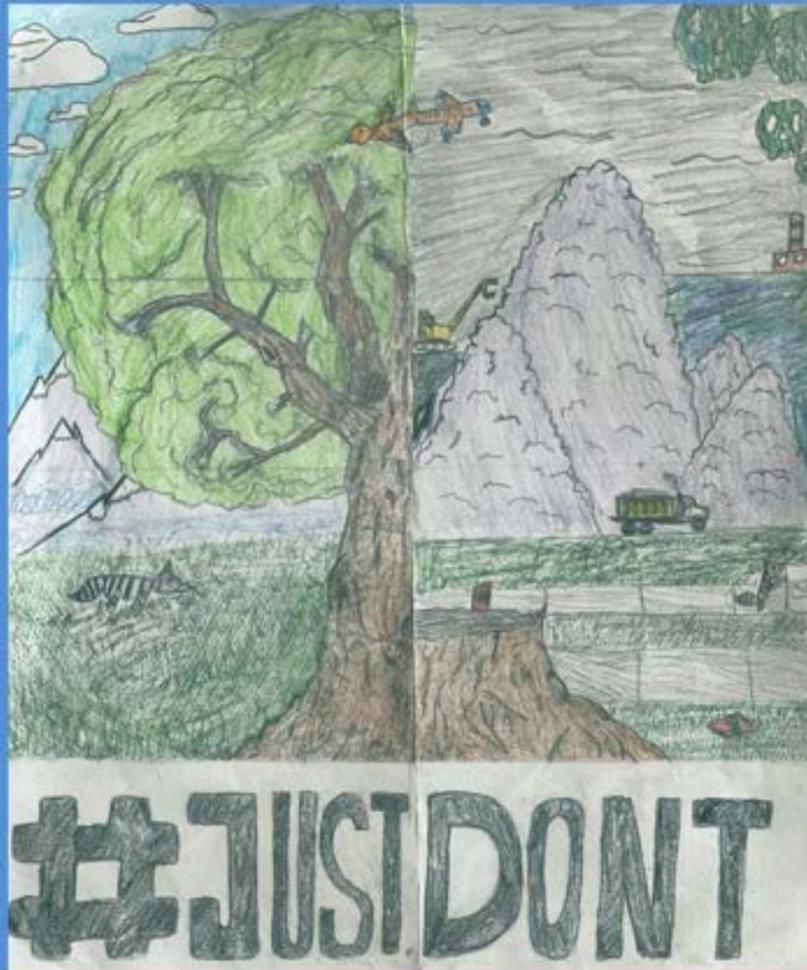
*Geneva and James. Photograph on Vinyl. 4x3 feet. 2021*



*Muslims for Freddie Gray. Digital Photograph. 20x24 inches. 2015*

# 04

## Education & Community Work



TOLA'S ROOM AND NLIFE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PARTNERED ON A PILOT PROJECT ENTITLED, #JUSTDONT: YOUTH ANT-LITTER & ART ADVOCACY MOVEMENT. THIS PROJECT USES ART AS A TOOL TO EDUCATE PEOPLE ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF TRASH ON COMMUNITY AND HEALTH. OUR GOAL WAS TO TEACH YOUTH TO THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT WASTE, TO EDUCATE & CONVINCE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME.



LEARN MORE HERE.



#JUSTDONT. 2021  
Photo by Hadiya. 2021

QTY:1

# Johnston Square Gateway Project: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

Through the *Neighborhood Design Center's Build Together Designer-in-Residence Program*, artist Christina Delgado led a summer-long public space intervention for the Johnston Square neighborhood. This project was done in partnership with Rebuild Johnston Square neighborhood organization. The Johnston Square Gateway Project commemorates efforts to enliven the East Biddle St. bridge located in the Johnston Square neighborhood at 300 E Biddle Street between Fallsway and Barclay. Through a public mural and activation, the project bridges what has historically been a dividing line between Johnston Square and Midtown, and anticipates the future park and development along East Biddle Street as part of the Johnston Square 2020 Vision Plan.

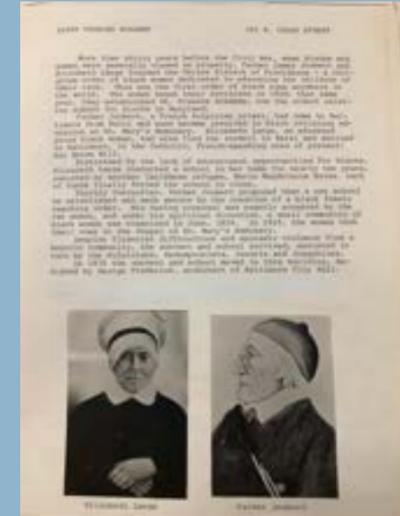
Orpin recreated and painted the design as the backdrop for black and white images of people and place taken by Delgado. Smaller images were shared by countless residents of the Johnston Square community present and past. The mural and photo exhibition honor the people who have made Johnston Square a place of community, and they both represent and envision a new future for the neighborhood. As the Johnston Square neighborhood rapidly changes, it is more critical than ever that we honor and highlight its shared history.

We would like to acknowledge the endless partners, stakeholders, and community members that helped to make this project possible. This project was made possible with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Abell Foundation, the Goldsaker Foundation, and the Johns Hopkins Neighborhood Fund.

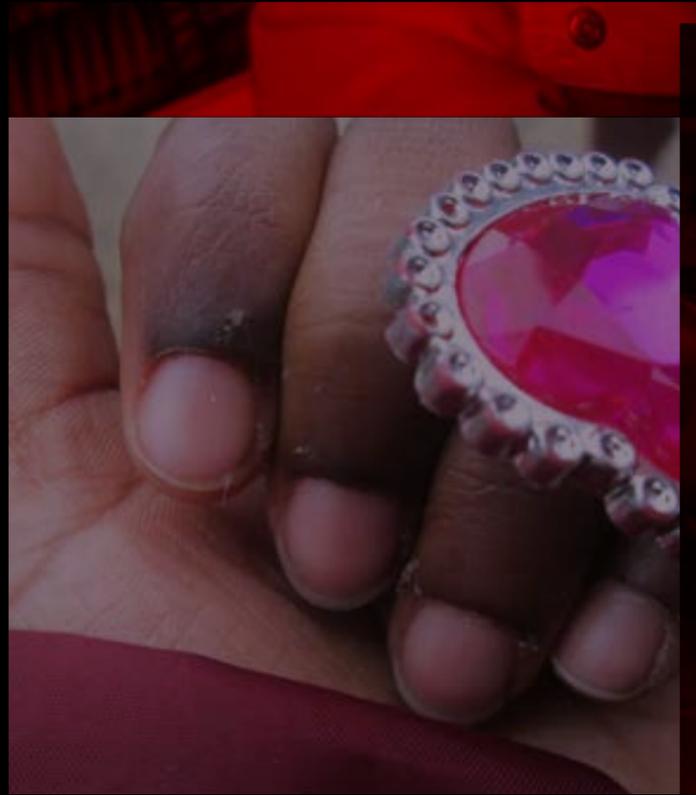
The mural design was based on a new branding concept for Johnston Square created by Glenn Dellon. Muralist Pagie

A big thank you to the following people for their oral and visual contributions to this project:

- |           |         |            |           |           |
|-----------|---------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Barbara   | Diamond | Jeanette   | Marcus    | Sharon    |
| Blanca    | Elaine  | Kate       | Priscilla | Thomasina |
| Bonita    | Evon    | Keth       | Rachel    |           |
| Clark     | Geneva  | Lillian L. | Rita      |           |
| Coach Jon | Inez    | Lillian T. | Rob       |           |
| Deborah   | James   | Loretta    | Robin     |           |



SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION.



Student Photography Examples. 2013-2023



# COMMUNITY IS

REIMAGINING TEACHING THROUGH PEOPLE, PLACE & PRACTICE

# THE CLASSROOM

**What if the classroom isn't defined as a physical space — but as a living, breathing network of people, place, and practice?**



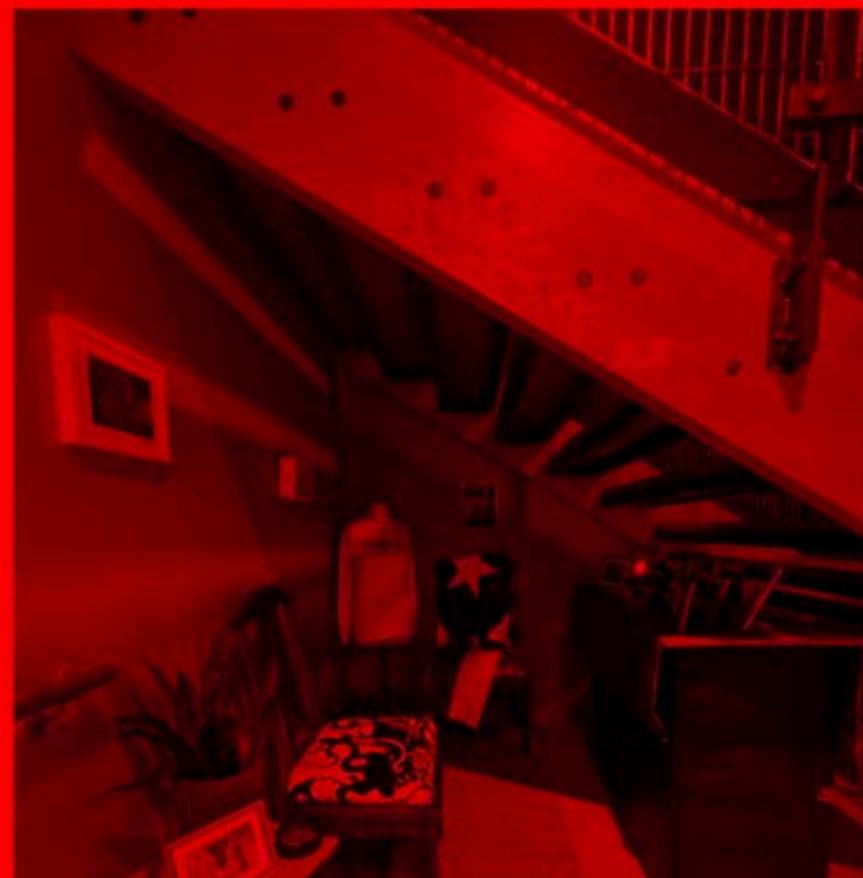
VISUAL ART

## Pa' Mi Gente: an Embassy of Boricua Culture on North Avenue

Motor House's Exhibition Celebrating Baltimore's Puerto Rican Diaspora Closes 12/5

December 4, 2023

Words: *Adriana Vélez*



# 05 Exhibitions & Publications

"BmoreBoricuas Popup Exhibition @ Hello Bonita, Tola's Room, October 2025

"BmoreBoricuas Mini Exhibition", Tola's Room, December 2024

"Pa Mi Gente", The Motor House, October 2023

"Taking Space", Creative Alliance, September 2023

"Boricua", Maryland Women's Heritage Center, September 2023

"Diasporican Art in Motion", Center for Puerto Rican Studies, February 2023

"Building Capacity for Community-Academia Research Partnerships by Establishing a Physical Infrastructure for Community Engagement: Morgan CARES." Sheikhattari, P., Shaffer, E., Barsha, R.a.A., Silver, G. B., Elliott, B., Delgado, C., Purviance, P., Odero-Marah, V., & Bronner, Y. (2022). International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19(19), 12467.

"Casa de la Cultura Art Exhibition", Casa de la Cultura, 2022

"Passion & Purpose: Voices of Maryland's Civil Rights Activists" Exhibition, Maryland Center for History and Culture, June 2022

Baltimore Uprising Archive Project, Maryland Center for History and Culture, 2015

Christina Delgado



*De Puerto Rico.* Digital Photograph. 24x20 inches. 2024