



## FALL 2023

### MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL TOUR CURRICULUM

#### Familias

##### Ramiro Davaro-Comas

September 7 2023 – January 6 2024

The exhibition *Familias* is deeply personal for the artist who created the work, Ramiro Davaro-Comas. The series, which is on view in the East and Hodges Galleries of the Albany Museum of Art from Sept 7, 2023-Jan 6, 2024, depicts families that maintain physical closeness even as they are caught in moments of immense transition, migrating through surreal landscapes.

Davaro-Comas, who immigrated from Argentina and now resides in New York State, said the *Familias* series enabled him to process some of his childhood experiences, when he felt he was caught between two different worlds. Young immigrants, he said, are often cast into the critical role of translating signs, grocery store labels, customs and event jokes for their non-English-speaking parents because children can absorb new languages faster.

“Presented in an approachable style of cool and youthful graffiti art, with tattooed characters styled in trendy streetwear, the messages in Ramiro’s work lie much deeper than the spray-painted surfaces,” AMA Director of Curatorial Affairs Katie Dillard said. “This is a narrative of a lifetime of human experiences the artist is sharing with us.

“Landscapes of unknown, often-blurred environments embody Ramiro’s message of immigrants coming into unfamiliar places, and contain vulnerable characters trying to fit in with the rest of us, but still stand out so uniquely. After viewing these characters and the different journeys they embark on, audiences can’t help but grow fond of them, and their Felix the Cat-esque masked faces start to appear normal.”

The figures in his work, all painted in three-quarter or profile view, “are focused on what lies ahead, needing that forward momentum to journey into new lives in foreign lands,” Davaro-Comas said. “The families in the series are painted as happy and hopeful, as my childhood immigrant experience to this country was generally pleasant. Yet there was always an underlying sense of loss, a feeling that connects many immigrants regardless of our specific experiences.

“My characters contain visual cues to represent some of this inner conflict. As migrants, especially as children, we know our difference can be used against us, so we don masks in order to fit into our new worlds. We must learn a new language and culture, with the expectation that the process be seamless.”

Davaro-Comas currently co-directs Super-Stories, a non-profit arts education organization in upstate New York with his partner, Grace Lang, and consults on public art projects, collaborates with skate shops, paints murals, and creates work for gallery exhibitions.



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## PRE AND POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Students are encouraged to research the artist at [ramirostudios.com](http://ramirostudios.com), and read his artist statement. Below are suggested pre-and post-visit activities for this exhibition:

1. **Prepare Questions:** Encourage students to prepare questions about the art and the museum in advance. These questions can guide their exploration and foster critical thinking during the visit.
2. **Discuss Museum Etiquette:** Review museum etiquette and behavior expectations with the students. This may include rules about not touching artwork, speaking quietly, and staying with the group. Stress the importance of respecting both the art and other visitors.
3. **Assign Visual Analysis Opportunities:** Assign each student a specific work (see [ramirostudios.com](http://ramirostudios.com)) they will see in the gallery for them to do a visual analysis of before your visit. They can present their findings to the class during gallery time, promoting a deeper understanding of the art and fostering engagement.
4. **Art Journaling:** Encourage students to bring sketchbooks or journals to the museum. They can use these to sketch their favorite pieces, jot down their thoughts and impressions, or take notes on the information provided in museum placards.
5. **Post-Trip Reflection:** Post-trip activities help students reflect on their museum visit. This could include class discussions, written reflections, or creative projects inspired by the art they saw.

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## FIELD TRIP ACTIVITIES

- Students will be introduced to the role of museums in our community and why they are so important to us.
  - They will then be shown a few key works from this exhibition in the East Gallery. While examining these works, we will discuss concepts of migration, multiculturalism, fears and hopes of coming to a new place, and family. Students will be encouraged to speak as a group and individually, read wall labels aloud, and engage in analytical conversation with educators and peers.
  - The guide will help the students with visual thinking strategies so that they may understand what the works are and why they were created.
  - In the classroom, students will create drawings that depict a migrant's journey of their choice. They can choose to illustrate the reasons for migration or the challenges faced.
  - After completing their drawings, students will share their work with the class. They will be encouraged to explain their artwork and how they resonate with the exhibition,
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