

A.I.R.

In 2017 A.I.R. Gallery will celebrate 45 years of uninterrupted creation of spaces for women in an artworld still characterized by inequities. The artists of A.I.R. and our community of supporters have provided a safe space to insure that women's art has a presence and our voices are heard. We will continue to do so until there is fairness, justice, and a level playing field for all. For more than 40 years we have supported a model of cooperation and empowerment through our work. There is a need to continue countering misogyny, racism and xenophobia as urgently and thoroughly as ever before.

The Unforgettables Program

As we approach our 45th anniversary, we embark on *The Unforgettables Program*, a project that is divided in three distinct but interrelated parts.

The first part of the project consists of *The Unforgettables Reading/Working Group*, a series of open-to-the-public monthly meetings at A.I.R.. This group, formed by readers/workers from several disciplines and backgrounds, brings a combination of texts, artworks, and films into a discussion context. Every month the group looks at historic feminist and queer manifestos, science fiction, new feminist fiction, poetry and theory pieces that will help imagine a future where no-one is forgotten. The meetings are always lead by different members of the group, empowering the attendants to learn and publicly share their thoughts with others.

Under the initiative of artist Ofri Cnaani and A.I.R. Executive Director Roxana Fabius the creation of the group is the result of the realization that we live in challenging times, in which direct and indirect violence are becoming more visible and socially approved. We understand the group as an opportunity to face this violence through community and information, through the creation of a future that embraces its origins, accepts the mistakes of the past, and becomes more inclusive. We invite everyone to study, and work together on A.I.R.'s non official horizontal and updated feminist library. An unusually unforgettable one.

The Unforgettables Library is the second part of this project which we will initiate in January 2018. The library will be based both on the readings of the group and a selection of books and artworks. Organized in close collaboration with curators Amber Esseiva (Assistant Curator, ICA Virginia) and Natalia Zuluaga (Artistic Director Arts Center/South Florida) the library will grow with its readers. Every 4 weeks the curators will work to select an artist that will have a one work exhibition. This work will be tied to a selection of books by the artist and the curators that will be added to the library and will be available for public consultation. These exhibitions will be dedicated to a diverse pool of female and femme artists, encouraging our audience to think about the issues presented in the description of the reading/working group through multiple points of view. This choice of curators will also reflect on artists from other parts of the country, expanding the possible participants beyond NYC.

The library space will serve a number of communities. Our fellowship artists will be able to use it for their community development projects, to meet with the members of the different communities they work with as well as a consultation space on feminist texts and female and femme writers. This will also benefit members of the greater A.I.R. community, local New York artists, and our national members when they

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visit the city. The space will always be available to our neighbors and multiple school partners as a space of consultation and hospitality.

The third part of *The Unforgettables Program* will consist of a series of large-scale exhibitions that will research and reconsider A.I.R. past shows. These exhibitions are chosen within the framework of the 45th anniversary because they present themes that are still extremely urgent to feminist discourse. Organized in collaboration with curator and writer Rachael Rakes, these exhibitions will consider the past shows through a contemporary lens and in dialogue with contemporary artists and thinkers.

The first exhibition will take place in March 2018, coinciding with the Women's History Month. It will be dedicated to a series of shows that took place in Lower Manhattan in February 1994, called *The Women's Health Show*. Launched in collaboration with the Women's Caucus for Art, *The Women's Health Show* explored the American medical system, and questioned "how women are perceived within it." The show at A.I.R. included panels developed with community and arts organizations such as Art in General and Creative Time, which explored race and racism in healthcare, and medical research deficiencies for diseases affecting women and people of color. These concerns, and the systemic imbalances they stem from, remain urgent problems today and will be approached through a collaboration with contemporary artists and programs. We will partner with neighbor institutions like Art in General, and Smack Mellon.

The second exhibition of the 45th anniversary program will take place in August 2018. In 1980, A.I.R. gallery member Ana Mendieta curated the show *Dialectics of Isolation: An Exhibition of Third World Women Artists of the United States*. The group show included artists Judith Baca, Beverly Buchanan, Janet Olivia Henry, Senga Nengudi, Lydia Okumura, Howardena Pindell, Selena Whitefeather, and Zarina. In a booklet for the show, Mendieta comments on the erasure of women of color in the American feminist movement that they helped to build. But rather than rehash the injustices of a racist society or a movement that had become only for the white middle class, Mendieta wrote, the exhibition pointed "towards a personal will to continue being 'other.'" Exhibiting some of the original works in the show, and work by the original artists, *Restaging Dialectics* reframes that show, looking through this work and moment to examine intersectional feminism today. In this opportunity, we consider contemporary artists, researchers, and activists, examining how conversations and conditions have changed—and how they have not. The program will count with a publication, current contributors being considered for it are: Sarah Ahmed, Caitlin Cherry, Silvia Federici, Reina Gosset, Carolyn Lazard, Lucy Lippard, Park McArthur, Catherine Morris, Sarah Schulman, and Rita Segatto.

Overall, this year of programming looks back critically from the complicated present at events, exhibitions, and initiatives from A.I.R.'s forty-five continuous years as an institution. While uncovering hidden histories of women's art and artists, key movements, and institutional memories, this initiative will consider the existence of a "women-only" gallery in NYC today, and the inclusiveness and exclusiveness inherent in that organizational self-definition.