

You, Me, We, She

February 23 - March 31, 2012

Reception February 23 6-8 pm

Fleisher/Ollman Gallery is excited to announce the exhibition *You, Me, We, She* featuring contemporary female artists working with or responding to community or collective identity in their practices. *You, Me, We, She* will be on view from February 23 to March 31 with a reception on February 23 from 6-8 pm.

The exhibition features nineteen artists and artist groups who work in a variety of media and with a range of methods. Select artists in *You, Me, We, She* take the public or groups of people as their subjects and investigate social and relational concerns; others create work that conceptually speaks to communal identity. Additional artists in the exhibition are engaged in a practice that is defined by a performative, process-based, or site-specific approach. While the level of finish or output varies between artists, all share a concern with the idea of exchange and exploration of quotidian experience - artworks act as social interstices and attempts to redefine community revolve around the complex forms of identification that exist between individuals and larger collective entities, identities that are in re-negotiation through encounters with others.

Artists in the exhibition:

Becca Albee & Kathleen Hanna, Art Book Club, Anna Banana, Johanna Billling, Tammy Rae Carland, Stephanie Diamond, DISBAND, Annika Eriksson, Kara Hearn, Donna Henes, Corita Kent, Fawn Krieger, Justine Kurland, Jennifer Levonian, Shani Peters, Mika Rottenberg, Julia Sherman, Francine Spiegel, Martha Wilson

Events in conjunction with the exhibition:

DISBAND performs at AUX Performance Space Wednesday March 14 at 9 pm

DISBAND was active in the downtown art scene in Manhattan from 1978 to 1982. Members Ilona Granet, Donna Henes, Diane Torr and Martha Wilson reunited in 2008, and continue to blur the line between performance and live music with their feminist acappella songs.

AUX Performance Space, 319 North 11th Street, Philadelphia, PA

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Community of Community at Fleisher/Ollman

Friday March 16 - Saturday March 17 during gallery hours

Stephanie Diamond gathers with collaborating artists for *Community of Community*, a retreat wherein participants and visitors interact, share and support each other in a variety of ad hoc activities.

The Art Book Club at Fleisher/Ollman Saturday March 31 at 3 pm

The Art Book Club—a group of artists based in New York City that meets regularly to discuss an assigned reading—invites the public to take part in a conversation about Katy Siegel's book, *Since '45: America and the Making of Contemporary Art*.

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About the Artists:

Collaborators **Becca Albee and Kathleen Hanna** asked New York City women, "what do you carry that gives you a sense of security?" The resulting installation *In Case of...New York City* represents not only an archive of physical objects that these women carried daily on their person, but also the shared experience of post-traumatic stress in a post-September 11th society.

The **Art Book Club** is a group of nine artists living and working in NYC (Amanda Friedman, Carolyn Salas, Christina Leung, Fran Holstrom, Gina Beavers, Inna Babaeva, Letha Wilson, Saira McLaren, and Stacy Fisher) that convenes regularly to host member studio visits and discuss an art text. The groups' previous reading material will be on display for viewers to access.

Anna Banana is a major contributor to the mail-art phenomenon and has been circulating her publications and engaging with the public since 1971, when she first took to the streets in Victoria, British Columbia. Banana created her first publication the *Banana Rag* in 1971 and still actively mails and offers subscriptions, fostering community through correspondence art.

Johanna Billing's film *I'm Lost Without Your Rhythm* (2009) is based on a live recording of a workshop involving amateur dancers and acting students in Romania. Led by renowned Swedish choreographer Anna Vnuk, there is no 'final performance' as the video weaves several days' activity into a continuous process of live improvisation. Referencing Yvonne Rainer's explorations of everyday movement, Billing investigates the sense of having a body and how we 'perform' our being.

For her *Outpost* series, **Tammy Rae Carland** traveled to lesbian women's intentional land communities in rural and remote America to photograph, write and spend time in dialogue with the women who live and create these self-sustaining cultures. The resulting photographs on view document the unpopulated encampments within the "women born, women only" space of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.

Stephanie Diamond will be creating a *Community of Community* during the exhibition by occupying the gallery floor for two days with several local artists. Visitors will observe a group interacting, sharing, conversing and supporting each other, and can take part themselves if they wish. Diamond's *Community of Community* is a series of retreats for community-based artists to gather around a theme, skill-share, support each other and themselves and explore the lineage of the field.

DISBAND is an all-female band composed of artists living in New York City and was active in the downtown art scene from 1978-1982. DISBAND screamed, shouted, sang, and stomped through the heyday of New York City's new- and no-wave scenes, blurring the line between performance art and live music; their acapella songs were informed by the collective feminist experience. DISBAND reunited in 2008 with members Ilona Granet, Donna Henes, Dianne Torr, and Martha Wilson.

Annika Eriksson's video *The Great Good Place* (2010) was filmed in Istanbul and takes a community of local stray cats as its subject. The video makes reference to Ray Oldenburg's *The Great Good Place* which argues that "third places" - places where people can gather, put aside the concerns of work and home, and hang out simply for the pleasures of good company and lively conversation - are the heart of a community's social vitality and the grassroots of democracy.

Kara Hearn's video *Tremendous* was filmed with the participation of more than 170 visitors during a three-month residency at Recess Activities, Inc., a storefront gallery program in New York City. Hearn's resulting video, composed of interviews, reenactments, and performances conceived of in collaboration with visitors, is a complex but cohesive narrative about the experience of being overwhelmed.

Donna Henes is an artist, urban shaman and member of DISBAND. On view will be a selection of photographs documenting her contemporary rituals and performances created for the New York City public over the last thirty seven years.

Corita Kent, also known as Sister Corita, discovered the power of printmaking and used serigraphy to campaign for spirituality, social justice, peace and love during the 1960s. On view are a suite of text-based serigraphs that promote this activist message.

Fawn Krieger's *Architectural Organs* is composed of a series of pink ceramic sculptures housed on a wooden platform made from a demolished Quaker Meeting House. Krieger's sculpture references American architecture and the foundations upon which they are built, often looking at how bodies construct, inhabit, and navigate such spaces.

Justine Kurland drove cross-country with her one-year old son, stopping at some 45

locations (including national parks, beaches and campgrounds) to take photographs of other mothers and children that she met along the way. The resulting *Of Woman Born* series (a nod to the 1978 manifesto on motherhood by the feminist poet Adrienne Rich) depicts landscapes of women and their children actively free and wandering like tribes or fertility goddesses.

Jennifer Levonian creates stop-motion animations using watercolor and collage; her practice draws inspiration from history, literature and personal narrative. In her recent animation, *Rebellious Bird*, Levonian researched archived stories and images of women who cross-dressed to pass as men in order to fight in the Civil War. In the animation, Levonian weaves together the stories of contemporary protagonist Wendy Ramsburg, a female American Civil War re-enactor, Albert Cashier—a transgender Civil War soldier, and the artist's own recent pregnancy, thus raising larger questions about gender roles in society.

Shani Peters actively took to the Harlem streets to preach her message in *We Promote Knowledge & Love*, borrowing the aggressive street advertising tactics of pawnbrokers in low-income communities as a vehicle to promote knowledge, wisdom, self-empowerment and love rather than commerce or monetary wealth.

Women are cast in **Mika Rottenberg's** films for their notable physical features and talents; they perform routine factory-line duties, at times manufacturing inane items worth less than the labor required to make them. In *Cheese*, Rottenberg constructs a farm-like, wooden maze atmosphere to host her long-haired women (alluding to the famous Sutherland Sisters) who 'milk' their hair and pet goats to produce the eponymous product.

Julia Sherman's works, while at first glance read as minimalist forms, are, in fact, glass-mounted photographs of acid-treated mirrors from a Manhattan convent (a gesture taken by this community to limit vanity). In addition, Sherman has recently started working with the eight Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, an order of sisters in Dayton, Wyoming, to re-brand their collection of hand-made soaps and creams named *Monastery Creations*.

Francine Spiegel's photographs document her largest performance to date, *Curse of the Century Old Egg*. Culling researched imagery from monster magazines and horror films, her goo and food-laden feminist heroines live somewhere between the erotic and the horrible. Calling to mind Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous-Feminine*, Spiegel works with stereotypes from the male-manipulated world of porn and uses them to make feminine and feminist works of art.

Martha Wilson is a feminist performance artist whose personal practice takes the female body and women's identity as subject. Wilson is a member of DISBAND and the Founder of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc. in New York City.