

# *Soft and Wet*

The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts



Ana Mendieta, *Burial Pyramid*, 1974. Super-8mm film transferred to high-definition digital media, color, silent. Running time: 3:17 minutes. © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC. Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co. Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

September 19, 2019

Share

## ***Soft and Wet***

September 18–November 16, 2019

### **The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts**

EFA Project Space  
323 W. 39th Street, 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10018  
United States

**Hours:** Wednesday–Saturday 12–6pm

T +1 212 563 5855 244  
projectspace@efanyc.org

[www.projectspace-efanyc.org](http://www.projectspace-efanyc.org)  
[Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#) / [Twitter](#)

**Curated by:** Sadia Shirazi

**Artists:** Arooj Aftab, Beverly Buchanan, Crystal Z Campbell, Caroline Key, Ana Mendieta, Andy Robert, Julie Tolentino, Zarina, and Constantina Zavitsanos

EFA Project Space is pleased to present *Soft and Wet*, curated by Sadia Shirazi. The exhibition features works by Arooj Aftab, Beverly Buchanan, Crystal Z Campbell, Caroline Key, Ana Mendieta, Andy Robert, Julie Tolentino, Zarina, and Constantina Zavitsanos.

The exhibition cites Prince's 1978 single, "Soft and Wet" and *Dialectics of Isolation: An Exhibition of Third World Women Artists of the United States*, which was co-curated by Ana Mendieta, Kazuko Miyamoto, and Zarina at A.I.R. Gallery in 1980. These citations serve as reference points to help us locate fleshy, formalist impulses in the practices of contemporary artists that echo those of artists from the 1970s. Working through sound, vision, vibration, touch, and breath, the artists in *Soft and Wet* activate multi-sensory responses that move beyond the linguistic registers of a singular voice and questions of individuated agency dominating discourses of representational art. The artists turn their formalism towards questions of flesh, fugitivity, and consent in relation to the nation-state, neoliberal capitalism, and the medical-industrial complex, while stretching formalism beyond the assumption of hegemonic subjects as the sole inheritors of its legacy. The works in this show are experiments in, and explorations of, what it means "to consent not to be a single being" as Édouard Glissant writes. The artists in *Soft and Wet* think with and through one another, invoking the artist whose song gives the exhibition its title, to feel out the contours of other ways of being in relation. They join him in saying—"We'd be so lost, in our mouths, the best, I feel it everyday (every way)."

### Exhibition Events

#### Curatorial walkthrough and opening reception (walkthrough begins promptly at 5pm)

Wednesday, September 18, 5–8pm

#### Lecture performance by Crystal Z Campbell, followed by a conversation with Sadia Shirazi, Caroline Key, and guest speaker

Saturday, October 19, 5pm

The conversation will touch upon questions of flesh, fugitivity and consent in relation to the medical-industrial complex, focusing on Campbell's work on Henrietta Lacks's immortal cells and Key's work on the technological gaze in her new video work *Khôra*. (This event takes place during EFA's Open Studios Weekend.)

#### Publication launch

Friday, November 15, 5pm

Writers of commissioned texts will read excerpts from their writing, alongside readings of selected passages by artists included in the catalogue of *Dialectics of Isolation: An Exhibition of Third World Women Artists of the United States* from 1980, followed by a conversation.

#### About the curator

Sadia Shirazi is a writer, art historian, curator and sometimes architect based in New York. Her reviews, essays, and interviews have appeared in *Artforum*, *Bidoun*, *MoMA post*, *C Magazine*, *The Funambulist*, *Jadaliyya* and *ArteEast* and she has written monographic essays on Zarina and Jessica Vaughn. Shirazi has curated exhibitions internationally including *Three days in the desert* at the Lower East Side Printshop (2018), *welcome to what we took from is the state* at the Queens Museum (2016), and *230 MB/Exhibition Without Objects* at Khoj Artists's Association in Delhi (2013). Her work has been shown at the 16th Venice Architecture Biennale, Performance Space New York and the Devi Art Foundation. Shirazi holds a MArch from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a BA from the

University of Chicago. She is the Instructor for Curatorial Studies at the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program (ISP), teaches at The New School and Cooper Union, and is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Art History and Visual Studies at Cornell University.

### **About EFA Project Space**

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.projectspace-efanyc.org](http://www.projectspace-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 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.

Accessibility Note: EFA Project Space is located at 323 W. 39th Street, 2nd Floor, between 8th and 9th Avenues, in Manhattan. The building is wheelchair accessible, with two accessible elevators in the lobby. Guests are asked to sign in in the lobby, but no ID is required for entry. Nearest accessible subway station is 42nd Street/Port Authority, 1 block north on 8th Avenue. EFA Project Space is committed to nurturing an intergenerational environment, and we encourage 'kid noise' at our events. Please feel free to notify us of any accessibility needs by email [projectspace \[at\] efanyc.org](mailto:projectspace@efanyc.org), or phone at T (212) 563-5855 x 233.

Press contact:

JP-Anne Giera, [jpanne \[at\] efanyc.org](mailto:jpanne@efanyc.org), T (212) 563-5855 x 229