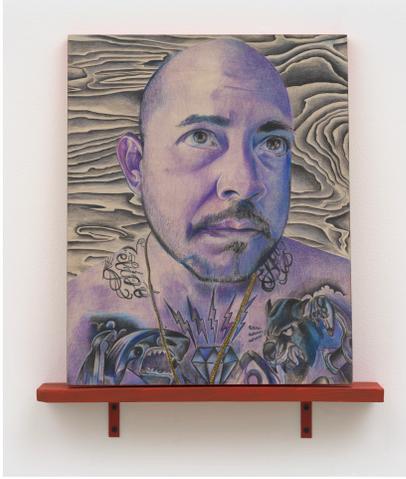


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Christopher Paz-Rivera

Due Time

January 13 - March 2, 2024

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 13, 6 - 8pm

Rachel Uffner Gallery is thrilled to announce *Due Time*, a solo exhibition featuring new and recent works by artist Christopher Paz-Rivera. This marks the artist's first solo show in New York. Paz-Rivera was born in Puerto Rico and has spent much of his adult life between San Juan and New York. The works in *Due Time* reflect on and celebrate his life in New York, and his relatives who immigrated before him, as well as the artist's relationship to Puerto Rico and living between the two cities. Each piece interweaves personal narratives with broader themes of belonging, intergenerational dynamics, and social, labor and value systems.

On the gallery walls, Paz-Rivera presents a series of colored pencil drawings on wood panels, depicting the artist's family members and close friends, locations with personal significance, and self-portraits. Paz-Rivera employs a realistic yet nuanced style that captures the subject's spirit. Each drawing is vibrant in color and Paz-Rivera activates the composition's negative space by accentuating the wood grain of the panels.

Central to Paz-Rivera's work are heartfelt tributes to his forebears. A small wedding portrait of his maternal grandparents titled "*De Aibonito y Juncos para la catorce y octava*" revisits the moment they got married in 1952 at the Guadalupe Church on 14th Street and 8 Ave in Manhattan. In another piece titled "*José, Mayagüez-Brooklyn*", a portrait of a man slouched over with a bird perched on his head, the artist pays homage to his paternal step-grandfather—an immigrant who faced inequality and racism and long hours working countless double shifts in his role as a janitor at the Metropolitan Hospital. "*Crucita, Naguabo-Bronx*" celebrates the resilience and perseverance of his grandmother, portrayed amidst a disco ball's glow. Overcoming numerous challenges, she lived out a vibrant career as a salsa performer. Through his works, Paz-Rivera acknowledges the sacrifices made by his ancestors, laying the foundation for his pursuit of success in New York.

These drawings relate to a sculpture in the center of the gallery, a hand-carved wooden ladder inscribed with lines from "Puerto Rico is a Beautiful Place, Puertorriquenos are a Beautiful Race," a poem by Pedro Pietri. This melancholic tribute addresses the assimilation struggles, inequities, unjust labor, and unfulfilled dreams faced by Puerto Rican immigrants—a resonating symbol within the space.

Paz-Rivera's drawn self-portraits serve as introspective windows into his diasporic experience, evoking a sense of limbo. In "*De aquí ni de allá*" the artist portrays himself, floating in the waters of his favorite beach in Puerto Rico. Spanning two panels, the visual metaphor of Paz-Rivera's split body represents the perpetual mental state of transitioning between two cities and cultures.

Rachel Uffner Gallery
170 Suffolk Street
New York, NY 10002

+1 212 274 0064
info@racheluffnergallery.com
racheluffnergallery.com

Other drawings in the exhibition delve into Puerto Rico's history. "*Tio Wicho y el pana, Oso Blando*" depicts Paz-Rivera's uncle with his cellmate in prison, a gang member from a prisoner association that advocated for Puerto Rican independence. In another piece, "*Untitled (Esperanza means Hope)*", Paz-Rivera draws himself floating in the waters of Esperanza Beach, which is located near a former sugar cane hacienda and the last to have enslaved people in Puerto Rico. The artist further explores these historical narratives through a sound piece produced specifically for the exhibition. This piece is inspired by Puerto Rico's long history of traditional drums and percussion music called *Bomba y Plena*. The audience hears Paz-Rivera playing the drums as well as fellow musician and master drum maker Don Rafa Trinidad, and the artist's friends, musicians Enrique Bayoan and Fabian.

Beyond his artistic pursuits, Paz-Rivera is a curator and co-founder of EMBAJADA gallery in San Juan. Committed to promoting the voices of Puerto Rican and Latinx artists, he actively addresses the growing inequality gap in Puerto Rico, exacerbated by developers and technology investors displacing locals.

Amid ongoing conversations about the resilience of Puerto Rican communities, Paz-Rivera's *Due Time* stands as a poignant reflection on the intricate layers of identity, migration, and the impact of external forces on his dual homes. His profound exploration of personal narratives contributes to broader dialogues concerning the preservation of heritage and the complexities of our collective journeys.

Christopher Paz-Rivera was born in 1982, San Juan, Puerto Rico. The artist received his BFA from the University of Puerto Rico (2007) and his MFA from Hunter College in New York (2012). Paz-Rivera's work was included in La Bienal 2013 at El Museo Del Barrio, New York. In addition the artist has exhibited at venues including Mishkin Gallery at Baruch College, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, Riverside Museum California, and Área Lugar De Proyectos, to name a few. In addition to his artistic practice, Paz-Rivera is co-founder of EMBAJADA, a prominent gallery based in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and has curated exhibitions at Rachel Uffner Gallery, the Contemporary Art Museum Saint Louis, Mishkin Gallery at Baruch College to name a few.

Please call +1 (212) 274-0064 or email info@racheluffnergallery.com for more information.

For press inquiries please contact Hanna Gisel, Hanna Gisel Communications, hanna@hannagisel.com.

Image: Christopher Paz-Rivera, *Due Time*, 2023, colored pencil on wood panel, panel: 20 x 16 x 1 in (50.8 x 40.6 x 2.5 cm); shelf: 19.25 x 3.5x 3.25 in (48.9 x 8.9 x 8.3 cm)

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