

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**La Raza: Embracing Diversity**

(BROOKLYN, N.Y.— Sept. 19, 2016) SUNY Empire State College will present La Raza: Embracing Diversity, a fine art exhibit showcasing the work of graduate students sharing their views, experiences and contribution to the Latino culture.

The opening reception is from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 28, at the Livingston Gallery, sixth floor, 177 Livingston Street, Brooklyn. The exhibit will be on display noon to 5 p.m. from Sept. 28 through Dec. 15, Monday through Thursday. Raúl Manzano, Ph.D., a visiting assistant professor and gallery coordinator, is the curator of the exhibition. Admission is free.

“I was thrilled to hear about the La Raza: Embracing Diversity exhibit, curated by Raul Manzano,” said Megan Mullen, who recently joined the college as the associate dean of Humanities. “One of my great joys during the early months in my position has been seeing the diversity of artistic and cultural expression taking place within Empire State College. I’m especially pleased with what’s happening within my division, which encompasses the arts and humanities disciplines. La Raza represents something we all can celebrate and take part in.”

The participating artists are:

Patricia Cazorla, whose large-scale, mixed-media in charcoal, acrylic, markers, silver liquid leaf and industrial paint on wood, adapts perfectly into a gallery 3D display, as well as an outdoor installation. Her social-driven art, created in collaboration with artist Nancy Saleme, addresses immigrant and migrant working-class communities. Their passion for public art creation is inspired by their own migrant experiences, as well as the notion of art as a medium for communication to raise awareness and empower individuals.

Daisy Ferrer, an artist and community and human service professional who works with people with developmental disabilities, uses art as a therapy and visual expression. Her work, she says “is a rewarding experience that requires so much love, patience and kindness, virtues which come naturally as an artist.” Her work has taught her that within every human being lies a unique form of expression, and, for her, that is painting. According to Ferrer, “My work has enabled me to look beyond individuals’ disability, and be able to see their abilities and potential to accomplish most of their goals and aspiration.”

Using unconventional pictorial narratives of the Statue of Liberty, **Raúl Manzano**’s triptych asks whether dreams, freedom and hope are still relevant today. His oil paintings on canvas depict history and cultural references to past and current affairs. On one canvas, he pays homage to Mexican master Diego Rivera. Manzano’s painting, however, makes allusion to farm workers who come in search of the American Dream, only to find themselves in a cycle of exploitation work. On another canvas, he conveys the current political

presidential elections. His last panel questions the canon of education as to what civilization has learned from The Enlightenment, the Haitian Revolution and religions dogmas.

In his painting, “The Great Spectacle of Life,” self-taught artist **Gabriel Rivera** conveys life’s passage. He says, “as we stand in life’s arena, it teaches us that life is the teacher of a different sort. It tests us first and provides the lessons afterwards. Also, that death is ever-present and woven into the fabric of life. Therefore, it is not how we die, but rather how we live life; we can live it to the fullest while navigating the challenges.”

Manzano, an ESC alumnus, has been with the faculty since 2006. He introduced the Hispanic Heritage month exhibits in 2011 at the college’s Brooklyn location. Since then, Empire State College has been a partner with the Latin American Cultural Week (LACW) and the Pan American Musical Research (PAMAR), celebrating the Latino culture. Manzano also introduced the annual celebration of Black History Month art exhibition in 2012. He will introduce, Caribbean Heritage Month celebration in June 2017 in collaboration with Rosalind October-Edun, Ph.D., college visiting assistant professor and Community and Human Services mentor.

The LACW is a festival that showcases music, dance, visual arts, theater, film, literature and auctions throughout the New York City area. The LACW is a program of Pan American Musical Art Research, founded and directed by Uruguayan pianist Polly Ferman. For more information about Ferman, visit www.pamar.org or www.pollyferman.net. “This citywide celebration, working with artistic institutions promoting and enriching the arts and bringing together the community at large, is what ESC goals are about,” emphasized Manzano.

About Empire State College

Empire State College, the nontraditional, open college of the SUNY system, educates more than 18,000 students worldwide at eight international sites, more than 35 locations in the state of New York, online, as well as face to face and through a blend of both, at the associate, bachelor’s and master’s levels.

The average age of an undergraduate student at the college is 35 and graduate students’ average age is 40.

Most Empire State College students are working adults. Many are raising families and meeting civic commitments in the communities where they live, while studying part time.

In addition to awarding credit for prior college-level learning, the college pairs each undergraduate student with a faculty mentor who supports that student throughout his or her college career.

Working with their mentors, students design an individual degree program and engage in guided independent study and course work onsite, online or through a combination of both, which provides the flexibility for students to choose where, when and how to learn.

Students have the opportunity to enroll five times during the year.

The college’s 78,000 alumni are active in their communities as entrepreneurs, politicians, business professionals, artists, nonprofit agency employees, teachers, veterans and active military, union members and more.

The college was first established in 1971 by the SUNY Board of Trustees with the encouragement of the late Ernest L. Boyer, chancellor of the SUNY system from 1970 to 1977.

Boyer also served as United States commissioner of education during the administration of President Jimmy Carter and then as president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

More information about the college is available at www.esc.edu.