



IMPACT REPORT

2023 – 2024



WE ARE SALT: a nonprofit Photography Program running artistically rigorous, multi-year, sequential visual arts residency programs for young people ages 14 to 24. It is taught by artists and creative professionals and combines a high level of art instruction with individualized mentoring, college preparation, and career exploration to the creative industry.

OUR MISSION : to engage, inspire, and empower youth in New York City to reach their full potential and develop a sense of agency, belonging, and integrated identity through the lens of a camera.

OUR VISION: to bring more diversity to the creative industry and level the playing field by creating pathways to higher education and careers in the arts, supporting our students at the pre-professional and emerging professional stages of their artistic development.

WHY WE EXIST:

NYC Salt bridges the opportunity gap by supporting students to **discover, claim and express their identities** through photography.

We create **pathways, connections, and guidance for college & creative careers.**

LIMITED ACCESS TO ARTS EDUCATION & ENRICHMENT

City funds are diverted away from the arts, perpetuating a loss of significance and expression that holds youth back from reaching their full potential and accessing the kinds of arts enrichment that we know motivates students to succeed.

100%

of NYC Salt parents surveyed reported a lack of arts education in their child's public school

325 to 1

Is the **Student to college counselor ratio** in NYC public schools.

INSUFFICIENT HELP IN THE COLLEGE PROCESS

Low-income students go to college at dramatically lower rates than their peers. Factors in low-income and immigrant homes and communities create seemingly insurmountable barriers, like:

- Family pressure to work
- Inadequate English language proficiency
- Lack of college-knowledge
- Lack of guidance to navigating a pathway to and through college

LACK OF EQUITY IN THE CREATIVE SECTOR

In addition to barriers to college, underserved students often don't see creative careers as possible, or have access to connections in the industry. Expensive equipment makes barriers to entry high, and lack of guidance and mentorship often precludes strong portfolio development.

300,000

jobs in NYC's
creative sector

**\$30.4
billion**

in wages earned
by NYC creatives

44%

people of color in
NYC



11.4%

people of color in NYC's
creative sector



OUR MODEL:

Salt programs are explicitly designed to address barriers to the arts and to college faced by students from low-income communities.

We blend learner-centric photography instruction, 1:1 college and career guidance, and long-term mentorship to support strong student outcomes.

It works—our students have a **100% college acceptance rate** and many are **earning over double their reported family income** from high school.

AGES 14-18 • 1 - 4 years

High School Residency Program

Our multi-year digital photography program is led by professional artists and combines:

- Advanced digital photography instruction
- 1:1 mentoring with creative sector leaders
- Portfolio development
- Individualized college guidance
- Career exposure to jobs in the creative industry

FIRST YEAR (Year 1)

Students learn how to see and master the basics of digital technology, including the creative and technical aspects of photography and visual literacy.

ADVANCED (Years 2-4)

Students develop style and voice, focusing on documentary storytelling, studio photography and career exploration. They are matched 1:1 with professionals for mentorship.

AGES 21-24 • 6 MONTHS

Alumni Emerging Artist Fellowship

This cohort-based program is designed for emerging artists to dedicate their time to generating new work. The fellowship seamlessly integrates creative support with professional development, offering participants the resources and guidance they need to advance both their artistic and professional careers.

AGES 18-24

Young Creators Lab

We host workshops that provide opportunities for creativity, community, and guidance for artists. Professional artists lead sessions on photography techniques, digital technology, life skills, and business practices.

Programming is **100% free** for all students.

Salt is led by professional artists (photographers, curators, editors, art directors) who **leverage their industry connections** for our students.

Most importantly, NYC Salt is **a lifelong family**. Our students form deep bonds with their peers, their teachers, and the visual arts community in New York City.

OUR VALUES :

1

EXCELLENCE:

Working with professional artists to offer advanced instruction that directly applies to the industry and giving students opportunity to use professional equipment and learn workforce skills in a professional photo studio.

2

BELONGING, DIVERSITY, &

COMMUNITY: We create a safe space for students to develop their voice and cultivate their unique creative process. Our studio provides a second home, and we facilitate lifelong connections with and among our students. This builds confidence, motivation, and a sense of belonging.

3

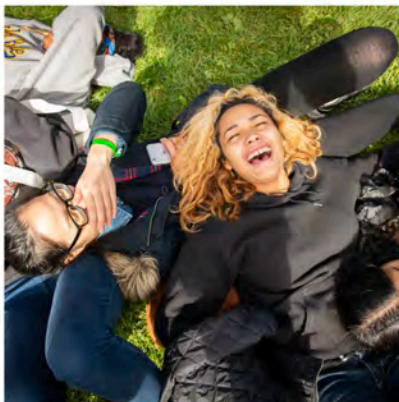
CREATIVITY & CURIOSITY:

Students gain exposure to the arts to expand their perspective, develop cultural intelligence, and learn to see. Experiential and peer-to-peer learning frameworks promote curiosity and engagement.

4

OPPORTUNITY & EXPOSURE:

Long-term investment in those we serve allows us to layer knowledge over time. Salt's network and industry ties open doors to projects, internships, and jobs. Artist mentorship helps students build professional portfolios and plan their careers. Dedicated sessions offer comprehensive college preparation support.





THE PROGRAMS:

“I love that we were able to obtain multiple different experiences throughout the program. It not only brought something new to me but also something in-depth. I really get to know more about what I have been passionate about.”

– Viola Zheng

1ST YEAR RESIDENCY:

Students learn the basics. They learn to use a camera in manual - understanding shutter speed, aperture, ISO. They learn to import, organize, edit and tone images in Adobe Lightroom. They learn about composition, color theory, and lighting, using all these elements to learn to “see” and tell stories with pictures. Nikon supplied Mirrorless Z5 camera bodies and a 28-75mm 2.8 lens to each student to check out for the school year. Think Tank, Sandisk, and Western Digital supplied each student with a camera bag, hard drive and SD card.



LEARNING TO EDIT

THE PROGRAMS: *cont.*

LIGHTROOM :

Each student receives an Adobe Creative Cloud License and a Western Digital portable hard drive. They learn the basics of Lightroom in their first year, focusing on the Library and Develop Modules, learning to import, catalogue, and make selections and do basic cropping and toning of their images.



CRITIQUE WITH THE PROS:

Students learn to give and receive feedback. This year we started critique nights, printing digital contact sheets for students to review with professional photographers, editors and creative directors we brought in from the industry.



THE PROGRAMS: *cont.*

“I loved the teachers, and how it has helped me develop my skills and life experience. Everyday I take my camera no matter where I go and take photos. I’ve walked up to people and asked to take photos of them. So far I have 70 yeses and 7 no’s.”

— August Moreno

2ND - 4TH YEAR RESIDENCY: Students spent half the year in Documentary Storytelling and half the year in Studio Photography classes. In this year, students start to develop their style and voice. They learn to tell a story with pictures both in the studio and through an essay. They learn the basics of studio lighting - continuous and strobe, and how to use different modifiers. They delve deeper into technical training in Adobe Photoshop, editing and sequencing, and pre-visualization. By the end of the year students should have a portfolio demonstrating stronger compositional, lighting and storytelling abilities. All students were required to read *The New York Times*.



IN THE STUDIO WITH COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHER, ADAM CHINITZ :

Students spend a semester shooting portraits and still life images. They come up with their concept and spend class time and extra time outside of class in the studio. Adam’s favorite starting point is photographing an egg!

HOLLYWOOD LIGHTING ASSIGNMENT :

Students found a reference photo of lighting they wanted to re-create and then worked together in the studio with lighting and one of the students modeling to make their photo.



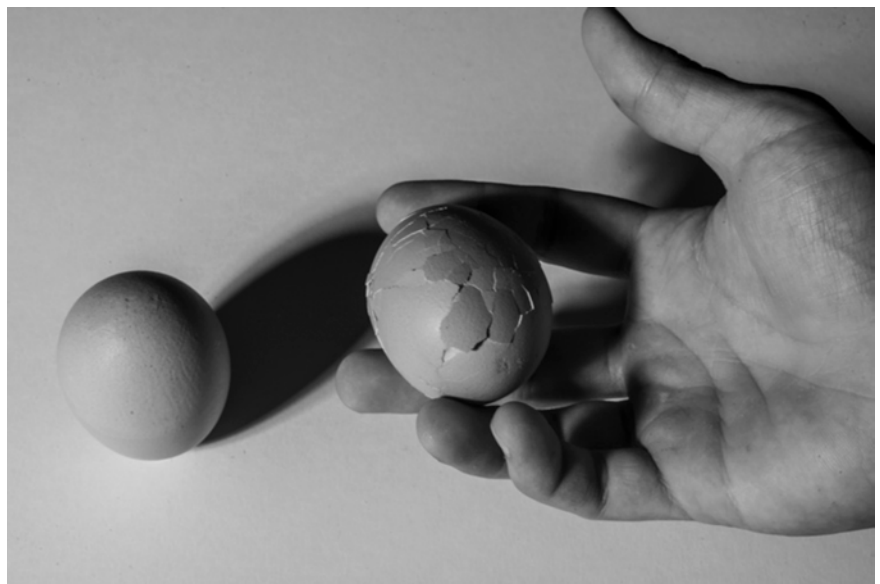
Reference Photo - The Inspiration



The result!

PHOTOGRAPHING EGGS :

to learn light direction and shading - how to put the illusion of depth in an image.



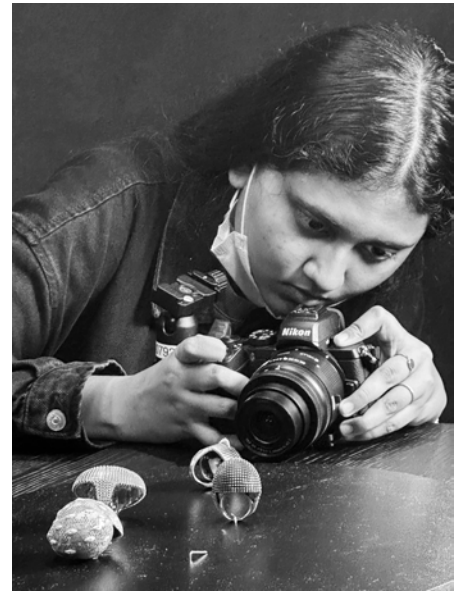
CLASS ACTIVITIES :

Students this year went on gallery visits to the **Hauser Wirth Galleries, Jack Shainman Gallery, Leica Gallery, and Harper's Gallery**. They learned about photography conservation at **The MET**, how to photograph jewelry with **Central St. Martins at the Tom Dixon Store**. They learned Hollywood Lighting and did a special workshop weekend sponsored by **BenQ** with Professional Photographer, **Esteban Toro**, and **RC Concepcion** from **Syracuse University**.

CENTRAL ST. MARTIN FACULTY & TOM DIXON :

Students were invited to Tom Dixon's Showroom in Soho in partnership with Central St. Martin's jewelry design program to photograph jewelry for Design Week in NYC.

CSM Professors, Simon Fraser and Dr. Elizabeth Wright guest lectured, sharing about the University of Arts in London and the creative storytelling process of jewelry design.



THE PROGRAMS: CLASS ACTIVITIES : *cont.*



GALLERY VISITS :

- Hauser & Wirth Gallery: **Cindy Sherman & Pipilotti Rist's** 'Prickling Goosebumps & Humming Horizon' Exhibition
- Jack Shainman Gallery: **Gordon Parks** 'Born Black' exhibition
- Harpers Gallery: **Martin Parr**
- Leica Gallery: **Elliot Erwitt**



AT THE MET : The Photography Conservation Department hosted several classes for our students this year. Students learned about jobs available in conservation, conservation techniques and how to fix and identify photos from different time periods.



THE PROGRAMS: CLASS ACTIVITIES : *cont.*

PHOTO WALK & LIGHTROOM MASTERCLASS :



Sponsored by BenQ, Students went on a photo walk in Long Island City with Professional Photographer, **Esteban Toro** (<https://estebantoro.com>) & spent a day with **RC Concepcion**, (<http://aboutrc.com>) a digital post-production specialist at Syracuse University, learning to edit their work in Lightroom.



THE WORK: 1ST YEAR STUDENTS



Photo By Salim Bhuiyham

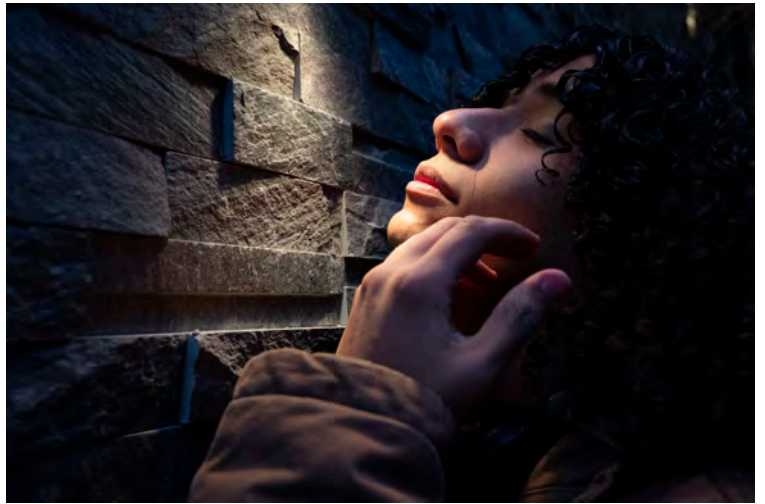


Photo by Chloe Zhou

Learning to see...
**LIGHT, MOMENT, SHAPE,
SHADOWS, REPETITION, THE
RULE OF THIRDS.**



Photo by Michelle Osorio

THE WORK: *cont.*
1ST YEAR STUDENTS



Photo By Lia Faynberg

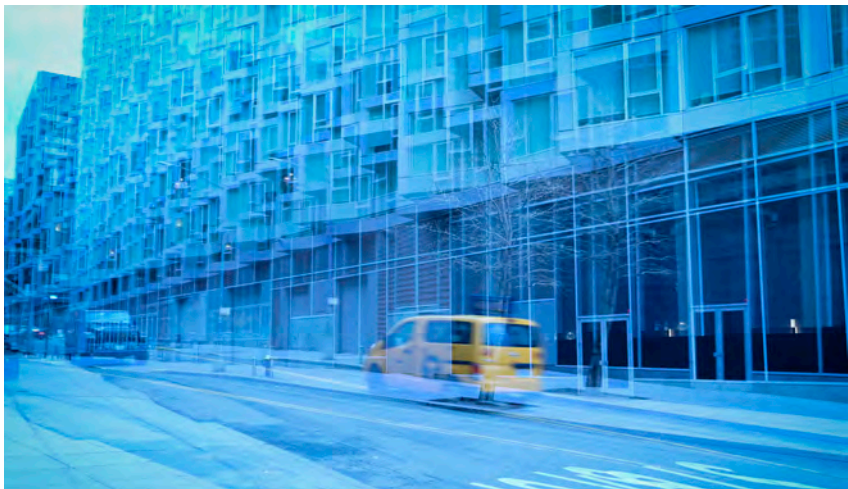


Photo By Sophia Hakim



Photo By Nevaeh Brown



Photo By Noah Kato



Photo By Yifan Zhang

THE WORK: *cont.*

1ST YEAR STUDENTS



Photo By Selah Stanley

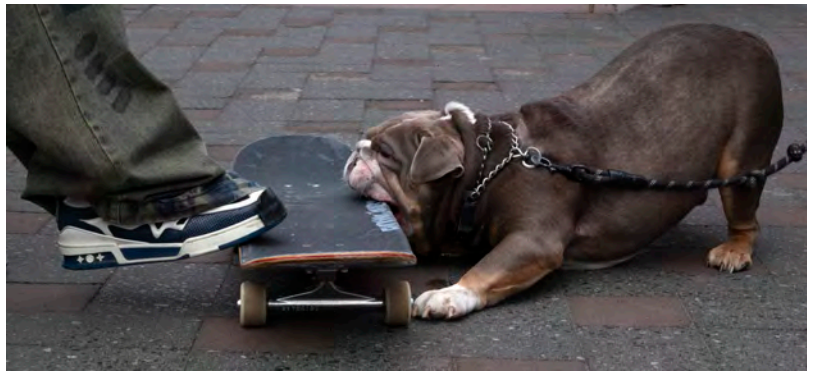


Photo By Kyan McGregor



Photo By Anastasia Sichel-Hahn



Photo By Sophia Hakim



Photo By Yifan Zhang

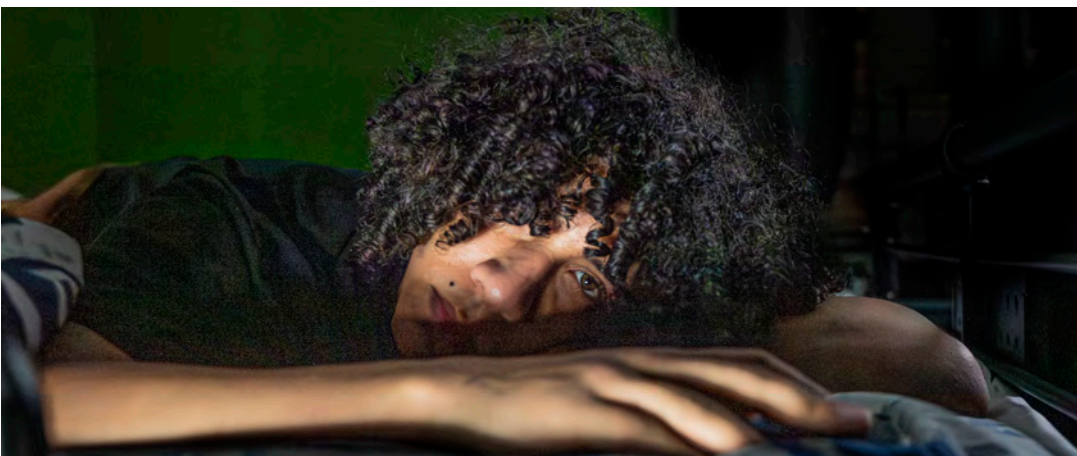


Photo By John Leon

THE WORK: STUDIO PORTRAITURE



Photo by Stephen Lin



Photo by Tenzin Nordon



Photo by Jordan Martinez



Photo by Jordan Martinez

THE WORK: STUDIO PORTRAITURE *cont.*



Photo by Stephen Lin



Photo by Jordan Martinez



Photo by Into Owens Valverde



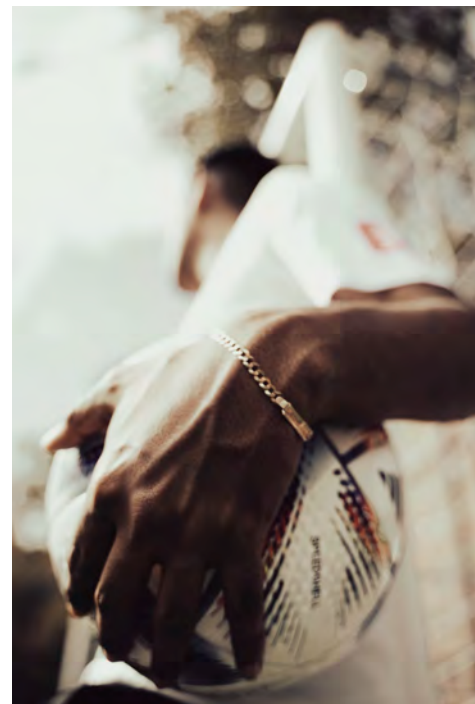
Photo by Thalia Ozoria



Photo by Aidan Bach

THE WORK: DOCUMENTARY CLASS

MY TEAM : A STORY ABOUT SOCCER BY JORDAN MARTINEZ



COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES:

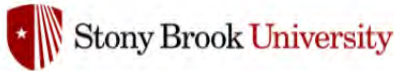
Throughout our High School Residency Program, students receive 1:1 college guidance and dedicated support for college and scholarship applications.



100% of our seniors were accepted to college.

20% are going to Ivy League Schools in the Fall.

A collective \$1.7M in scholarship and grant funding was received.



OUR NEWS: STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

MOLESKINE + **WICKED** + NYC SALT

It's quite a honor to receive a grant from a witch!



On June 26th, on the stage of the Broadway musical, Wicked, NYC Salt was the recipient of the ***Everyone Deserves a Chance to Fly Grant*** from the Moleskine Foundation. The grant will provide Salt student, Neveah Brown, the opportunity to continue our Photography Residency Program as the fellow of this grant! Neveah will be in the 11th grade next year and has just completed her first year at Salt. See the video here: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C8-PJeux0i5/>

ESTEE LAUDER + NYC SALT : AN INTERNSHIP

Residency student, **Jordan Martinez**, will intern at **Estee Lauder-AVEDA** this summer!

SCHOLASTIC ART AWARDS

Salt students received 75 Scholastic Art Awards this year. Their work was exhibited in a show at the **High Line Nine Gallery!**

NIKON EMERGING TALENT SCHOLARSHIP:



Salt alumni, Sebastian Lopez, was selected by Nikon this year for a \$10,000 college scholarship. Sebastian is a junior at Syracuse University Newhouse School. The scholarship supported an opportunity for him to study in London for a semester this past spring.



NYC Salt

LEADERSHIP & PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to our corporate partnerships, we had the opportunity to join the **Moleskine Foundation** in Milan, **The International Photography Awards** at the United Nations, **Central St. Martin** for Design Week and **The Conscious Project** for a 6-month leadership Programme with Co-Lab Europe. **Vogue Italia** featured us in October in conjunction with the Moleskine Creativity Pioneers Un-Conference!

MOLESKINE CREATIVE PIONEERS: As a member of the 1st cohort of grantees in 2022, we were invited to Milan in October to join the foundation's first creativity conference with organizations from all over the world. Salt alumni, Malike Sidibe, was invited to create a portrait booth to capture portraits of all the attendees.

The United Nations hosted the **INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS** and NYC SALT alumni were invited with our Founder, Alicia Hansen.
November 2023



Alicia joins **CO-LAB EUROPE PROGRAM 2024** with **The Conscious Project** for a 6-month workshop focusing on leadership development. Jan - July 2024

We joined **CENTRAL ST MARTINS & TOM DIXON** for Design Week in NYC. Faculty created a workshop in Tom Dixon's showroom to teach students about jewelry design and how to photograph it.
Photo left



SALT EMERGING ARTISTS : PUBLISHED WORK



MALIKE SIDIBE:

Photographed his first **Broadway** billboard for the new **Alicia Keys** musical "**Hell's Kitchen**" and the **Amazon Prime** series "**Them.**" He spent 10 days photographing **Usher** for the **New York Times Magazine** for a spread in the October 2023 magazine. [See the story here.](#)

The New York Times Magazine

Can Usher Turn America On Again (to R.&B.)?

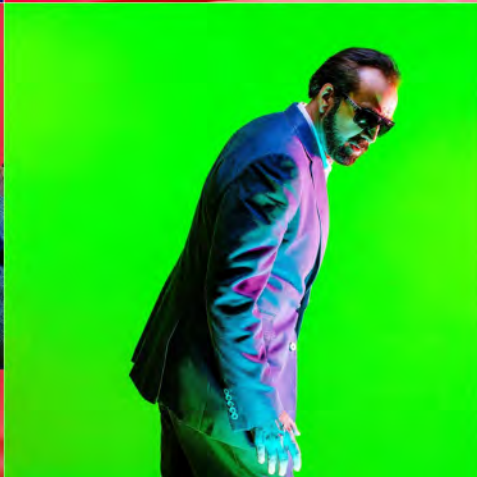
Almost 20 years after his sexy, best-selling album "Confessions," Usher is back with new music that could redefine the whole genre.





SALT EMERGING ARTISTS : PUBLISHED WORK

MAMADI DOUMBOUYA finishes a 5-year contract with the *New York Times Magazine* Interview Talk Column photographing celebrities. [Read about this in the Times.](#)



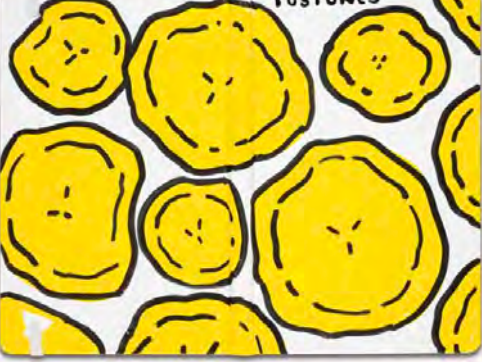
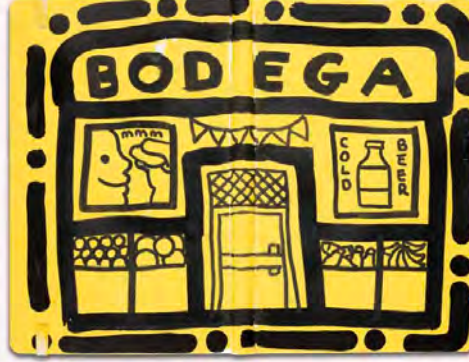
MOLESKINE COLLABORATION: *Three Salt Emerging Artists exhibit their work for a two months in the Moleskine Moynihan Station Flagship Store May - October 2024.*



Ruben "Dario" Ramirez is a 32-year-old artist from Washington Heights. His work is influenced by the Latin American communities of Uptown New York. He currently works with the brands P&G, Converse, Snipes, and Democracy Now and has illustrated books for Harper Collins and the author, Isabel Allende. Ruben started at Salt in 2005 as part of our first cohort of students in Washington Heights.

"When I first heard about NYC SALT, I wasn't sure about it. I had heard they were teaching how to use a camera and some digital software tools. That was about 20 years ago, and here I am, a professional illustrator with a huge portfolio. This was only possible thanks to Alicia and NYC SALT. They taught me that dreams can become a reality, and after all these years, I'm here, dreaming and working on the thing I love the most."

His work is his way of representing the uptown community, lifting up the Dominican culture, his home, in a love letter to the Heights. Ruben and his exhibition, "Dear Uptown", are a representation of the Latino heritage that is part of New York. His work depicts everyday life in the Uptown neighborhoods, from bodegas to barber shops, sweet abuelas, and the savory smell of street empanadas.





STUDENT REFLECTIONS: WHAT I LOVE ABOUT SALT...

The teachers and warm environment as well as getting **feedback** from my peers and learning from their work.

– Anastasia Sichel-Hahn

I loved how freeing and open it was to us! There was always **room to speak your thoughts** and ideas without restrictions.

–Suhana Rahman

I liked that I was able to fully embrace the concept of photography by having **access to a camera** that I didn't expect to use.

– Jay Guanuchi

I liked **meeting new people** and having the opportunity to have **a creative outlet** in a space that is not available at school.

– Stephen Lin

I liked **looking at other students' work** a lot because it was really interesting to see how they interpreted assignments and developed their styles.

– Lia Faynberg

Meeting kids from all over the city! I go to a really tiny school and SALT has given me the chance to expand my network and connections. I've made some **lifelong friends** through SALT.

– Audrea Chen

It is a **creative space** where we share our own perspectives; I also like the consistency meeting weekly provided.

– Favor Okonkwo

I liked how flexible the assignments are which **gave room for creativity** along with a kind **supportive staff** to help encourage me.

– Thalia Ozoria

I like that **it's very authentic**, I connected with everyone here well & I gained more confidence than ever being around my teachers & classmate. I also like that I've learned everything from scratch here & I've been improving.

– Nevaeh Brown

The teachers. The teachers I've had over my time at SALT have all been incredibly kind and really great at teaching

– Inti Owens-Valverde

SALT STUDENTS BY THE NUMBERS 2023-24

100%

College Acceptance Rate

75

Scholastic Art
Awards

60

High School
Residency Students

92%

Attendance
Rate

3.67

Average GPA

12

Languages
Collectively
Spoken

365

PROGRAM HOURS





Photo By Danny Martinez

THANK YOU.

With the support of our community, Salt impacts the lives of our city's young artists. Amplifying their voices and creating pathways for their artistic careers also paves the way for a more diverse and equitable creative economy with a broader sense of belonging.