The past few years in the art world, there has been a promising amount of attention on women artists with the sale of artworks from North American museums, such as the Baltimore Museum of Art selling seven artworks by seven male 20th-century masters, in order to diversify collections in addition to this year's College Art Association conference which has committed 50% of its programming to women. These initiatives are encouraging, but there is still more work to be done. *Visibilities: Intrepid Women of Artpace* seeks to ask more questions than answer, but additionally to celebrate the distinct contributions of women artists to the past, present, and future of Artpace.

Special thanks to D'Hanis Brick and Tile Company.

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HUDSON SHOWROOM & MAIN SPACE

Visibilities: Intrepid Women of Artpace

Jan 3 - April 26, 2020

THE ARTISTS

Main Space, First Floor
Margaret Meehan

Stairwell, First Floor
Wu Tsang

Conference Room, First Floor
Janet Flohr
Linda Pace
Kathy Vargas

Archive and Resource Library First Floor
Wu Tsang
Wangechi Mutu
Joyce J. Scott
Martha Wilson

Stairwell, Second Floor
Margaret Meehan
Lorraine O'Grady

Hudson Showroom
Laura Aguilar
Jenelle Esparza
Mona Hatoum
Koo Jeong-a
Regina José Galindo
Jennifer Ling Datchuk
Autumn Knight
Katrina Moorhead

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

> "ArtPace was an expression of who I am. I was unconsciously protecting my turf, asserting my identity." –Linda Pace in *Dreaming Red*

Founded in 1995, Artpace's International Artist-in-Residence Program was conceived of by philanthropist, artist, and collector Linda Pace (1945-2007). In 2020, Artpace is celebrating its 25th anniversary and the truly staggering number of artists, curators, and facilitators who have walked through its doors. Every one of the organization's alumni artists has boldly created and presented unique work that would otherwise not exist were it not for Artpace. Throughout its history, a significant number of individuals have made indelible contributions not only to the organization, but the world of contemporary art. The works on view in this exhibition represent only a small, but mighty, percentage of important contributors to Artpace's rich past, present, and future.

This is a banner year for a number of reasons: not only is it an election year, but also the 100th anniversary of women's Suffrage in the United States. For these reasons, in tandem with Artpace's 25th birthday, 2020 is the perfect background for *Visibilities: Intrepid Women of Artpace*. The exhibition acknowledges the

significant contributions of women artists to the organization and our residency program. As a starting point, *Visibilities* uses the distinct work of both **Linda Pace** and **Janet Flohr**, which are installed in Artpace's Conference Room. Pace and Flohr have ensured Artpace's success in different, but equally remarkable ways. In myriad forms, on view are works by resident alumni artists addressing identity, femaleness, gender, or feminism, in a moment when decades after the nascent stages of the Women's Movement, the presentation of these concepts is *still* relevant, and perhaps even more pressing.

The Women's Movement made its way to the art world in the 1960s and 1970s. In January 1971, American art historian Linda Nochlin (American, 1931-2017) published her landmark essay "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" This important piece of nearly fifty-year-old writing is often considered one of the first works of feminist art theory, but in spite of its age, Nochlin's essay is no less relevant in the current moment. It sharply and eloquently reveals the biases and inadequacies of the Canon of Art History as being one entirely molded (and determined) by the Western male. Despite the best of intentions, the Women's Movement and feminism, more specifically, began as representative of educated, white women and completely ignored the perspectives and experiences of those of other races, genders, sexualities, education, and classes. Perhaps outside of the mainstream appearance of the Movement, Nochlin includes mentions of this failure in her essay, acknowledging the institutional perpetuations and validations of such injustices. Several years later, in 1989, lawyer, advocate, and scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (American, b. 1959) coined the term "Intersectionality," acknowledging the intersections of which create new modes of discrimination. The term existed in relative obscurity (outside of legal and scholarly circles) until it gained significant traction in the past several years, putting a name to a broader and more inclusive framework. These tenets guide the *Visibilities* exhibition.

Margaret Meehan's two works in the Main Space gallery and banner in the stairwell repurpose vintage materials, including parachutes and photographs capturing diverse representations of women (some found in San Antonio), and refrains commonly heard and seen at feminist protests. Installed under the stairwell and in the Archives and Library are two prints by **Wu Tsang** on which she collaborated with Hare & Hound press during her time in residence at Artpace. The image under the stairs is a portrait of the artist and her collaborator Boychild dressed as Qiu Jin (1875–1907) and her Wu Zhiying (1868–1934). Qiu Jin is a legendary Chinese feminist revolutionary, writer, and martial artist. On view in the Conference Room, along with works by Linda Pace and Janet Flohr, is a new body of work by **Kathy Vargas** which subtly addresses the low wages and poor conditions present in factories used by fast-fashion retailers. Scoring a deeply-discounted garment is usually on the backs of poorly paid, female laborers working excessive hours for next-to-nothing.

On the second floor are photographs by **Lorraine O'Grady** from one of her first performances Art Is… at the 1983 African American Day Parade in Harlem. She gathered fifteen men and women dressed in white on a float emblazoned with the title *Art Is...* She and her performers mingled among the million attendees throughout the parade and held up gold frames. She was concerned about whether or not public would understand, but she was elated to find herself validated by their enthusiasm and excitement exclaiming, "That's what art is. We're the art!"

On view in the Hudson Showroom is a single-channel video installation by **Autumn Knight**, which she produced while in residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 2017. Michelle Obama visited the Museum a year before her residency and Knight's video is dialogue between the personalities of the artist and the former First Lady. Meesh ruminates on how black women are denied femininity, regardless of their status and prominence. Nearby are two works by **Wangechi Mutu** and **Jennifer Ling Datchuk**. Mutu's series of prints takes imagery from Victorian medical diagrams of cancers in female bodies, pornography, and glossy women's magazines. Her luscious and complex arrangement of these disparate materials addresses the perpetual objectification of black, female bodies. Typical of Datchuk's practice is the union of porcelain (a fragile material with a rich history) with something entirely unexpected, in this case, nunchucks in the name of Bruce Lee's 1973 martial-arts classic. Of both Chinese and Caucasian heritage, her work centers on her hybrid identities in relationship to womanhood.

Joyce J. Scott's small untitled figure is characteristic of her investigations into African-American cultural, religious, and decorative symbols. Representative of her careerlong work with beads and found objects, Scott's combination of an African wood figure along with beaded appendages and a brass charm call to mind fertility figures. Adjacent to Scott's work is a provocative triptych by (and of) the late photographer **Laura Aguilar.** The nude artist is bound by a heavy rope and flanked by American and Mexican flags which speaks to her displeasure with being forced into specific categories, whether they be nationalities, sexualities, or body types. Another self-portrait by Aguilar is also on view in the gallery.

Katrina Moorhead's material curiosity is evident in the work nearby titled Woman *Survives Fatal Bomb Blast Forty Years Before She Realizes She Has.* The artist rests a printed image (dated 1973) on peat sods from her native Northern Ireland. Though the image dates from the 1970s, it was only recently published in 2013 in the *Coleraine Times* in commemoration of the people who died in these particular bomb blasts during the Troubles. The media downplayed these events at the time in an effort to discourage escalation, and after forty years, it was deemed appropriate moment for publication. The monitor nearby plays Palestinian artist **Mona Hatoum's** hypnotic but disturbing *There's so much I want to say* (1983). Based on a performance, it is one of the artist's earliest video works. It is a series of close-ups of her face with male hands aggressively preventing her from speaking. We are witnessing Women, particularly women of color, who often do not feel heard or taken seriously.

Pioneering feminist artist **Martha Wilson's** equally hypnotic video, *Makeover: Melania*, was made during her Artpace residency in 2017 as an extension of her *Political Evolution* series, in which the artist impersonates political figures (both male and female) in a fascinating exploration of women existing in a patriarchal world. **Jenelle Esparza's** *Continent* hangs nearby. Having used unfinished quilt blocks from her grandmother in the creation of this work, she considers it a collaboration. Textiles are a material typically relegated to the female realm (and judged accordingly), but this monumental flag functions as a celebration of the artist's heritage in addition to the strength and tenacity of women. **Koo Jeong-a's** nearby sculpture and work on paper operate quietly in the gallery and are references to the word "ousss." She coined the term in order to capture a childlike, whimsical quality which characterizes many of her works.

Let's Rodeo, a video created by **Regina José Galindo** during her time as an Artpace resident in 2008, was never shown in her exhibition project that year. Over the course of an hour and a half, one watches the artist riding an electrical bull and becoming increasingly more and more worn down. In the context of the *Visibilities* exhibition, *Let's Rodeo* serves as a metaphor for the trials women of color face, even 12 years after its creation.

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