ARLINGTON ARTS CENTER presents

SOLOS 2020

on view SEPTEMBER 26 - DECEMBER 19, 2020
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featuring
TARA GUPTA
KIM LLERENA
REBECCA RIVAS-ROGERS
ANNE CLARE ROGERS
CONSTANCE SIMON
HEIDI ZENISEK

Front Cover: Rebecca Rivas-Rogers, Working drawing (green tape) (detail)
Inside Cover: Tara Gupta, Homage to Long Face
Introduction

Arlington Arts Center is pleased to reopen its galleries with **SOLOS 2020**, which features solo-style exhibitions by Tara Gupta, Kim Llerena, Rebecca Rivas-Rogers, Anne Clare Rogers, Constance Simon, and Heidi Zenisek.

It feels appropriate that, after a prolonged closure due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, AAC is welcoming visitors back into our galleries with **SOLOS**. As one of AAC’s longest-running programs, **SOLOS** embodies the core mission of AAC’s exhibitions program: connecting the public to contemporary art and artists and giving artists based in the Mid-Atlantic the opportunity to present ambitious projects and exciting new work.

The exhibitions presented as part of **SOLOS 2020** demonstrate the importance of that mission. Featuring work in diverse media, including photography, painting, installation, drawing, and sculpture, the shows reflect the wide-ranging concerns of contemporary artists, addressing national identity, violence, illness, and environmental degradation, as well as the possibilities, meanings, and limits of representation and abstraction.

In Kim Llerena’s exhibition, **American Scrapbook**, the artist presents photographs taken across the United States, specifically focusing on the ways in which invisible systems—agriculture, business, religion, racism, and entertainment, among others—shape the country’s landscape. In Heidi Zenisek’s installation, **Bullet Points**, the artist turns an eye towards her own upbringing, considering the messages about life, death, gender, violence, and sexuality she absorbed growing up in the midst of hunting culture. Tara Gupta’s brightly colored landscapes express both the struggles of an individual body coping with illness, and the catastrophes inflicted on our planet by environmental degradation.

Three additional **SOLOS** exhibitions explore meaning and form, with a specific interest in the relationship between representation and abstraction. In Anne Clare Rogers’ sculptures, familiar forms appear in surreal combinations or unexpected materials, creating a gap between the viewer’s expectations and their understanding, a space where new meanings can emerge. Constance Simon brings skills developed as a representational painter to her grid-focused abstractions, focusing on volume and form to create compelling and complex dimensional worlds. In The Drawing Room, Rebecca Rivas-Rogers creates three-dimensional forms and depicts them in isometric drawings using what she calls “precise approximation”. Borrowing architectural drawing techniques meant to represent certainty and structure, Rivas-Rogers builds an environment that celebrates the provisional, impermanent, and idiosyncratic.

The six artists included in **SOLOS 2020** were selected from an open call for proposals by two accomplished jurors: Terence Washington, Program Director of NXTHVN, a residency and gallery space in New Haven, Connecticut, and Michael Benevento, director of Current Space in Baltimore, Maryland. AAC is truly grateful to both jurors for the commitment and thoughtfulness they brought to the selection process.

In addition to **SOLOS 2020**, AAC’s fall lineup includes **Passage**, a site-specific installation created by artist Lynda Andrews-Barry for Arlington Arts Center’s front lawn. The ship-like forms of **Passage** are inspired by Andrews-Barry’s family history as a descendant of enslaved people who were brought to Maryland and Virginia as part of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The work also grapples with the legacy of Matthew Fontaine Maury, a renowned oceanographer and leader in the Confederate Navy, whose innovations in naval navigation impacted the transportation of enslaved people and helped fuel an economic system built on their forced labor and violent exploitation. AAC’s historic building once housed the Maury School, which was renamed in honor of Maury in 1944, and the park surrounding our building still bears his name. Andrews-Barry’s work is a powerful reflection on the history behind a name and on our ongoing struggle to come to terms with our shared history.

As always, AAC is grateful to all of the exhibiting artists for their vision, creativity, and commitment. We’re proud to reopen with this strong selection of exhibitions and projects, each of which illustrates, in its own way, the power and possibility of contemporary art.

Blair Murphy, Curator of Exhibitions
Tara Gupta’s paintings depict a surreal colorful space, contrasting bright colors and animated figures with glimpses of danger and fear. Her landscapes act as a metaphor for a body in pain and a mind dealing with the psychological and emotional trauma of illness. This metaphor also works in reverse, imagining the earth itself as a body navigating the trauma of climate change and environmental destruction. The images in Gupta’s work result from her experiences dealing with Lupus and Fibromyalgia, autoimmune diseases affecting the joints and organs. Her colorful pieces are both companions through a difficult time and explorations of the deep mental and emotional anguish that accompanies such a journey. Fire and isolation, anger and peace, acceptance and growth—these binary tensions inspire complex compositions, expressing a story of individual healing which is echoed in the aches of the earth’s landscapes.

Tara Gupta is a multimedia artist and an Indian-American queer cis woman, born and raised in Fairfax County, VA. Gupta was diagnosed with Lupus at a young age, an experience which left her with a deeper understanding of the fleeting nature of life and health. She began her BFA at Rhode Island School of Design in 2014 but an interest in green urbanism and climate change inspired her to seek out models of learning beyond the institution, working with innovative organizations around the world that are developing new approaches to sustainable living. Returning to RISD, Gupta created 100 Days to 0 Waste, a reality TV show that engaged her community in the possibilities of a low-waste lifestyle. During her final year at RISD, she founded Earthhouse, a redeveloped home that supports the physical and social adaptations necessary for a more sustainable lifestyle. More recently, Gupta has returned to her painting practice, channeling her ongoing struggle with Lupus and Fibromyalgia into her work.
Kim Llerena’s American Scrapbook depicts fragments of the American experience. Taken individually, each image documents a particular place: someone’s yard, a small business, a landmark built or dismantled. Viewed together, relationships between disparate sites and structures emerge, highlighting the various systems that direct our collective national consciousness: business, infrastructure, agriculture, territory, racism, religion, power, entertainment, and more.

Dictated by these invisible forces, the indelible marks of past actions and diverse quests for an American Dream become potent symbols in our visual landscape. The photographs – of walls, gaps, signs, memorials, personal artifacts, debris – construct a shared language from the physical material of these systems, implying common ground in a time of deep divisions.

In many images there is a sense that something is missing, whether physical or contextual, underscoring the incomplete narratives that photographs and history often tell. Absent also of human figures, it is as if the subjects of these images are waiting for something, suspended in time, suggesting a portrait of our past, present, and future all at once.

Kim Llerena is a photographic artist currently based in Washington, D.C. She holds an MFA in Photographic & Electronic Media from Maryland Institute College of Art and a BA in Journalism from New York University. She was a Flash Forward Emerging Photographer selected by the Magenta Foundation in 2019, one of 100 photographers invited to CENTER’s Review Santa Fe in 2019, a semifinalist in The Print Center’s 90th Annual International Competition in 2016, and a finalist for the Trawick Prize in 2014. She exhibits nationally in addition to serving as full-time faculty at American University.
In Rebecca Rivas-Rogers' installation, *The Drawing Room*, interdependent sculptures, drawings, and improvised measuring devices subvert the functionality of materials, forms, and diagrams. Once-utilitarian construction and packaging materials are repurposed and used as drawing tools to survey space and document forms with what the artist calls "precise approximation." Ignoring any hierarchy between ideas of before, after, or finished, three dimensional forms are translated into isometric drawings whose two-dimensional marks are recreated in three-dimensional space. *The Drawing Room* offers an idiosyncratic view of routinely disregarded junctures and materials allowing for a sense of absurdity, provisionality, and impermanence to prevail.

*Originally from Northern Ireland, Rebecca Rivas-Rogers holds a BA in Design from Glasgow School of Art and has worked in graphic design throughout Britain and the United States. She began teaching art at a school for deaf children in Colombia, South America before completing an MFA in Studio Art at Maryland Institute College of Art, where she is currently an adjunct professor. Rivas-Rogers joined Arlington Arts Center as a resident artist in June of 2020. Working primarily in drawing and sculpture, Rivas-Rogers creates work that reflects the temporary nature and ordinary strangeness of utilitarian environments and materials.*
A Potato in Space

Some of Saturn's lesser moons (which do, in fact, resemble the root vegetable) have been dubbed “potatoids.” These non-spherical, lumpy satellites are held in their orbit by the balance of centrifugal force and gravity. This is the structure of their relationship to their parent planet. There are not, of course, potatoes in space, though I like the thought.

Naming an object draws it closer, makes it knowable (or at least, makes it possible for us to think we know it). Naming allows us to bridge a gap, though the act of naming also carries the risk that we will simplify, limit, or reduce what we are trying to understand. At the same time that we call a small moon a potatoid, we drift further from knowing the reality of the satellite, its true character.

My work is concerned with meaning-making, time, loss, and death. Calling these satellites potatoids is itself a metaphor for our attempt to accommodate the unknowable, a comically familiar name for something far, far from our grasp. Grief is a similar search for the right name; it lies between the desire for the thing lost and the devastating fact that it is gone.

It is in this space—between the wish and the fact—that I seek to locate my work.

Anne Clare Rogers is a sculptor who lives and works in Baltimore, Maryland. She has exhibited at The Hudson D. Walker Gallery and the Provincetown Art Museum (Provincetown, MA); Brown University’s Center for Public Humanities (Providence, RI); Visual Arts Center (Austin, TX); Gallery Four (Baltimore, MD); and Treasure Town (Brooklyn, NY), among other venues. Rogers was a 2019 Trawick Award finaliste, a 2017 – 2018 Visual Arts Fellow at Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, MA, and a 2015 Summer Fellow at Ox-Bow School of Art. Rogers holds an MFA in Sculpture & Extended Media from the University of Texas at Austin.
In her paintings, Constance Simon explores the wealth of possible variations that can be created from the grid, drawing on influences from decorative art traditions, the built environment, and the natural world. Simon began her practice as a representational still-life painter, creating work rooted in the observation of three-dimensional objects. She now combines these three-dimensional illusions of volume and light with influences from the two-dimensional flat patterning of non-European textile and tile traditions, including Islamic tile patterns, African Kente cloth, and Berber kilim. Simon is attracted to the repetition and purity of the grid and the calm and soothing order it embodies, while also being inspired by the wealth of possible variations the grid presents. This simple, geometric theme allows her to combine close observation of light and color with her passion for patterned textiles and decorative arts.

Constance Simon received her BFA from the Cleveland Institute of Art and her MFA from Syracuse University. She was on the faculty of the Delaware College of Art and Design in Wilmington for 21 years before retiring this year to move to Silver Spring, MD. Simon was awarded a 2020 Individual Artist Fellowship from the Delaware Division of the Arts. Recent exhibitions of her gouache paintings have been at the Delaware Art Museum in Wilmington and Holy Family University in Philadelphia, PA. Her work is in the permanent collection of the The Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College in Collegeville, PA, and has been featured in Artists’ Magazine, American Artist, New American Paintings, New Art Examiner, Art Calendar, and Art Matters, and is included in the 2nd edition of Color: A workshop for artists and designers, a college textbook.
**Bullet Points** is the result of re-examining my relationship with hunting through probing my childhood memories of this culture. To reduce the conversation to good or bad is simplistic and I’m interested in what lies in between. I took a closer look at some of the complexities of deer hunting: ritual, tradition, community, identity, necessity, sport, power, desensitization, gender roles, sexualization, fetishization. My curiosity about this complex connection I have with life and death grew into an interest in the simultaneous seduction and repulsion I feel towards the graphic nature of the process. Some of my earliest childhood memories are the blood streaked floor in one of the structures on our farm dubbed “The Deer Shed.” Here, deer carcasses are brought to be skinned and processed post-hunt. The men would laugh and drink Busch while I made a game of tracing the crimson gestures with my boot. Shouldn’t I have been traumatized by all of this? Was I groomed from an early age to form this disconnect or was it more innocent, emerging from the familiarity of death and a respect for the process of hunting to feed oneself and family? How much is nature and how much is nurture?

**Heidi Zenisek** is a sculptress from Iowa City, IA, where she spent her formative years on a farm surrounded by dirt, cows, corn, and rust. She has exhibited throughout the U.S. and Iceland, and has participated in numerous residencies such as HEIMA, Franconia Sculpture Park, and Salem Art Works. In 2016, she was a Fellow at The LungA School in Iceland and has twice been invited to exhibit at the Icelandic Light Festival, List i ljosi. She holds a BFA from the University of Iowa, an MA from Eastern Illinois University, and is currently an MFA candidate at the University of Maryland, College Park.

*Entrails (detail), 2020
Lenticular print
5 x 5 in*
Passage, a site-specific installation created for AAC’s lawn, includes 26 large-scale sculptures created from driftwood, rebar, metal hardware, and canvas sails. The sculptural forms are designed to evoke the ships that transported more than 12 million kidnapped and enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean between the 16th and 19th centuries. Inspired by artist Lynda Andrews-Barry’s own family history as the descendant of enslaved people, Passage also grapples with the legacy of Matthew Fontaine Maury.

Known as the “Pathfinder of the Seas” and the “Father of Oceanography,” Maury was a pioneer of naval navigation. A commander in the United States Navy, Maury resigned his post in 1861 to join the Confederate Navy. During the Civil War, Maury traveled to Europe, where he acquired ships for the Confederacy and lobbied on its behalf with European leaders. Arlington Arts Center’s historic building originally housed the Clarendon School, which was renamed the Maury School in 1944. The grounds surrounding the building continue to be known as Maury Park. Passage evokes the ships of the transatlantic slave trade as well as Maury’s connection with naval navigation and his role in the Confederacy.

Lynda Andrews-Barry is a multidisciplinary artist with a practice that encompasses time-based media, installations, and sculptures created from found and fabricated objects. Andrews-Barry’s work has been shown and sold at various art venues, including the National Building Museum, National Museum of Women in the Arts, and the Smithsonian’s Renwick Gallery. Her public art projects have been installed in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, and Florida. Recent solo exhibitions include the Waddell Gallery at the Loudon Campus of Northern Virginia Community College, and Rockville Civic Center at Glenview Mansion in Maryland. Her work will be included in the Foggy Bottom Outdoor Sculpture Biennial in 2021. Andrews-Barry received her BA in Interior Design from Mount Vernon College, and her MA in Exhibition Design from The Corcoran College of Art + Design.

Passage, 2018
Driftwood, rebar, metal hardware, and canvas sails
Photo: Dawn Whitmore

Passage is presented by Arlington Arts Center and the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia (CFNOVA), in cooperation with Arlington Public Art, and is funded by CFNOVA’s Ross-Roberts Fund for the Arts.
About

Arlington Arts Center (AAC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit contemporary visual arts center dedicated to enriching community life by connecting the public with contemporary art and artists through exhibitions, educational programs, and artist residencies.

AAC was established in 1974 and has been housed since 1976 in a historic building in Virginia Square. Our facility includes nine exhibition galleries, a large lawn suitable for public art, working studios for twelve 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.

Exhibitions

Through quarterly exhibitions, AAC serves as a launching pad for emerging artists, provides established artists with the opportunity to experiment, and offers the public a snapshot of the region’s most compelling contemporary art.

AAC’s exhibitions and attendant lectures, workshops, and panel discussions offer opportunities for dialogue, and ultimately serve to illustrate the value of contemporary art—specifically, what it is and why it matters in our daily lives.

Education

AAC offers a stimulating schedule of art classes year-round for novice and seasoned artists of all ages, from toddlers to adults. Taught by experienced professional artists, AAC’s classes are small and scheduled around the school and work day. Tuition is affordable and AAC’s art students have access to the excellent contemporary art in our galleries to help stimulate and inspire their own efforts. For Fall 2020, AAC’s classes continue to take place primarily online.

Resident Artists Program

AAC’s resident artist program provides subsidized studio space in a supportive environment that encourages interaction, dialogue, and exploration. Residents become part of a creative community that enables them to exchange ideas, engage in meaningful conversation, and expand their practice.

Hours & Location

Arlington Arts Center is open free to the public Wed - Sat, 12 - 5 pm
Metro: Silver & Orange Lines: Virginia Square 🚆 🚆
3550 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201
703.248.8800
For more info about AAC visit: www.arlingtonartscenter.org

Staff

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Holly Koons / director@arlingtonartscenter.org

CURATOR OF EXHIBITIONS
Blair Murphy / exhibitions@arlingtonartscenter.org

EDUCATION COORDINATOR
Lia Farro / education@arlingtonartscenter.org

Sponsors & Partners

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