

EFA Project Space and EFA's Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, programs of The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, present two companion exhibitions: *As We Were Saying: Art and Identity in the Age of "Post"* and *Talking*.

efa project space



Cassandra Guan, *Women's Times*, 2014, cyanotypes, dimensions variable (detail).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

As We Were Saying: Art and Identity in the Age of "Post"

September 12 – October 25, 2014

Opening Reception: Friday, September 12, 6–8 pm

EFA Project Space at EFA Center, 323 W. 39th St., 2nd Floor in Manhattan

Artists: A.K. Burns and Katherine Hubbard, Josh Faught, Nikita Gale, Cassandra Guan, Jen Kennedy and Liz Linden, Josh Kline, Ignacio Lang, Simone Leigh, Suzanne McClelland, Shelly Silver, Jason Simon, The Filmballad of Mamadada*, and Michael Wang

Curator: Claire Barliant

Does “identity politics” still matter? Maybe a better question would be: does difference still matter?

Since the mid-nineties, when interest in identity-centric issues began to wane, traditional categories based on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, have been in question. Identities are now considered relational and fluid rather than inherent and fixed, and it is often stated that we have entered the age of “post”—post-racial, post-critical, post-AIDS. Passive retrospection has replaced active debate.

The artists in this exhibition wrestle with the question of what identity and difference mean today. Works by A.K. Burns and Katherine Hubbard, Josh Faught, and Cassandra Guan reflect on the erosion of community by considering past moments when identity was a cornerstone of political change. Other artists, including Ignacio Lang, Suzanne McClelland, and Jason Simon, examine the way media shapes and constructs identities in a nuanced way, while Jen Kennedy and Liz Linden’s *The New York Times Feminist Reading Group* is a public forum that encourages frank discussion about women’s rights. The question of what identity means now is taken up by Josh Kline and Simone Leigh, who both explore new ways of representing the “other” through figuration; Nikita Gale, whose prints simultaneously pay homage to the legacy of identity politics while protesting being pigeonholed as an artist of color; and Shelly Silver, whose video gives a diverse group of New Yorkers a chance to air their views on subjects ranging from existence to economics. Michael Wang theorizes that difference still matters—and comments on the complications of hybridity—with a sculpture that encourages interaction between domestic and feral pigeons, the latter free to come and go as they wish through one of the gallery’s windows.

Though these artists all have very different strategies and styles, each of them share a sense of responsibility to the past and the legacy of identity politics. If “the work of the past [is] incomplete,” as Walter Benjamin wrote in *Theses on History*, then, instead of blithely accepting the perturbingly neat category of “post,” the artists in this exhibition continue a conversation begun some thirty years ago.

Related events:

Wednesday, October 8th, 6:30 PM: *The Unknown Play Project*, led by Alexis Clements, involves a cross-country journey to explore shifting identities and politics among lesbians and queer women through the lens of a handful of lesbian & queer spaces. This project combines community-based play readings and documentary filmmaking.

Join us for a discussion about the project and an informal reading of the play, *UNKNOWN*, that inspired it. Members of the EFA community, along with some of those who show up for the reading, will read the play aloud. Inspired by the Lesbian Herstory Archives in Brooklyn, NY, *UNKNOWN* asks how we come to know a person as something more than the role they play in our lives or the labels society applies to them.

Saturday, October 18th, 3:00 PM: Jen Kennedy and Liz Linden’s *The New York Times Feminist Reading Group* is a public forum that encourages frank discussion about women’s rights. Since 2009, Kennedy and Linden have been organizing periodic reading groups, free and open to all, dedicated to examining that day’s issue of the newspaper. Reading groups have been

held all over New York City and beyond, including at DISPATCH, P•P•O•W Gallery, the New Museum, and Murray Guy.

Tuesday, October 21st, 7:00pm: BOFFO is pleased to present this series of experimental gallery conversations conceived by Gordon Hall. Between artists and in proximity to their work, these events seek to explore the performative possibilities of speech in relation to exhibitions, objects, and galleries. Rather than talking about artworks, this series experiments with methods of talking with, to, around, through, and because of artworks. Join Gordon Hall, Claire Barliant and a select number of artists (TBA) in a conversation engaging *As We Were Saying: Art and Identity in the Age of "Post"*

* The Filmballad of Mamadada is a collective production. For more information please visit www.mamadada.info

For press inquiries, please contact Lauren Bierly, EFA Project Space Assistant Director at lauren@efanyc.org or 212-563-5855 x 234.

EFA Project Space, launched in September 2008 as a program of The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, is a collaborative, cross-disciplinary arts venue founded on the belief that art is directly connected to the individuals who produce it, the communities that arise because of it, and to everyday life; and that by providing an arena for exploring these connections, we empower artists to forge new partnerships and encourage the expansion of ideas.

The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (EFA) is a 501 (c) (3) public charity. Through its three core programs, EFA Studios, EFA Project Space and the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, EFA is dedicated to providing artists across all disciplines with space, tools and a cooperative forum for the development of individual practice. www.efanyc.org

EFA Project Space is supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in Partnership with the City Council. Private funding for the program has been received from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and Foundation for Contemporary Arts.

efa project space

A Program of the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts

323 West 39 Street 2nd Floor New York NY 10018
212.563.5855 x 244 Wed- Sat 12- 6
www.efanyc.org

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts



Foundation for Contemporary Arts