

IENA CRUZ

**VISITOR
CENTER**

IENA CRUZ
VISITOR CENTER'S FIRST ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

RESIDENCY:
SEPTEMBER 15 - 30, 2022
EXHIBITION:
OCTOBER 1ST - NOVEMBER 15, 2022

A solo exhibition by iena Cruz on view October 1st - November 15th, 2022
Opening reception: Saturday October 1st, 5-7 pm
Press Preview: Saturday October 1st, 4-5 pm
at VISITOR CENTER, 233 Liberty street, Newburgh NY



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Newburgh, NY August 2022
iena Cruz Named VISITOR CENTER's First Artist-in-Residence

One of the most innovative street artists in the world, Federico Massa (known professionally as iena Cruz) has been selected as VISITOR CENTER's inaugural artist-in-residence. Much of iena Cruz's work is inspired by the ever-growing threat of climate crises. Speaking about his mural titled 'Hunting Pollution' in Rome, Cruz remarked that "the inspiration to use the heron is above all because it's an animal in danger of extinction. Most of my work is influenced by the desire to bring attention to environmental problems, like global warming and the extinction of animal species." In 2022, The Art Newspaper named 'Hunting Pollution' one of "ten essential artworks to see in Rome," alongside works by Caravaggio and Bernini.

As part of VISITOR CENTER's mission to support emerging interdisciplinary artists of the Hudson Valley and beyond, the invitational residency will provide space for creative investigation and experimentation with new concepts or materials. During the self-directed residency, artists are encouraged to experiment with a new body of work or develop a new process and are invited to engage with the local community of Newburgh. On Saturday, October 1st, VISITOR CENTER will present a series of new works by Cruz created during his two-week residency in Newburgh with a never-before-showcased series of glazed ceramics. Spanning the entire gallery, the comprehensive presentation will chart the recent evolution of Cruz's practice.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Federico Massa is a world-renowned street artist with a unique style that blends hyper-realistic animal portraiture with psychedelically bright backgrounds. He gained traction in the 1990s as a rebellious graffiti artist in the burgeoning street art movement under the alias "Cruz." As his body of work progressed, he began using the symbol of a hyena (iena in Italian), which led to his current alias "iena Cruz."

Originally from Milan, Cruz has called Brooklyn home for the past ten years. Initially trained in stage set design at Milan's prestigious Brera Academy of Art, he is primarily known internationally for his large-scale, eco-conscious murals that use special nanotechnology-infused paints to scrub pollution from the air around them.

Throughout the years, iena Cruz has expanded his practice to include a variety of different mediums. In 2018, he spent six months studying screen printing techniques at the Gowanus Print Lab in Brooklyn and began producing original silk-screened textiles as samples for future upholstery fabrics and wall coverings. The following year, he focused on the ceramic processes of modeling, firing, glazing, and re-firing during a six-month project at La Mano Pottery in Manhattan, and produced numerous objects including lampshades, ornamental plates and knives, pitchers, and vases. With this multidisciplinary knowledge, he has launched a design collection called Zurcanei that features custom textiles, wallpaper, mosaic, clothing, and custom home art decor. In this spirit, iena Cruz has collaborated with designer Jan Kath to bring the worlds of street art and textile art together: Cruz painted murals directly on the walls of the Jan Kath gallery in New York, replacing select areas on the wall with hand-knotted carpets in the same design, thus blurring the line between the fabric and the hand-painted mural.

Recent work also includes Hand Woodblock Printing. Designed in NYC and hand-made in Jaipur, Cruz is exploring textile production based on an ancient Indian technique of woodblock printing to support and draw attention to the importance of preserving artisanal traditions.

ABOUT VISITOR CENTER

VISITOR CENTER is a contemporary art gallery whose mission is to feature artists of the Hudson Valley and beyond, working in painting, sculpture, mixed media, sound, video and VR art. Located in Newburgh, NY, it occupies 2,000 square feet on the ground level of the US workshop of Hysteria Glamour, an iconic Japanese streetwear company. VISITOR CENTER is dedicated to supporting artists in the advancement of their practices and careers through a supportive community and curated exhibitions.

VISITOR CENTER is open Fridays 4-6pm & Saturdays 1-5pm - weekdays by appointment

For press inquiries and to schedule an appointment please contact Attila.King@VisitorCenter.space
For other inquiries please contact the gallery at 917 703-9262

ABOUT NEWBURGH NY - a jewel in the rough of a city located 60 miles north of Manhattan - has been long hailed as the new Brooklyn or Williamsburg maybe because of its demographic diversity, or because it boasts the largest historic district outside of New York City. As Julie Laskin perfectly put it in her December 2020 New York Times feature piece: "Newburgh doesn't just have good bones — it is magnificent." But Newburgh's narrative is much more layered than that: a city of 28,000 in Orange County has now become a haven for artists, designers, architects, artisans and all kind of creative individuals. How to get to Newburgh from Manhattan (approx. 1:30min)

Driving directions Metro-North Trains stop at the Beacon station just across the Hudson River from Newburgh; The Newburgh side ferry connects commuters to the station. Train runs south to Manhattan and north to Albany. Taxis are available at Beacon's train station; Uber and Lyft also offer rides across the Hudson River (approx. 15 minute ride).