

# Joy, Play and Resistance in the work of Miguel Luciano and Hiram Maristany

Joy is transformative. It vibrates with generative possibility and revels in an emergent and collective capacity to reimagine dominant structures and reclaim power. Play is nourishment. It is a vital and self-affirming expression of a community's spirit. Together, joy and play are an antidote, a space of resistance, a refusal to break. They make space for one to revel in self-affirmation, kinship, and love.

These ideas percolate through Hiram Maristany's images and permeate the sense of self-determination among the Nuyoricans who populate his photos of El Barrio. Today these concepts ring out in the celebrations embodied in Miguel Luciano's work, from his sculptures to his participatory public art projects. These two artists, through an intergenerational and transmedia dialogue, remind us of the transformative power and generative possibilities of joy and play. They promote a spirit of resistance and a means by which to evoke and re-read history.

Claire L. Kovacs, Curator of Collections and Exhibitions

**This exhibition is dedicated to the memory of Hiram Maristany, who passed away during the final stages of planning this exhibition.**

**Miguel Luciano** is a multimedia visual artist whose work explores themes of history, popular culture, social justice and migration via sculpture, painting and socially engaged public art projects. His work has been exhibited widely and is featured in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, El Museo del Barrio, the Newark Museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture and the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico. Luciano is a faculty member at Yale University School of Art and The School of Visual Arts in NYC.

**Hiram Maristany** was a photographer born and raised in El Barrio (East Harlem), New York. He came of age in the 1960s, when young New York-born Puerto Ricans were asserting a new cultural-political identity inspired by the Cuban Revolution, the Chicago Young Lords, and the civil rights and Black Power movements. Maristany was one of the founding members of the New York chapter of the Young Lords Party and became its official photographer, capturing some of its most iconic moments. His work is featured in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, The Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, and El Museo del Barrio.