ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Our house is on fire
The bigger your carbon footprint, the bigger your moral duty
The bigger your platform, the bigger your responsibility
Adults keep saying we owe it to the young people to give them hope
I don't want your hope
I don't want you to be hopeful
…I want you to act
I want you to act as if the house is on fire
Because it is.

Greta Thunberg, 25th January 2019

Like Gold Dust takes its starting point imagining women's stories and presence. Inspired by the histories and memories of Texans and Guyanese I explore and trace the relationship between landscapes, environments, and present-day living. I am interested in exploring different 'origin' stories for women of color in order to conceive of a different present and future.

Tell us about the title of your exhibition.

Like Gold Dust refers to something precious, as a byproduct of gold which is ultimately connected to Guyana, a location I am inextricably linked to: it's where my parents are from and where I spent my formative years as a child. Gold is one of Guyana's mineral resources and both Guyana and gold are both associated with the El Dorado myth of gold fever, colonial discovery and searching for the unobtainable. I also think of the term as a metaphor to describe our planet in a time of environmental crisis whilst reflecting as to how it can be associated with the presence of women of color—their safety and wellbeing. It's about the magical and mystical qualities of alchemy and was the main location where I shot photographs for the artwork.

How did you conceive of your exhibition?

Having lived and worked in Guyana and being here in San Antonio for the residency, there are significant links between the two locations, mainly to do with the presence (and importance) of oil in Texas, and its current links to Guyana with one of the largest recent finds of offshore oil and gas this century. This brings up the question of the effect of this potential oil extraction (by 2020) and what the real benefits will be for Guyana and women in particular. Elena and Rosa as imagined figures, good friends and activists in the artwork, living both here and there, evoke responses that women might have to such potential changes to the environment, the land, and their everyday lives.

Each work on view invites people to consider counter narratives presented by Elena and Rosa. Rosa, located in San Antonio and Elena in Guyana, who correspond with each other. Their experiences recounted in the audio piece allude to environmental activism they are involved in and both are particularly in support of indigenous rights and address challenges to land use both in Texas and in Guyana.

How would you describe your practice?

I describe myself as a media artist, photographer, and scholar, having been trained in photography in the UK. My artwork is mainly based on creating composite, manipulated imagery from photographs intended for the gallery space or the screen. I am interested in the question of expanded media as a creative space—that is the way in which other multiple media and digital platforms may extend how we might make meaning of photographs and therefore our interpretations of the world.

Important too, is the concept of performativity in my work. The ethics of working as a documentary photographer present real challenges and have a linked visual history to a colonial past. This is particularly burdensome as someone of the Caribbean diaspora working and creating in places intimately familiar. My use of fictional characters is therefore a creative strategy based on listening and being in conversation with those I met, collecting archive material, objects, and walking the landscape, rather than any attempt to imagine I can account for the lives of others living in Guyana or San Antonio.

My journey as a media artist has included working as a social documentary photographer for the Format Women's Picture Agency and being involved in setting up Autograph ABP in London, both agencies in different ways being concerned with photographic representation of persons of color, diasporic communities, women, and notions of equality and racism.

In creating *Like Gold Dust* I hope to evoke the racism, violence, volatility, and precarity that women of color are experiencing in the here and now.

THANK YOU

The artist wishes to thank all those who contributed to *Like Gold Dust* including:

Amalia Ortiz – Tejana poet/actor/writer/activist

Music from the album *Resistir* (2018) by Mexstep (Marco Cervantes, Mexican Stepgrandfather)

With Us (feat. Maya Guirao). Production: Adrian Quesada. Lyrics: Marco Cervantes, Maya Guirao and Still Production: Adrian Quesada. Lyrics: Marco Cervantes, Charles Peters

Maria Ibarra – Theatre arts teacher/director/performer/narrator

Michael Martínez – digital video and sound editor

Sara Littlecrow-Russell – poet/writer of 'Ghost Dance' from *The Secret Powers of Naming* by Sara Littlecrow-Russell © 2006 The Arizona Board of Regents. Reprinted by permission of the University of Arizona Press.

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UTSA Institute of Texan Cultures

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

Since 1995, Artpace has welcomed more than 230 artists through its renowned International Artist-in-Residence program. Annually, Artpace hosts three residencies, which each feature one Texas-based artist, one national artist, and one international artist, who are selected by a notable guest curator. Each eight-week residency culminates in a two-month exhibition on site. The mission of this program is to provide artists with unparalleled resources that allow them to experiment with new ideas and take provocative risks.

ABOUT ARTPACE

Artpace San Antonio is a nonprofit residency program which supports regional, national, and international artists in the creationof new art. As a catalyst for artistic expression, we engage local communities with global art practices and experiences.

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INTERNATIONAL ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

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Like Gold Dust
Roshini Kempadoo

Spring 2019 International Artist-in-Residence
In residence January 23–March 25, 2019
Exhibitions on view March 21–May 19, 2019

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Roshini Kempadoo is a media artist, photographer, and scholar. Her research, multimedia, and photographic projects combine factual and fictional re-imaginings of contemporary experiences, histories, and memories.

Roshini has been active in documenting Caribbean communities, events, rights issues, and individuals in the UK and the Caribbean. She was instrumental in setting up Autograph, the Association of Black Photographers in the late 1980s, and worked as a documentary photographer for Format Picture Agency (1983–2003).

Her photography and artworks are created using montae, layering, narration and interactive techniques of production. Her recent work includes photographs and screen-based interactive art installations that fictionalize Caribbean archive material, objects, and spaces.

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