



## Gianna Paniagua

At what point does my body reach its limit? Or did I cross that threshold months ago and not even realize it? In the past 7 months, my body has rejected my transplanted heart over 4 times forcing me to undergo a series of rigorous immunosuppressive treatments. My cells, after 24 years, still see my heart as a foreign object. With each new drug, I am simultaneously healed and destroyed internally. At what point does my body and its normal functioning become so distant that it becomes unrecognizable?

I create multimedia sculptures and large-scale installations related to dualities of the human body such as strength vs. fragility, growth vs. decay, and unique vs. patterned. Abstracted anatomical and biological imagery play with the foreign and the familiar. Constant hyperawareness of my own body's functioning (or malfunctioning) and limitations drive me to incorporate overwhelmingly obsessive patterns and techniques into the work. Enveloping, immersive environments form a spiritual space with implied notion of the infinite in imagery and scale. Just as living organisms are collections of a single cell repeated, I focus on continuously reproducing and reimagining a single shape. I expect human error similarly to how I foresee disease or illness to occur when there is a glitch in our cellular pattern.

Originally a process that functioned as a therapeutic activity, I practice meditative papercutting that allows me to fall into a hypnotic mental state distracting me from physical ailments. Repetitive movements with an embedded ritualistic nature allow for long-term durational creation of work. Inspired by my personal culture, I reference Afro Cuban spiritual healing rituals centered around action seeking the unattainable.

A distinct parallel between the medical world and my creative practice exists beyond the obvious surgical connection found with my tools like the scalpel knife. I believe materials to be like little bodies-susceptible to decay and strength just as we are. Layering materials and processes, I allude to disease and destruction brought on by long term medical treatment and medication. Painting, cutting, burning, stretching, and tearing during my practice allow materials to work with or against one another.

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## Education

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- 2018 (Pending) MFA Fine Arts: Sculpture, California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA.
- 2017 Chronic Pain Management Course, Kaiser Permanente, San Francisco, CA.
- 2013 Studio Arts Major, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.
- 2013 Film Studies Minor, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.
- 2009 Oakland Catholic High School, Pittsburgh, PA.

## Solo Exhibitions

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- 2017 **SomArts**, San Francisco, CA: *Murphy and Cadogan Awards Exhibition*. September.  
**SFMOMA**, San Francisco, CA: *Unauthorized SFMOMA Show #13*, April 12.
- 2016 **The Orange Box** at California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA:  
*Within/out*. November.  
**The Reveal**, Genentech Campus. San Francisco, CA. August.  
**Nordstrom Rack** on Market St. Rear Windows. San Francisco, CA. April.
- 2015 **707 Gallery**, Pittsburgh, PA. *Vascular Caverns*. April.
- 2014 **Westmoreland Museum of Art**, Westmoreland, PA: *Art 30 Pop Up*. September.  
**New York Presbyterian Medical Center** with Columbia University, New York, NY:  
*The Transplant Forum Conference*. May.  
**Sanctuary Pop Up Gallery**, Pittsburgh, PA: *Collection of Works*. August.  
**Hat Rac Gallery**, Oakland, CA: *Fragile Materials*. June- July.
- 2013 **The Inn**, Pittsburgh, PA: *Dos Solos*. September.

## Group Exhibitions

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- 2017 **Embark Gallery, San Francisco, CA**: *Spread*. April.
- 2016 **Box Heart Gallery**, Pittsburgh PA: *Inter/National*. January.
- 2015 **Square Offices**, San Francisco, CA: Paper Exhibition Curated by SF MOMA  
Corporate Programs. October.  
**Radiant Hall**, Pittsburgh, PA: *The Studio Tour*. September.  
**The Rum Room**, Pittsburgh, PA: *Papes*. August.  
**The Mine Factory**, Pittsburgh, PA: *Being Human*. August.  
**Boom Concepts**, Pittsburgh, PA: *August Agenda Pop Up* with Makayla Wray. August.  
**Krikawa Jewelry Designs**, Tucson, AZ: *Miracles and Milagros*. September.  
**The Mine Factory**, Pittsburgh, PA: *No Vacancy*. May.
- 2014 **The Mine Factory**, Pittsburgh, PA: *I Just Want the Paper*. December.

- 2014        **S. Dillon Ripley Center at the Smithsonian Institution**, Washington D.C.,  
*The Journey*. September-January.
- ESA SS EcoArt Festival**, Sacramento, CA. Collaboration with Kyle Ferrar of the  
Fractracker Alliance. August.
- Garfield Artworks**, Pittsburgh, PA: *Artists in Pittsburgh Against Fracking Exhibit*.  
Collaboration with Kyle Ferrar of Fractracker Alliance. May.
- Wood St Gallery**, Pittsburgh, PA: *Interioractive Art Show*. April.
- The Gallery 4**, Pittsburgh, PA: *The 2014 Salon Show*. April.
- Scope: New York** with C Emerson Fine Arts Gallery, New York, NY. March.
- 709 Gallery**, Pittsburgh, PA: *The Neverlands by Terry Boyd*. January.
- 2013        **Scope: Miami** with See.Me, Miami, FL. December.
- The Wynwood Warehouse Project**, Miami, FL: *Miami Mix 2013 Art Fair*, December.
- Self Created Pop Up Space**, Pittsburgh, PA: *Pop Up on 5139 Penn*, November.
- Radiant Hall**, Pittsburgh, PA: *9th Annual Lawrenceville Artists' Studio Tour*, November.
- Wood Street Galleries**, Pittsburgh, PA: *Art of the City*, October.
- See Exhibition Space**, Long Island City, NY: *EXPOSURE Exhibition*, July.
- Greenpoint Gallery**, Brooklyn, NY: *Summer Solstice Salon Show*, June .
- UNSMOKE Art Systems**, Pittsburgh, PA: *Residual Conditions: Impressions of Humanity  
from Industry, the Body, and Ecology*, July.
- Silver Eye Center for Photography**, Pittsburgh, PA: *8x8 Photo Party*, May.
- University Art Gallery** with the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA: *University of  
Pittsburgh Studio Arts Student Exhibition*, April.
- National Museum of The Guild of American Papercutters**, Somerset, PA: *Black,  
White, and Easily Red*, January-March.
- University Art Gallery** with the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA: *University of  
Pittsburgh Honors College Summer Research Exhibition*, January.
- 2012        **University Art Gallery** with the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA: *Face Value:  
(De)constructing Identity in Portraiture*, November.
- Mellwood Art Center**, Louisville, KY: *Urban Art Show*, April- May.
- 2011        **University Art Gallery** with the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA: *University of  
Pittsburgh Studio Arts Student Exhibition*, April.
- 2010        **Iron City Brewing**, Pittsburgh, PA: *13th Annual Art All Night*, April.

## Residencies

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- 2017        The Helene Wurlitzer Foundation, Taos, NM, May-August.  
The Kala Institute, Berkeley, CA. February- April
- 2015        The Kala Institute, Berkeley, CA, January-April.
- 2014        Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts, Saratoga, WY, March.  
Studio of Joanna Commandaros, Pittsburgh, PA. June-July.

## Teaching and Lectures

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- 2017**      **Guest Speaker**, Kaiser Permanente Heart Transplant Support Group, Special talk given during the spring meeting to heart transplant patients. The talk covers my personal journey living with a transplant and how I used my artistic therapy to build a career in art.
- 2016**      **Guest Lecturer**, Genentech Transplant Legacy Meeting, An art and medical talk given to the members of the Transplant Sales Team at Genentech at their last meeting in San Diego, CA. In-detail storytelling of my heart transplant surgery, experiences as a transplanted adult, and how I was led me to art and sculpture.
- Panel Speaker**, The Kennedy Center, Invited to speak on the panel of working artists who are previous winners of the VSA Emerging Young Artist Program to the new winners.
- 2015**      **Guest Lecturer**, University of Pittsburgh, Special talk given to students in the upper level drawing course in the Studio Arts Department on repetitive, detailed processes found in my work and how to build an artist career with this type of making.
- Guest Artist in Residence**, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, Site specific installation temporarily installed at the maker studio in the museum with parallel workshop designed for children.
- Lecture and Workshop**, The Cleveland Clinic, Lecture given at the Cleveland Clinic about working and living as a heart transplant patient. Workshop was catered to teenagers in the pain management program. Side workshops were done privately with kids and parents who were admitted on the cardiac floor.
- Six x Ate**, The Mattress Factory, Brunch and artist talk by six selected artists, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Printmaking and Papercutting**, Neu Kirche Contemporary Art Center, Class for young girls from at risk neighborhoods. Classes will teach basic screenprinting techniques that can be incorporated with papercutting to create three dimensional works.
- Meditative Papercutting with Natural Pigments**, Society of Contemporary Craft, Pittsburgh, PA. Two classes in the 2015 year that will be teaching the art of meditative papercutting and also how to incorporate chemical free pigments made of juices and spices into the work. One class revolves around the Mindful: Exploring Mental Health Through Art exhibition.
- 2014**      **Meditative Papercutting Class**, Pop Up Studio at the Westmoreland Museum of Art Westmoreland County, PA.
- Guest Artist Lecturer**, Museum Studies Class at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. Talk concerned using an artistic creative practice to assist with physical healing and to cope with physical illness.
- Guest Artist Speaker**, Level B Studios Art Club at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. Spoke on Living as an Artist post-graduation.
- 2013**      **Teaching Assistant** for Upper Level Painting 1240 Class at the University of Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh, PA. Responsibilities included: Class Demos of materials and techniques, office hours, access to locked materials and equipment.

2013 **Guest Artist Lecturer**, Museum Studies Class at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. Talk concentrated around self portraiture and its uses and meanings in my practice.

## Related Experience

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- 2017 *Participating Artist* at SFMOMA Annual Benefit. San Francisco, CA.  
Open Portfolio Presentation at Southern Graphics Council International Conference. Atlanta, GA.
- 2016 *Commission* for Genentech's Transplant Legacy Team. San Francisco, CA.  
*Featured "Young Genius" for Cadillac China Dare Greatly Campaign*, Three members of the original United States team were selected to be featured in China's own campaign that focused more on the personal stories behind each person's profession. New York, NY and Hong Kong, China.  
*Featured "Young Genius" for Cadillac Dare Greatly Campaign*, One of a group of young professionals selected specifically by Cadillac to be featured in their commercials worldwide. Specially cut paperworks were created for the set and I was given the opportunity to share my heart transplant story as it relates to my artwork. Los Angeles, CA.
- 2015 *Construction of a Paper Flower Wall* sized at 16' x 20' for an event organized by LUXE Creative held at the Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh, PA.  
*Book Design and Layout for "Iron Sharpens Iron,"* a photography book that follows the journey of the Central Catholic Vikings football team in their 2014 season, Pittsburgh, PA.  
*Poster Design and Graphic Designer*, Monthly Collaboration with Hennessey and Atlantino honoring an outstanding Latino Major League Baseball Player, New York, NY.
- 2014-2015 *Part Time Graphic Designer* for Atlantino, New York, NY.
- 2014 *Digital Media Assistant* to sculptor Joanna Commandaros and Vanessa German.
- 2013- 2014 *Creative Design, Construction, and Installation* of the Imagine Millvale: Age of Aquarius Mural on the Millvale Public Library in Millvale, PA. This is the first living eco-mural in the Millvale Area.
- 2012 *Attended the Honors College Wyoming Field Study* with the Studio Arts Department, University of Pittsburgh, Rock River, WY. July 2012.  
*Organization of Community Mural Project* with Uptown Partners, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.
- 2010- 2013 *President and Founding Member of the Studio Arts Club*: "Level B Studios," University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.
- 2010- 2012 *Contributing Illustrator*, The Original Magazine, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.
- 2010- 2013 *Studio Arts Department Digital Lab Monitor* and Large Format Printing Manager, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

- 2011- Present      *Arts and Culture Blogger and Creator*, October 2011- Present.  
[www.tragicdarling.wordpress.com](http://www.tragicdarling.wordpress.com)
- 2010- 2013      *Member and President of Studio Arts Club: "Level B Studios,"* University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.
- 2010- 2012      *Contributing Illustrator*, The Original Magazine, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.
- 2010              *Guest Photographer* for Epitaph Records, Vans Warped Tour, First Niagra Pavillion, Burgettstown, PA.

## Awards

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- 2017              **Murphy and Cadogan Bay Area Award**, California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA.
- 2016              **Fine Arts Scholarship**, California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA.  
**CCA Scholarship**, California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA.
- 2015              **Fuerza! Latinos Making a Difference**, Cafe Con Leche, Pittsburgh, PA.
- 2014              **Artist Opportunity Grant**, Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council, Pittsburgh, PA. \$2250 to attend a printmaking residency at the Kala Institute in Berkeley, CA.  
**Grand Prize 2014 VSA Emerging Young Artist Award** in Association with the Kennedy Center, Washington D.C.
- 2013              **Kenneth P. Dietrich School of the Arts and Sciences Dean's Award**, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.  
**A.J. Schneider Award**, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
- 2012              **Office of Undergraduate Research Small Grant Award**, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.  
**Brackenridge Summer Research Fellowship** through the University of Pittsburgh Honors College, Pittsburgh, PA.  
**Office of Undergraduate Research Small Grant Award**, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

## Press and Publications

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- 2017              Gilroy Patch, *Young Heart Transplant Recipient Celebrates Long Life, Holidays at Kaiser Permanente*, <http://patch.com/california/gilroy/young-heart-transplant-recipient-celebrates-long-life-holidays-kaiser-permanente>
- 2015              **WPXI Video**, *The Gift of Life, Presented by UPMC*, <http://www.wpxi.com/news/news/local/gift-of-life/nmwPP/>  
**Pittsburgh Post-Gazette**, *Artist Tells Her Story With Papercutting*, written by Katerina Sarandou, <http://www.post-gazette.com/ae/2015/06/10/Artist-tells-her-story-with-papercutting/stories/201506100011>  
**WPXI Video**, *RAW: Gianna Paniagua*. Video can be viewed on my website.  
**TribLIVE**. *Art Review: Gianna Paniagua and Tamara Natalie Madden at Penn Galleries*, written by Kurt Shaw, <http://triblive.com/aande/museums/8256881-74/madden-says-paniagua#axzz3u9lrCchV>

- 2014 **Street Anatomy**, *Gianna Paniagua Natural Formations*, written by Vanessa Ruiz, <http://streetanatomy.com/2013/05/14/gianna-paniagua-natural-formations/>
- Young. Millennial. Adult.** *Millennial Focus: Gianna Paniagua*, written by Weenta Girmay, <http://ymadult.tumblr.com/post/102294186958/millennial-focus-on-gianna-paniagua>
- Next Pittsburgh.** *Local artist Gianna Paniagua wins the prestigious VSA Emerging Young Artist Grand Prize*, written by Leah Lizarondo, <http://www.nextpittsburgh.com/next-wave/local-artist-gianna-pianagua-wins-vsa-grand-prize/>
- Words &TC.** *Gianna Paniagua at Gallery 4*, written by Alexandra Oliver, <http://apittsburghartblog.tumblr.com/post/84138864898/gianna-paniagua-at-gallery-4>
- Hip Latina.** *Young Artist Profile: Sculptor Gianna Paniagua*, <https://hiplatina.com/young-artist-profile-sculptor-gianna-paniagua/>
- Pittsburgh Post-Gazette**, *Depite Challenges, Lawrenceville Artist Sculpting a Career*, written by Kathleen Ganster,
- Hispanicize Wire**, *Latina Sculptor and Heart Transplant Survivor Wins Grand Prize in the Kennedy Center's 2014 VSA Emerging Young Artists Program Recognizing Excellence in the Visual Arts.* <http://www.hispanicizewire.com/latina-sculptor-and-heart-transplant->
- 2013 **Metabolism of Human Diseases: Organ Physiology and Pathophysiology**, Published Medical Illustration.
- 2012 **Forbes and Fifth**, Front and Back Cover Design, Fall Issue.
- The Collegiate Scholar**: Online Publication for the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. Published "Flamenca" Drawing.

## Groups

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- Paper Artist Collective, Member.
- SF MOMA Artists Gallery, Artist.
- Southeastern Graphics Council International, Member.
- Guild of American Papercutters, Member.
- Golden Key International Honor Society, Member.