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FAU Exhibition Poses the Question: Why Not Discuss Politics at the Table

BOCA RATON, FL. (September 4, 2020) - The University Galleries in Florida Atlantic University's Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters presents the online exhibition "Why Shouldn't We Talk About These Things at the Table?: A Community Based Conversation with South Florida Artists," from Thursday, Oct. 1 through Friday, Jan. 15, 2021. The exhibition will be accessible at www.fau.edu/galleries.

The exhibition looks at the American cultural tradition of not discussing politics, religion, and other potentially volatile topics at the table, and proposes that varied manifestations of family should allow for us to bend these rules to bring together an informed and empathetic community as extended family.

"Presenting and reflecting on these collective yet varied points of view may serve to enrage, divide, heal or enlighten, while bringing forth a sense of community, reminding us that we are all delicately interconnected," said AdrienneRose Gionta, one of the curators of the exhibition. "Ultimately we may begin to understand the broader scope of these seemingly local issues and their importance on a national scale through the works of these 15 South Florida artists."

The exhibition was co-curated by Gionta and Jeanie Ambrosio. In questioning why certain subjects are not traditionally discussed in formal settings or at the proverbial "table," Gionta and Ambrosio wanted to emphasize dialogue as a core tool for speaking to the many challenging subjects which have arisen in the community. To open this conversation in a time of social/physical distancing, the curatorial process builds on a series of virtual studio visits with the artists and co-curators which aim to understand how local artists from diverse backgrounds are responding to the current political climate through their work.

The 16 artists in the exhibition include Harumi Abe, John William Bailly, Randy Burman, lou anne colodny, Morel Doucet, Todd Lim, Laura Marsh, Peggy Nolan, Marielle Plaisir, Sri Prabha, Sandra Ramos, Lisa Rockford, Sarah Michelle Rupert, Onajide Shabaka, Michelle Weinberg. The curators suggest taking a seat and joining in conversation about the multiple layers and nuances of these artworks as they serve as an alternative source of social and political contemplation beyond the traditional debates and media stream we are collectively experience in this election season and the unusual phenomena of the COVID crisis.

The title and concept of the exhibition was inspired by conversations about the 1922 text by Emily Post, “Etiquette: The Blue Book for Social Usage” which provided the earliest “how-to’s” for interacting thoughtfully with others and has been passed on to young women and brides-to-be over the years. The book is currently on its 19th edition as Post’s descendants have continually updated the contents in order to reflect current times. “Why shouldn’t we talk about these things at the table?: A Community Based Conversation with South Florida Artists,” considers Emily Post’s dinner table guidance which states, “while politics, religion, and other potentially volatile topics aren’t really off-limits, discussing them could risk nettling your dinner companions and putting a damper on the meal.”

Today, table etiquette takes the form of blogs, podcasts, social media posts and news articles. The persistent nature of this advice has led the curators to question why it still seems appropriate to avoid important subjects in conversation. The dinner table has long ties to the idea of the nuclear family and of family bonding. Yet, the nuclear family has not historically represented the diversity of unique family dynamics, notably exemplified within our South Florida community which is considered to be the most diverse in the state.

The exhibition is part of “A Four Exhibition Look at Our Past, Present and Future Politics,” a suite of exhibitions on the occasion of the 2020 presidential election. All four exhibitions can be accessed online beginning October 1, 2020 through www.fau.edu/galleries.

The University Galleries Museum Education Program is continuing its programs virtually employing some content from “A Four Exhibition Look at Our Past, Present and Future Politics,” including school partnerships with area schools and its Artist Mentorship Program with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Palm Beach County. Ashley Utley is the Galleries 2020/2021 Museum Education Coordinator. For more information: autley2018@fau.edu

University Galleries exhibitions and programs are supported by the Isadore and Kelly Friedman University Galleries Fund; Florida Department of State Division of Cultural Affairs and Florida Council on the Arts; and Cultural Council of Palm Beach County. Museum Education programs are made possible by the Kaye Arts Integration Endowment.

For more information call 561-297-2661 or email shonekman2016@fau.edu.

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About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU's world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of three signature themes – marine and coastal issues, biotechnology and contemporary societal challenges – which provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU's existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu

Why shouldn't we talk about these things at the table?

A Community Based Conversation with South Florida Artists

Curators: Jeanie Ambrosio and AdrienneRose Gionta
October 1, 2020 - January 15, 2021

A Four Exhibition Look At Our
Past, Present & Future
Politics

ONLINE : October 1, 2020

Artists in the Exhibition: Harumi Abe, John William Bailly, Randy Burman, lou anne colodny, Morel Doucet, Todd Lim, Laura Marsh, Peggy Levison Nolan, Marielle Plaisir, Sri Prabha, Sandra Ramos, Lisa Rockford, Sarah Michelle Rupert, Onajide Shabaka, Michelle Weinberg

Harumi Abe

Pine Island, 2018
gouache and acrylic on canvas
36 x 48 inches



John William Bailly

Decree of Death, 2019
oil on canvas
86 x 118 inches
courtesy LnS Gallery



Randy Burman

Burying Racist Presidents, 2020
45 minute video with sound
dimensions variable



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lou anne colodny

caught, 2020

mixed media

open dimensions 17 x 11 inches



Morel Doucet

Tea with the Queen (Reparations), 2019

porcelain ceramic with cast altered

forms and hand built

14 x 7 x 7 inches

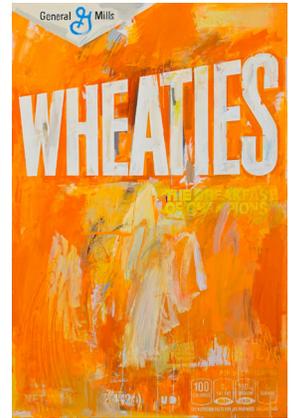


Todd Lim

WHEATIES (Be a Somebody with a Body), 2016

oil, acrylic, pencil on canvas

70 x 46 inches



Laura Marsh

Masked And On Task, 2020

Vinyl appliqué and fringe on nylon

40 x 50 inches



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Peggy Levison Nolan

untitled, 1992

silver gelatin print



Marielle Plaisir

M. Davis, Give me five, guys and will wrap this up!

Malediction of Cham, 2020

Duratrans archival paper, backlit transparent archival film,
black frame, remote control, 29 x 49 x 2 inches

Courtesy of the artist and De Buck Gallery, New York



Sri Prabha

Nightlands 3, Flowing Thru Time, 2018

Mixed media and found objects

20" Diameter



Sandra Ramos

Isla Desierta / Desert Island, 2018-19

video animation, woodcut

35 x 45 x 5 inches



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Lisa Rockford

*Sketch for Prospective Installation of
American Splenda, 2nd iteration, 2019*
digital montage
dimensions variable



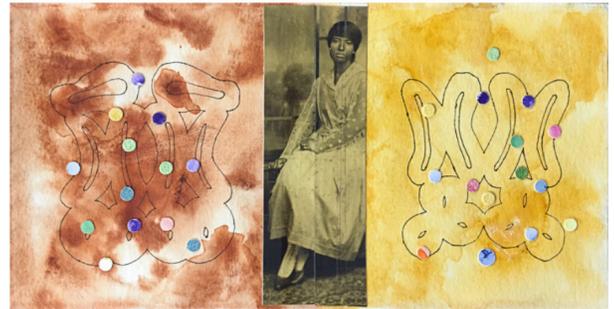
Sarah Michelle Rupert

Sinking City: Four Horsemen, Miami, 2015
Ink, pen, Xerox transfer and collage on paper
22 x 30 inches



Onajide Shabaka

You belong here..., 2020
watercolor, collage on paper
6 x 11 3/4 inches



Michelle Weinberg

Hashtags @Home, 2020
carbon transfer on mulberry paper
18 x 36 inches

