



Image courtesy of Sarah Zapata. Photo: Walter Wlodarczyk

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Curriculum: spaces of learning and unlearning

January 16 – March 16, 2019

OlaRonke Akinmowo for Free Black Women's Library, Becca Albee, Amelia Bande, Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo, Christen Clifford, January Hunt, Carolyn Lazard, Candice Lin & Patrick Staff, Julie Tolentino, Quay Quinn Wolf, Sarah Zapata

Curated by: Stamatina Gregory & Jeanne Vaccaro

EFA Project Space, 323 W. 39 St., 2nd Floor, NYC, between 8th and 9th Avenues, Hours: Wed - Sat, 12 – 6 PM
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EFA Project Space presents *Curriculum*, an exhibition which reimagines collective study outside of cultural institutions and creates pathways for resistance by asking the questions: What would a curriculum for collective study and political action look and feel like? Can simply being present together be form of learning, a way of transforming one another? What is recuperable from decades past? What can we do that we have not yet

done?

The second-wave feminist ethos of “the personal is political”—coined to underscore the interconnectedness of individual experience and larger social and political structures—has been, in our contemporary moment, inverted. Popular feminism, as it manifests today—in the news cycle, on social media, in consumer culture—enjoys an almost unprecedented visibility, as it operates through a framework of personal strength and the individual capacity to overcome (and collapses into a capitalist aestheticization of wellness and self-care). The political is now personal. Feminism’s narratives are constrained and enclosed by contemporary economies of information and reception: movements toward social justice have had their vision replaced by the politics of visibility, trapped in an economy of shares, clicks, and likes. How can self-care move from a restoration of one’s individual capacity to a collective, collaborative project? What is the potential for a learning that is haptic, that you can touch and feel?

CURRICULUM explores the potential for collective study outside entrenched forms, such as formal classrooms and university spaces—a study which might move past prevailing modes of circulation. Emerging from a space of reading and revision, these works utilize a range of artistic strategies for intuitive, participatory, haptic learning—from sonic enclosures to ceramic vessels and woolen landscapes to photographic portraits. Together, these works position self-care as an ethical and artistic practice of political action, moving towards ways of reconceiving the interaction of bodies and ideas in the present.

Several artists in the exhibition, including **Christen Clifford** and **January Hunt**, create visual, sonic, and material enclosures, refiguring bodily relations in regard to community and healing. Clifford’s *Interiors* (2018) immerses the viewer in a visual field made from the footage of diagnostic cameras as they explore the bodily interior of several subjects across genders. **Becca Albee**’s revisitation of a 1992 text on radical feminist therapy and collective organizing explores our personal attachments to formative texts, while proposing that such sustained engagement is necessary for self and community transformation.

Candice Lin and **Patrick Staff**’s *Hormonal Fog* (2016-18) and **Carolyn Lazard**’s *Crip Time* (2017) radically reconceptualize bodily differences and their relationship to both structures of power and notions of private and public space. By acknowledging the most basic, material space of our shared existence—the air we breathe—Lin and Staff’s infiltration of the gallery space through the vaporized release of botanically-derived anti-androgenic compounds addresses both alternative forms of therapeutic transformation and new forms of environmental solidarity. In Lazard’s video, an unidentifiable protagonist performs one of the repetitive tasks of managing chronic illness, moving the private and mundane into the realm of widely shared experience.

The work of **Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo**, **Quay Quinn Wolf**, and **Sarah Zapata** propose new forms of haptic intimacy through sculpture and image. Branfman-Verissimo’s painting translates the metaphorical act of holding space for individual and collective learning into deeply affective imagery, while Wolf’s sculptures invoke the demands of care through both prosaic and perishable materials. Zapata’s woolen landscapes, propose a new kind of monumentality for our present moment: engaging multiple senses and indebted to indigenous histories.

An area of the exhibition will be dedicated to **OlaRonke Akinmowo**’s ongoing project *Free Black Women’s Library*, a mobile space committed to circulating the work of Black women authors. Conceived as part of the tradition of mobile libraries as spaces for collective learning, community building, and anti-capitalist sites of exchange, the space will host workshops and open hours throughout the exhibition.

In co-creating forms of collective study for our present moment, CURRICULUM seeks to construct an environment for both contemplation and movement. Taken together, these works ask: what can a personal, spatial practice enable? What histories can be contained, reconstructed, and remade? What traumas can be held and learned from?

CURRICULUM builds on the foundation of a corollary exhibition, [READING ROOM](#) (June 6-30, 2018 at Root Division, San Francisco), which considered themes of the revision and reconstruction of feminist texts and canonical figures. Following the work of historical recovery and image remediation which occurs in READING ROOM, CURRICULUM explores the present as a site of renewed potential.

The exhibition will be activated through a number of performances and programs. The opening on the evening of Wednesday, January 16 features a durational performance by Julie Tolentino and Pig Pen, followed by an open performance workshop on Saturday, January 19. A panel discussion on Saturday, March 2 considers collective strategies for reparative care, featuring writer and organizer Ted Kerr for *What Would an HIV Doula Do?*, filmmaker and scholar Lana Lin, and Ola Ronke, creator of the Free Black Women's Library. A performance by Amelia Bande on Saturday, March 9 will function as a collective rehearsal, inviting a new relation between the audience and artworks.

Curators

Stamatina Gregory is a curator and an art historian, whose work focuses primarily on the interrelationship of contemporary art and politics. She has organized exhibitions for institutions including The Cooper Union, FLAG Art Foundation, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, and the Santa Monica Museum of Art, and has taught art history, critical theory, and writing at New York University, The New School, the School of Visual Arts, Purchase College, Sotheby's Institute, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Jeanne Vaccaro is a writer, curator, and teacher whose work explores the intersection of aesthetics and the history and theory of trans and queer life. Her book in process, *Handmade: Feelings and Textures of Transgender*, considers the felt labor of making identity and was awarded the Arts Writers Grant by Creative Capital | the Andy Warhol Foundation. Jeanne is a Queer|Art curatorial fellow, working with mentor Nelson Santos, and she received her Ph.D. in Performance Studies from New York University.

Gregory and Vaccaro are the co-curators of *Bring Your Own Body: transgender between archives and aesthetics*, for the Cooper Union (one of ArtNet's most memorable museum shows of 2015); *Reading Room: the feminist art of self-help* (Root Division); and *Tuesday Similie: left brain of darkness* (Magil Library).

Related Events

- **Wednesday, January 16, 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM**, Curatorial Walkthrough with Stamatina Gregory & Jeanne Vaccaro
- **Wednesday, January 16, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**, Opening Reception and Performance by Julie Tolentino and Stosh Fila (aka Pigpen)
- **Saturday, January 19, 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM**, Performance and Workshop with Julie Tolentino and Stosh Fila (aka Pigpen)
- **Sunday, January 27, 2:00 PM**, TFBWL Book Sessions: a discussion of *Heads of the Colored People* by Nafissa Thompson-Spires
- **Sunday, February 24, 2:00 PM**, TFBWL Book Sessions: a discussion of *Eloquent Rage* by Brittney Cooper
- **Saturday, March 2, 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM**, Collective Strategies for Reparative Care: A panel discussion with **Ted Kerr** (writer and organizer, *What Would an HIV Doula Do?*), **Lana Lin** (filmmaker, scholar, author of *Freud's Jaw and Other Lost Objects: Fractured Subjectivity in the Face of Cancer*, 2017), and **OlaRonke Akinmowo** (creator, Free Black Women's Library). A reception will follow the event, Presented in a partnership with NYU Center for Disability Studies.
- **Saturday March 9, 4:00PM**, *Is It Our Anger That Makes Us So Beautiful?* A Live performance with **Amelia Bande**. Presented in associations with women and performance: a feminist theory journal.

PRESS INQUIRIES

Dylan Gauthier, *Program Director*

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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. www.projects-space-efanyc.org **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 EFA 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. EFA is a catalyst for cultural growth, stimulating new interactions between artists, creative communities, and the public. 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 and additional funding from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

