



Arlington Arts Center Media Contact:
Laura Devereux
703 248 6800
laura.devereux@arlingtonartscenter.org
www.arlingtonartscenter.org

“Listen, you
who transformed your anguish
into healthy awareness,
put your voice
where your memory is.
You who swallowed
the afternoon dust,
defend everything you understand
with words.
You, if no one else,
will condemn with your tongue
the erosion each disappointment brings.”

— From *You, if no one else* by Tino Villanueva



Danielle A. Scruggs, *Chance the Rapper, Grant Park, Chicago, November 7, 2016*

Arlington Arts Center presents: *You, if no one else*

On View: January 20-March 31, 2018

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 20, 6-9pm

Arlington Arts Center is pleased to announce the opening of *You, if no one else*, on January 20, 2018 from 6-9pm. Featuring ten contemporary artists and artist collaborations, *You, if no one else*, looks at the ways in which artists record, reflect, contribute to, rail against, and engage with politics and civic life, bringing dialogue, beauty, and nuance to their involvement in the public sphere. The title of the exhibition was inspired by poet Tino Villanueva, whose poem of the same name was included in his 1994 collection *Chronicle of My Worst Years*.

The artists included in the exhibition engage with communities, contribute to civic discourse, document political activity, highlight social injustice, and incorporate the architecture of political protest into their work. At a time of substantial turbulence, *You, if no one else* champions the role artists can play in supporting and expanding our democratic traditions and political institutions.

EXHIBITING ARTISTS:

Kim Beck

Inspired by Woody Guthrie’s anthem, “This Land is Your Land,” Kim Beck created a gold-mirrored #MINE sign cut in the distinctive typeface featured on Trump Tower. Beck took the sign on a road trip from California to New York, photographing it in national parks, next to oil rigs, on beaches, on private property, and along national

borders. The work explores issues of land use and natural resource extraction with both humor and nuance. *#Mine* can be seen as a critique, pointing to the private extraction of public goods for personal profit, or as a recuperative gesture, in which the artist announces her claim to and responsibility for our shared landscape.

Phil Buehler

In Phil Buehler's installations viewers are transported to specific moments in current events through large scale panoramas within small, enclosed structures. The event documented in the structure at AAC focuses on the Women's March on Washington. In additional installations, Buehler depicted the spot where Michael Brown was killed by police and the grave of Captain Humayun Khan, the son of Khizr Khan, located in Arlington National Cemetery. While images of these places and events have inundated news sources and the internet, Buehler surrounds the viewer with charged environments, intensifying the impact of the images.

Lizania Cruz

Lizania Cruz's *Flowers for Immigration* depicts flower arrangements created by undocumented bodega workers in New York City in response to President Trump's immigration policies. Cruz asked the workers to create the arrangements and then photographed the individual flowers and the final arrangements on stark black backgrounds. Calling to mind the symbolism and dramatic lighting of Northern European still-life painting, the arrangements are imbued with highly charged personal and cultural significance.

Mel Day + Michael Namkung

For *Wall of Song*, artists Mel Day and Michael Namkung invited people from different backgrounds, beliefs, political affiliations, orientations, and countries of origin—no matter their ability to carry a tune—to record themselves singing along to Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah." The artists layered the submitted videos, merging the voices and the figures to create a ghostly portrait of hundreds of participants. The resulting video gives presence to the many rather than privileging the few; it hands power to the masses.

Roxana Geffen

Roxana Geffen's *Dissent Collars* series deftly borrows a potent symbol of political discord—the iconic collar Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is known to wear to show disagreement with majority opinions. Geffen makes her own collars with palettes that range from acrid hues to more muted tones, with stitching and handiwork made intentionally visible. Geffen's collars function as sculptural objects and as props for self-portraits. In Geffen's photographs, the collars, often ominous, constricting and constraining, creep up and down her neck and body.

Ashley Minner

With a practice at the intersection of storytelling, folklore, and visual arts, Ashley Minner documents her own community, the Lumbee population of East Baltimore. For *The Exquisite Lumbee Project*, Minner invited her peers from the community to pose for portraits. Although the final images present their subjects individually, the sessions in the studio were a community affair, including groups who encouraged and coached one another. The resulting photographs illustrate the depth and personality of each subject, creating a portrait of a contemporary, urban, American Indian community that is simultaneously multifaceted and unified.

Dana Ollestad

In *Family Stories*, Dana Ollestad presents a multifaceted portrait of modern families. These stories are varied

yet relatable, touching on interracial marriage, adoptions by same sex couples, infertility, and immigration. *Family Stories* was originally completed in Richmond, VA, where Ollestad lives; for *You, if no one else*, Ollestad expanded the project to include a new video based on interviews conducted in late 2017 in Arlington, VA.

Jon Rubin + Lee Walton

For Lee Walton and Jon Rubin's anachronistic performance and video project, *When the World's on Fire*, two musicians clad in American Revolutionary War attire wandered Boston's historic Cambridge Common playing contemporary protest songs on a drum and fife. The performance lasted two hours and was repeated every day for thirty days. Chosen for its historical significance, Cambridge Common was the site where George Washington first assumed command over the Continental Army in 1775, and has hosted musical protests and political gatherings in the 200 years since that historic occasion.

Danielle A. Scruggs

Danielle A. Scruggs' photographs depict key events that took place across the city of Chicago during the historic 2016 election. As the director of photography at the Chicago Reader, Scruggs prioritized documenting the most vulnerable populations in her hometown, including Black and Latinx communities on the city's West Side. In the series *Parade to the Polls*, Scruggs photographed a concert and march to the Chicago Board of Elections led and organized by Chance the Rapper to encourage young people to vote.

ART ON THE GROUNDS:

For Freedoms

For Freedoms' *Yard Sign Activation* consists of hundreds of corrugated plastic signs reminiscent of campaign signs displayed in yards and public spaces during election season. Rather than promoting particular candidates, the signs include one of four phrases: Freedom From, Freedom Of, Freedom To, or Freedom For. Participants are invited to complete the phrases by writing on the signs before they are installed on AAC's front lawn. The project was created by For Freedoms Federation, which was co-founded by artists Hank Willis Thomas and Eric Gottesman. For Freedoms mobilizes the existing cultural infrastructure of art in the United States in order to encourage broader civic participation.

ALSO ON VIEW AT ARLINGTON ARTS CENTER

IN THE WYATT RESIDENT ARTISTS GALLERY

Michèle Colburn: *The More Things Change*

On View: January 20 – March 31, 2018

Michèle Colburn's work explores socio-political themes related to domestic terrorism, war, and the costs associated with both. A multidisciplinary artist, Colburn makes mixed-media objects with forays into endurance performance on the streets. Her two- and three-dimensional work incorporates gunpowder, spent bullet casings, and vintage surplus military trip wire. With a nod to Pop Art and notions of consumerism, these materials are transformed by the artist's hand and process, rendered useless but retaining their associations and symbolism. In *The More Things Change*, the artist reflects on her upbringing during the Vietnam War and the current political climate, drawing parallels regarding leaders, violence, uncertainty, and conversely, the need for escape.

ABOUT ARLINGTON ARTS CENTER

Location: 3550 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA 22201

Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 12-5 pm, or by appointment

AAC's exhibitions and their attendant lectures, workshops, and panel discussions offer opportunities for dialogue, and ultimately serve to illustrate the value of contemporary art —specifically, what it is, how it works, and why it matters in our daily lives. Established in 1974, Arlington Arts Center (AAC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit contemporary visual arts center dedicated to presenting and supporting new work by regional artists. Through exhibitions, educational programs, and subsidized studio spaces, AAC serves as a bridge between artists and the community. AAC is housed in the historic Maury School, and boasts nine exhibition spaces, working studios for thirteen artists, and three classrooms. At 17,000 square feet, AAC is one of the largest non-federal venues for contemporary art in the Washington DC metropolitan area. For more information, visit www.arlingtonartscenter.org or call 703.248.6800.

Our programs are made possible through the generous support of the Virginia Commission for the Arts/NEA, Arlington County through the Arlington Cultural Affairs division of Arlington Economic Development and the Arlington Commission for the Arts, The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, The Washington Forrest Foundation, The Arlington Community Foundation, Founders of the Fund Your Artist Vision, and AAC members.



###
