

# CRISTIN TIERNEY

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## Shaun Leonardo

### *The Return of El Conquistador*

Queens Museum

Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Building, Corona, NY 11368

Saturday, November 9, 2024, 3:00 PM

**Cristin Tierney Gallery** is delighted to announce **Shaun Leonardo's** performance at the **Queens Museum**, *The Return of El Conquistador*. This performance will take place on November 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 PM as part of the museum's Dia De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebrations. The event is free and open to all ages; no registration is required.

*El Conquistador vs. El Hombre Invisible (The Conqueror vs. The Invisible Man)* was a recurring lucha libre performance unfolding over several years. In it, Leonardo assumed the guise of a Mexican luchador to fight invisibility, both literally and metaphorically. This matchup served as a physical manifestation of internal struggles against societal obscurity and the complexities of the artist's masculine identity.

It has been ten years since Leonardo last wore the luchador mask and twenty years since *El Conquistador's* inception, when he first faced *El Hombre Invisible* at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. According to the lore of lucha libre, there is a special

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night—Día De Los Muertos—when the retired identities of once-defeated luchadores can be resurrected for battle. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, *El Conquistador* will don his mask and return to the ring in Leonardo's hometown of Queens, where he last fought *El Hombre Invisible*, offering him a chance to have his hand raised in victory once again. The event will also feature surprise matchups, including a 10-man, over-the-top-rope Battle Royal.

*“Amidst the confusion and speed of my transformation into a Mexican wrestler, I could not slow down to analyze all that was occurring to and around me. I am still unsure what it means to have become the very thing I had only, previously, critiqued—to have surpassed that energy which envelops you before and during a performative act that goes beyond the embodiment of a character.”*

- Shaun Leonardo

**Shaun Leonardo** (b. 1979, Queens, NY) is a multidisciplinary artist whose work negotiates societal expectations of manhood, namely definitions surrounding Black and brown masculinities, along with its notions of achievement, collective identity, and experience of failure. His performance practice, anchored by his work in Assembly—a diversion program for system-impacted youth at the arts nonprofit Recess, where he is Co-Director—is participatory and invested in the process of embodiment.

Leonardo received his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and received support from Creative Capital, Guggenheim Social Practice, Art for Justice, and A Blade of Grass. His work has been featured at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The Guggenheim Museum, the Norton Museum of Art, the High Line, and the New Museum, and profiled in *The New York Times* and *CNN*. His solo exhibition, *The Breath of Empty Space*, was presented at MICA, MASS MoCA, and The Bronx Museum. And his first major public art commission, *Between Four Freedoms*, premiered at Four Freedoms Park Conservancy, in the fall of 2021. The artist has a studio in Brooklyn, NY.

Founded in 2010, **Cristin Tierney Gallery** is a contemporary art gallery located on The Bowery with a deep commitment to the presentation, development, and support of a roster of both established and emerging artists. Its program emphasizes artists engaged with critical theory and art history, with an emphasis on conceptual, video, and performance art. Education and audience engagement is central to our mission.

## Image

Shaun Leonardo, *El Conquistador vs. The Invisible Man*, 2006. 25-minute performance at Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland. Photograph by Joanna Kinowska and Jacek Sielski.

## Inquiries

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