

Guided Tours at Urban Horizons Book & Exhibition



Isaura's home

I never thought I had a picture of when I was a little girl. My uncle just happened to have this. You see? This is me. I liked clothes with pockets, all the time. So, they just made clothes for me with pockets, otherwise I wouldn't want to wear them. This is my mother, Dionyesia. With my brother in her arms. This is my daddy, Joseph Santiago. This is my other uncle, and my uncle and his wife, and my auntie and her husband. And this is my grandmother, mother of my daddy. That was the day she buried my grandfather.

The Guided Tours at Urban Horizons are my collaborative project with residents of the Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation's low-income housing development, Urban Horizons, in the South Bronx, New York City. The project addresses the relationship between the building's thoughtfully architected spaces and the residents' building of their own lives. With the invaluable help of superintendent Tony Sosa, I asked five people, Narcissa, Isaura, Norma, Tony and Frances to give me tours of their homes and explain where in their spaces they felt most comfortable, most at home. Through the photographs and excerpts from residents' tours, the viewer can feel the importance thoughtful housing has for residents of Urban Horizons as rare places into which they can allow their individual identities to grow and flourish.

These are places that, and people with whom, I feel deeply for, and it is my hope that these works might allow the viewer to have something of that experience themselves. What my tour guides share about their making of home is both valuable and essential and I thank them.

The project was exhibited at the National Arts Club, New York, and is also an artist's book including the narrated tours and photographs of each of the five residents' homes.