

JUNE 1—
JULY 2, 2017
**OTHERWISE,
YOU DON'T
SEE ME**
SOHO20
NEW YORK

ONCE YOU CAN SEE ME, AND THEREFORE
MY STRUGGLE, YOU CAN NO LONGER
DENY MY EXISTENCE

*“Few struggles are more important than those that call into question so-called common norms by asking whose lives were never included in those norms.”*¹

As an organization whose roots date back to the early 1970s, SOHO20 has a long history of providing a platform for women artists within a system where they were mostly ignored. Although the art world is championed as a progressive arena, replete with liberal politics and concerns for social justice, the issues of society at large are often mirrored within this microcosm – namely inequality and lack of visibility of marginalized communities. SOHO20 has survived times when the label ‘feminism’ was an unsavory blemish – a term that signified misandry and radicalism against patriarchy, instead of support for those trying to exist within it. Over time, as language shifts, concepts become more comfortable or at least familiar. These important shifts can seem profound, even though the way in which they

affect the daily realities of a larger system can be small. It remains SOHO20's task to continue to push the visibility of these conversations, struggles, and shifts into the open, from the inside out.

At the outset, the aim of this exhibition was to examine the violence inherent in our current state of politics from SOHO20's particular perspective – one that is feminist, run by its artist members, and non-commercial. The conversation that unfolded over the months of planning was one centered around visibility, risk, and otherness. The artists in this exhibition grapple with the overwhelming impact of large systems – through immigration, documentation, mythologies of national heroes, censorship, and state sponsored violence, in contrast to the susceptibility of an individual, body, or identity to harm. Although the combination of these specific works does not necessarily call for a singular and focused resistance, the artists each offer a certain type of evidence of their existence within a system. That evidence is affective, empirical, abstracted, or numerical; most importantly, it is made apparent in some form.

In her essay “*Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance*,” Judith Butler suggests that as social creatures with laws and norms, we are inextricably dependent on our surrounding infrastructure, just as we are dependent on one another, both for survival and for the creation and understanding of our own identities. Displaying the undesirable or invisible aspects of these identities, our vulnerabilities have the potential to be a binding commonality and the lynchpin of resistance ². Through this display, we can be ‘exposed and agentic at the same time’. It is within this notion that we find Butler’s feminist ideology, which rejects the masculinist idea that vulnerability equals weakness, and therefore must be vanquished. Instead she finds value in common visibility, and strength in uncovering ³. Likewise, this exhibition is intended as a feminist excavation of the experiences that the majority considers ‘other.’ This is not yet the rallying cry that sparks the movement, but the step that comes before: the act of truly seeing all aspects of one another’s realities.

Rachel Steinberg

^{1,2,3} Butler, Judith, Zeynep Gambetti, Leticia Sabsay. “*Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance*.” *Vulnerability in Resistance* Durham: Duke UP, 2016. 12–27. Print.

Rindon Johnson
ON LANGUAGE

A life that exists only in Language
A life that is valued only in Language
The impractical nature of the Body in the
Face of Language.

They said you are Free We have said it so.
This Freedom does not exist.

This Freedom would mean that the Body would
have the actual ability to be Free.

Free could be defined a number of ways:

Free to change a tire in the Body,

Free to wear a hood on the Body,

Free to ask why the Body is being arrested,

Free to use the Body to drive a car,

Free to walk the Body home from work,

Free to protest with the Body,

Free to play with toys in the Body,

Free to be sick in the Body,

Free to pray with the Body,

Free to sit in the Body.

Christen Clifford

RN, on May 18, I am kicked off FB again.

“How can you get ‘kicked off’ of Facebook?”

“The last time I –“

“– the last time!?”

“Yep, I think this is the fourth time now. This last time was for sharing that gorgeous video of the woman naked on a porch, with all those green trees in the background –“

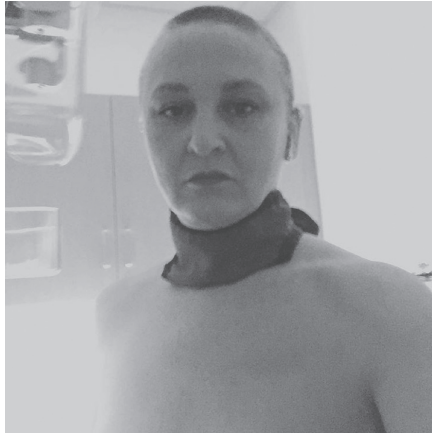
“– but everyone shared that!”

“But I get kicked off, because I’m on some algorithm where they flag me.”

“That’s fucked up.”

“I know.”

Christen Clifford



77 likes

cd_clifford The nurse would not let me record. *“We’ve been fined for that.” “But it’s my first time here!” “Please put it away.”* She was about 55, Russian, curly hair. Kind and no nonsense and a little strict. I liked her. I think she gave me the best mammogram ever. And by that, I mean it was the most uncomfortable. Really pushing my breast tissue under the plastic and lowering the plate so that I was super squished. She made me think she was doing a good job. Previously, they put it under and in there but that’s it. Afterwards I said, *“you didn’t use those little metal dots, why not?” “That’s only if they can’t see the nipple. It’s for the doctor to tell where the nipple is. But you,*





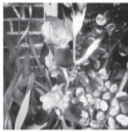

Christen Clifford

you have perfect breast and prominent nipples so you don't need." "That's the nicest thing anyone's ever said about my breasts!" "And I'm an expert!" She chided me after I snuck these selfies. While I was waiting, I spoke to the roaming Chaplain. I told her that the hardest part was that time after chemo when I looked good and tried to look good but still felt like shit. "And everyone would say, 'But you look great!' And it felt like a complete negation of my being that people didn't respond to me feeling bad." I spoke to a friend who had a brain incident and he is at that point. "It's driving me crazy that everyone is telling me how good I look." As if that's all we can say during recovery. I said, "I am finally really starting to feel better and I'm 8 months since my last chemo." It's a long fucking non-linear process. Healing. I think those two weeks in Florida really gave me some deep healing time. And I still feel weird about not being better enough faster better more now. Slowing down is always good for me. So hard to remember in NY. And it still gets me down that E accused me of pretending to be in pain bc "*only had three shots*

Christen Clifford

of chemo” – it’s so hard to not compete in the cancer olympics. And so what if I am performing my pain- that doesn’t make it any less real does it? Just because I am recording this doesn’t mean I’m not going through it. We are all going thru it. So many younger people being diagnosed with cancer. [#mammogram](#) [#fuckcancer](#) [#cancer](#) [#breasts](#) [#womenshealthcareasperformanceart](#)

photos that contain nudity. Check the box next to each photo you need to remove.



 <input type="checkbox"/> Remove	 <input type="checkbox"/> Remove	 <input type="checkbox"/> Remove
 <input type="checkbox"/> Remove	 <input type="checkbox"/> Remove	 <input type="checkbox"/> Remove

cd_clifford Follow

cd_clifford This is what #Facebook thinks is innuendo or #offensive!!! #cancer #fuckcancer

gallergina Stupid FB bots. The crap that stays on FB and this is what gets called out??

zoe.e You're f'n kidding me???

[schmorps](#), [liatris.jpg](#), [perelpix](#), [etchaskretch](#), [1amthefuture](#), [rachelvera_s](#), [bbview](#) and [kawaii_...ten](#) like this

MAY 31, 2016

Excerpt from the artist’s letter to Facebook:

“My account has been temporarily suspended. Again.

Christen Clifford

You recently allowed a murderer to post photos of the murdered woman's dead body and leave the photos on FB for 36 hours, after her family complained to the authorities.

And yet you are blocking me? Little old me, a feminist artist, writer, and activist? Little old me, who teaches "*Contemporary Feminisms*" and "*What is Rape Culture?*" at the New School?

Was it because a pearl-clutcher complained about an image of menstrual blood? Or did a bot flag me for hate speech because I wrote that I hate having cancer and I felt like I "hated" everybody? I understand it must be difficult to manage our free speech.

You asked me for my drivers license and I sent it to you, with my address and identifying number crossed out. To prove I am human. But still. Still. That's a bit much, isn't it?"

Rindon Johnson
DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

At my parent's house they just built a train from a northern suburb to their suburb. The whole suburb hates the train because trains should lead to cities not suburbs (especially when they cost almost 65 million dollars and only provide service to 65 people a day both ways.) I probably voted yes for this train because I like to vote in California on absentee ballots. They call me for jury duty less and if one day I fulfill my childhood dream and run for president the people can spend their time debating about the sexual nature of the work in my art practice – they will be assured I always voted. Anyway I voted yes because I like trains and public transit and the northern suburb the train goes to. Thanks to my vote when I come home to my parent's house when the sun is setting I can stand on the balcony and hear 3 long whistles of a train and look at the off center v of the same mountains I have looked at since before I could speak about looking and think I am home now. If I am being honest, this is the only instance I can think of where I feel my vote has mattered.

Nicole Goodwin
UP CLOSE & PERSONAL

– For Monty

When the white Homeland Security cop said “*I was in Iraq, I had to pull the trigger*” he must have forgotten that he thought the lives he snuffed out were less than his.

He still comes home to clean water and fresh cooked means. He hasn't a clue what it is to have his water tainted, for his body to become a time bomb due to the poison of Uranium infesting his homeland.

I try not to notice how his eyes had gone cold, as the other cops too with cold long stares usher me and the other water protectors into the elevator as if our words had become grenades launched into the air.

I see he struggles with his hands not to pull the trigger again, because THIS TIME he is employed in a federal building.

Nicole Goodwin

5 tours in Iraq and Afghanistan have jaded your recollections; soured your opinions—simply you have no compassion for this thing called life as you strictly, plainly exclaim “*Poisoning people and shooting children* ARE DIFFERENT! YOU’RE COMPARING APPLES AND ORANGES!”

I knew what you were saying...

But did you KNOW what you just said?

I heard within the silence you say “*Some lives matter and some lives don’t.*”

You said this to the tear-stained face of a young native man, whose heart you broke with no beguile. You said this to two veterans, who like you served and yet still are haunted by the lies.

How I wanted to protect the young native man, even more than I could protect myself from your words. Your misguided, self-absorbed indifference.

Nicole Goodwin

But I hadn't the courage. Instead I chose the wisdom of quiet. And like all gifts the sky opens up when you still yourself to hear it.

His sweet murmurings of mercy. God awaiting us outside Federal Hall. No condescension in his tone as he said: I will pray for you.

And in the smoke of his ancestors, in the bathing of an unusual spring sunlit mid-morning (almost as if it were June) he did. He did.

Andrea Arrubla



“Untitled”

(Portraits of Immigrants in Limbo), 2016
Paint on cardboard, dimensions variable



Department of Homeland Security, 2017
Plate, small bench, quarter, social security card

Andrea Arrubla



Boss 1, 2017

*Long distance calling cards, thread,
dimensions variable*

Through tangible objects of flimsy material, but of powerful uses, these three works are born out of Arrubla's experiences with immigration in America.

For an immigrant, a Social Security number is a prized possession that is not often easily

Andrea Arrubla

obtained. It can be a privilege that takes years, even decades, and has the ability to create divisions within one's immediate community, as a stepping-stone in mobility, in acceptance. These nine numbers can alter the realities of citizens of a country that both exploits and chooses to ignore basic human needs in order to serve a capitalist, bureaucratic mandate.

In "*Untitled*" (*Portraits of Immigrants in Limbo*), a corner pile of hand-painted, cardboard Social Security cards, Arrubla references the candy pile portraits made by artist Felix Gonzales-Torres, while reminding viewers of the pressing immigration crisis in America. Each time this piece is shown publicly, Arrubla creates more cardboard cards for the pile. While Gonzalez-Torres asked viewers to think about the decay of his partner's body as it was ravaged by AIDS in "*Untitled*" (*Portrait of Ross in LA*) – Arrubla asks us to consider the growing body of humans trying to be seen and recognized as valuable citizens within our country.

Andrea Arrubla

As a DACA recipient during a time of shifting positions on immigration, Arrubla has given serious thought to making work that effectively illuminates the material realities of this situation. How do we view humanity differently by whether or not someone is in possession of a Social Security card, a flimsy slip of paper? In an attempt to be honest and defiant, the artist has chosen to display her own Social Security card in *Department of Homeland Security*. It sits under a Virginia quarter, tail-side up, which obscures the number, and on top of a ceramic plate and handcrafted, American made stool. The boats on the quarter mirror those depicted on the ceramic plate, in a tidy scene of nostalgic Americana.

Boss 1 is part of an ongoing series titled *Larga Distancia*, which began three years ago when the artist began to collect discarded long distance calling cards that she saw on the ground. These cards are mostly used by immigrants calling their native lands, listening to the voices they miss, paying bills, arguing, making up, and delivering good or bad news. The appeal of each type of

Andrea Arrubla

card is a mix of affect and manipulative branding, depending on one's country of origin and nuances of identity. Within each card is a motion – a scratched off code that transcends rivers and oceans. The cards are loosely strung together with threads and hang out from the wall, highlighting their fragility, tactility, and movement.

Deborah Castillo
SLAPPING POWER



Slapping Power, 2016
Three channel video performance, clay,
dimensions variable

Through a powerful, performative action – a repeated slap, Castillo disfigures the soft clay face of a bust, modeled after El Libertador. Her defiance of this symbol of power is primarily physical and visual, as she puts herself into the conspicuous position of the antagonist, for all of the world to see. With each violent motion, the artist's hands are no longer simply the tools that create the sculpture, but the tools that also

Deborah Castillo

destroy it. In this way, both the wet clay as well as Castillo's own body become sites of vulnerability and movement: as she moves towards each slap, the clay reacts physically under the attack, showing us that even within a symbol this powerful, weaknesses can be revealed.

“As the artist slaps the wet clay that makes up the bust, she metaphorically destroys this embodiment of the nation, the father figure and the established structures of power. Castillo's slaps carry the full force of her frustration, or her hatred, and her inconformity. Each slap deforms the beautifully molded clay face of El Libertador until his iconic figure disappears, and his unrecognizable head metaphorically and materially bows down”

– Phd Sara Garzon, History of Art and Visual Studies, Cornell University

Scherezade Garcia
CATHEDRAL/CATEDRAL:
THEORIES OF FREEDOM



*Cathedral/Catedral:
Theories of Freedom, 2010–2017
Inner tubes, paint, zip ties, screen print
on paper, 6–8×5 feet*

Scherezade Garcia is an interdisciplinary visual artist born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and based in New York. In her work,

Scherezade Garcia

she addresses contemporary allegories of history and processes of colonization and politics, which frequently evoke memories of faraway home and the hopes and dreams that accompany planting roots in a new land.

By engaging collective and ancestral memory in her public intervention and studio-based practice, she examines quasi-mythical portraits of migration and cultural colonization.

Garcia's soft, large-scale sculpture is primarily comprised of gold-painted, stacked inner tubes, crudely held together with electrical ties, and wrapped in different colored baggage ID tags. Together the sculpture resembles a floating altar, evoking both hopeful stories of migration as well as the distress and suffering of an abrupt exit. On each tag is an image of the Statue of Liberty, painted in cinnamon brown, which is a result of blending all of the colors together.

Mona Saeed Kamal
DRONES IN WAZIRISTAN



Drones in Waziristan, 2015
Synthetic carpet, 11×10 feet

This piece was inspired by Afghani rug weavers, who began in the 1990s to weave war motifs in their carpets because the country had been at war for such a long time. During the time of making this work rug weavers have begun weaving drones into their rugs. It is composed of all the dates of drone attacks that took place in Waziristan from the first drone that was dropped in Pakistan to the most recent during the time it took to complete the work. Every time the piece is exhibited, the artist will add the dates of new attacks in the region.

Baseera Khan
BROTHERS AND SISTERS



Brothers and Sisters, 2014–2016
HD Video Quicktime, 5:10 min

The dialogue in the video is a script read by the artist along with an actor while a dream machine is spinning. The interview is a transcription of the artist and her father discussing the number of brothers and sisters he had in his family, which he could not remember correctly. The dream

Baseera Khan

machine acts like the third window, an idea used and partially defined to understand our subconscious desires and constructed selves, a term sometimes used by Paul Virilio.

This video is part of a larger collection, *Documents*, of informally stored items consisting of personal recorded conversations and artifacts, vinyl record albums and film, clothing, collected identification cards, diplomas, college lecture tapes, academic texts, dvc tapes, empty billfolds, and torn family photographs, materials that render subjects through bureaucratic data. The works that have come out of this collection of data has taken different forms – first narrative drawings and paintings, and more recently mini-scripts and performances that offer a testimony of how the personal is inherently political.

Sarah Maple
FREEDOM OF SPEECH



Freedom of Speech, 2013
Video 5:15 min

In 2008, during an exhibition by the artist inspired by her own background – a Muslim woman with mixed parentage, there was a backlash against the work, and a brick was thrown through the gallery window. Following this incident, the artist had not made any work about her Islamic identity since. In 2012 feminist campaigner Caroline Criado-Perez received rape threats via Twitter after campaigning to have a woman remain on a UK bank note. While there seems to be a great emphasis in the media that these aggressors should be allowed their

Sarah Maple

‘freedom of speech,’ the artist asks: but what happens to the ‘freedom of speech’ of the abused?

Freedom of Speech shows the artist attempting to explain her work and perspectives, clearly and professionally; all while a hand repeatedly enters the frame to slap her across the face. Looking at the complicated relationship between freedom of speech and abusive behavior, this video asks what the price is for ‘remaining strong’, and if the artist herself had in fact been silenced without even realizing.

Hồng-Ân Trương + Hương Ngô
THE OPPOSITE OF LOOKING
IS NOT INVISIBILITY.
THE OPPOSITE OF YELLOW
IS NOT GOLD



*The opposite of looking is not invisibility.
The opposite of yellow is not gold, 2016
Framed archival pigment prints, laser cut prints*

The opposite of looking is not invisibility. The opposite of yellow is not gold reframes vernacular family photography from the artists' experience as Vietnamese American women growing up in the U.S. in order to render material the invisibility that undergirds narratives about the Asian American experience. The project includes a series of photographs that consist of pairings

or single images of their mothers from our their family archives. These are juxtaposed with laser cut prints of excerpts from U.S. Congressional hearings on the Vietnamese refugee situation in the aftermath of the war in the mid to late 1970s. Through this juxtaposition, they hope to highlight the twofold invisibility of the labor of their mothers: firstly, in the institutional language of congressional reports which render refugees as pure labor, and secondly the obscured labor of women as mothers.

Moreover, this project is about narratives of the refugee condition set in sharp relief against what the nation imagines as pure economic capital, the labor of proper citizenship, the instrumentalization of the refugee as state alibis for new violations of racial and national others, and ultimately what Mimi Nguyen calls the “epistemic violence (in which state and capital collude to produce dispossessed peoples)” that gets covered up in these narratives. What these excerpts and juxtapositions make visible, are that these bodies are ineffacably marked by war, race,

Hồng-Ân Trương + Hương Ngô

gender, and immigration status vis a vis the biopolitical processes engaged by the state, military, and medical-industrial complexes.

Colophon

FEATURING WORKS

Andrea Arrubla, Debora Castillo,
Scherezade Garcia, Mona Saeed Kamal,
Baseera Khan, Sarah Maple,
Hồng-Ân Trương + Hương Ngô

TEXT CONTRIBUTIONS

Christen Clifford, Nicole Goodwin,
Rindon Johnson

CURATED BY

Rachel Steinberg

COORDINATED BY

Carla Hernandez with support from Carson Parish

ZINE DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Rosen Tomov

SPECIAL THANKS

Eddie José Bartolomei, Emily Gaynor,
Scott Schwartz

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, June 2, 6–9pm

EVENTS

**Reading with Christen Clifford,
and Nicole Goodwin**

Friday, June 23, 7pm

Baseera Khan: Dream Machine

Thursday, June 29, 7pm