



Glendalys Medina, *The Shank*  
November 3 - December 15, 2019

Opening reception:  
Sunday, November 3, 7-9pm

From November 3 - December 15, 2019 Participant Inc presents *The Shank*, a solo exhibition of new works by Glendalys Medina. Including Medina's *The Shank: Live*, a three-episode live broadcast and *Dear Me*, a twelve-hour durational performance presented over two days as part of the **Performa 19 Biennial**, the exhibition also hosts *No Microphone*, an evening of performance experiments organized by **Khaela Maricich** and **Glendalys Medina**. Culminating Medina's decade-long project that utilizes self-help techniques and Hip-Hop culture as its foundations, *The Shank* traces the artist's personal development program, incorporating movement through dance, rhythm through music, and aesthetics through visual arts. Here, the four elements of Hip-Hop – breakdancing, DJ'ing, MC'ing, and graffiti writing – serve as rich interdisciplinary vehicles through which Medina engages audiences. The rigorous discipline, technical skills, and pedagogy of each element offer a basis to explore the processes of self-transformation.

In 2012 Medina created her own signature graffiti tag, *BlackGold*, composed of fifty basic shapes taken from the face of a boom box, one of Hip-Hop's quintessential images. Using this as a stencil, Medina constructed drawings based on the Latin alphabet in her *Black Alphabet Series*. For *The Shank*, Medina completed *The Black Book*, constituting an alphabet of her visual vocabulary, and *Disciple*, a lightbox that documents her formative practice of copying prominent graffiti writers. Much like learning and repeating iconic graffiti tags to develop her own, the recording of the five-song LP *The Shank* holds traces of Medina's practice of emulating prominent creations in the Hip-Hop genre to create a self. As the artist has noted, "Using the idea that repetition is the mother of skill, I taught myself to become a powerful MC by learning and repeating 'One Mic' by Nas every day for about 6-7 months." The record is a result of that, and documents the artist's experience as the only participant in *The Shank: Live* for the past ten years.

*The Shank: Live*, a three-episode show to be live broadcasted on Instagram @glendalysmedina, will similarly guide viewers through a process that, when practiced, will enhance self-awareness and self-realization through song. Viewers can tune in for an episode in which the artist reveals a step-by-step technique inviting viewers to participate.

In the exhibition space, three new large-scale portraits further emphasize Medina's engagement with language and image: how they are used to identify and classify; how they can be altered to change ideas of the self and the world. In Medina's portraits of her parents, *Ms Puerto Rico* and *Mr Borikén*, both 2019, the artist uses Taíno symbols in celebration of her Afro-Caribbean heritage. The titles are intended to inform the public of the many identities of Puerto Ricans on the island and the mainland. Medina's self-portrait, *Mx Nuyorican*, is named for the non-binary aspects of the artist's identity. Borikén is the native name of the island of Puerto Rico and Nuyorican refers to people of Puerto Rican descent raised in New York.

For *Dear Me*, a small room built within the gallery will serve as the space of encounter between the artist and a solitary visitor. A brief lyric will be sung continuously for one visitor at a time for six hours each day. The artist will perform in darkness and no documentation will occur. A dim light will shine from under the doorway to help each visitor exit the room when they hear the words "Thank you." Upon exiting, they are given a token 'of affection.' The token bears the symbol of el coquí, a frog that is endemic to Puerto Rico that sings its mating call for twelve hours, from sunset to sunrise. Its call is its name, which it can only sing on the island, although it can live elsewhere. 'Co' repels the male frogs and the 'quí' attracts the females. Since the auditory systems of the male and female frogs respond preferentially, their difference comprises a sensory system.

Born in Puerto Rico and raised in the Bronx, **Glendalys Medina** is an interdisciplinary artist receiving her MFA from Hunter College in 2008. Medina's work has been presented at The Kitchen, PAMM, Artists Space, the Bronx Museum of Art, El Museo del Barrio and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Vigo Spain. She was awarded a Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship in 2019, a SIP fellowship at EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop in 2016, a BACK IN FIVE MINUTES artist residency at El Museo Del Barrio in 2015, a residency at Yaddo in 2014, the Rome Prize in Visual Arts in 2013 from the American Academy in Rome, a NYFA Fellowship in Interdisciplinary Art in 2012, and the Bronx Museum's Artist in the Marketplace residency in 2010.

IMAGE: *The Shank*. '02-'19. LP. 24 minutes.

[against a black background, gold lettering vertically spells out in two columns "The Shank" using the artist's designed "Black Alphabet Series" which is composed of basic shapes such as circles, squares, rectangles, and curved forms, taken from the face of a boom box.]

Glendalys Medina, *The Shank*, is supported by the Performa Commissioning Fund.

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PARTICIPANT INC is located at 253 East Houston Street between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets. The closest trains are the F (2nd Ave) and the J/M/Z (Essex/Delancey); the closest wheelchair accessible stop is the 4/6 (Bleecker/Lafayette). The entry is on grade and the gallery is barrier free throughout with an all gender, wheelchair accessible bathroom. Service animals are welcome. [participantinc.org](http://participantinc.org)



## PERFORMANCE AND PUBLIC PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

### Sundays November 10, 17, & 24, 8-8:30am, *The Shank: Live*

*The Shank: Live* is a 3-episode web series that will air @glendalysmedina on Instagram and later be available to watch online. In it, Medina gives the audience a view into *The Shank*, a system that uses 'self-help' literature and Hip-Hop culture for personal development. It aims to highlight the discrepancy between authors in the field and its consumers to level the playing field while motivating the audience to participate in the 3-week system.

### Sunday November 10, 4-6pm, *No Microphone*

Co-organized by Khaela Maricich and Glendalys Medina  
Aisha Tandiwe Bell, Kyle Dacuyan, Sara Jimenez, NIC Kay, Jodie Lyn-Kee-Chow,  
Khaela Maricich, Lydia Adler Okrent, and Sacha Yanow

*No Microphone* is an evening of performance experiments; a platform for trying something out before exactly knowing what it is. A studio practice for the material of presence, *No Microphone* aims to provide more access to the luxuries of time, space, and human attention. The series brings artists together across disciplines, scenes, and institutional affiliations, opening up space for psycho-emotional expansion as a direct tactic for surviving/transcending late capitalism and strategizing together towards an uncertain future. Creating a context for experimentation and intricate connection, the event is held in a different Manhattan location every month, weaving like a parasite through the landscape of arts institutions and cliques, propagating an atmosphere of possibility and alliance among artists in the city.

### Tuesdays November 12 & 19, 4-10pm, *Dear Me*

*Dear Me* explores various incarnations of love, from friendship, lust, true love to, ultimately, self-love. Performed in an intimate, darkened room for one visitor at a time, Medina will recite a brief love lyric for 6 hours each day. Originally premiering at the American Academy in Rome, this new rendition mimics the duration of the mating call of El Coquí - a frog indigenous to Puerto Rico that sings from sunset to sunrise. Named after its call, "coquí," the male frogs only hear the "co" sound, repelling other males, while the females only hear the "qui" sound, making their attraction sensory. Each visitor will receive a token of Medina's affection at the end of the performance. RSVP is required: [lia@participantinc.org](mailto:lia@participantinc.org)

IMAGE: *The Shank: Live*, 2019

[a closely cropped color image of the sneakered feet of a crouching figure whose knuckles touch the floor on each side; illumination in the dark space emanates from within their hands.]

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