

56 Artillery Lane, Raven Row, London, U.K.

Emily LaBarge

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Su Richardson

← *Fenix*° (Su Richardson, Monica Ross, and Kate Walker), detail, 1977/2017.

Photo : Marcus J. Leith

Anicka Yi

↑ *Deep State*, installation view and detail, Raven Row, London, 2017.

Photos : Marcus J. Leith, courtesy of the artist

56 Artillery Lane

“London is grey and cold. Night falls early. 4 o’clock is lighting time and sometimes much earlier.” The words scroll down the right-hand side of the screen, to their left, a series of images—against a cloud-dappled blue sky, a hand extends from a 90-degree angle white-shirted arm to grasp a rope; segments of coat-clad bodies in black and white, hands thrust deep into pockets, and over them a dense, hand-scrawled script in faint blue. “Count your blessings—you have children, mother, brother, family, friends near you.” This is Ingrid Pollard’s *Belonging in Britain*, a film about her family’s emigration from Guyana in the 1950s, presented alongside hand-tinted photographs of the artist’s mother at home: in her garden, kitchen, sitting room, looking through a family album, proffering freshly baked buns.

The word *domestic* comes from the Latin *domesticus*, “belonging to the household,” from *domus*, “house.” It also refers to the person who carries out the menial tasks of the home; a tame animal; a violent quarrel between family members; and goods or affairs that occur within a demarcated territory—internally. *56 Artillery Lane* (sited within its titular address, a set of Huguenot houses elegantly restored into a gallery space) hosts an array of works that traverse—in form, content, and ethos—intersections of art-making and dimensions of the domestic. Indeed, particularly for female artists, how the two are intrinsically linked, sites of contradiction both frustrating and fruitful, is perhaps best understood through processes of re-vision, re-membling, and re-imagining.

Curated by Amy Budd and Naomi Pearce, the group exhibition contains a diverse selection of works, from Stanley Spencer’s *Choosing a Petticoat* (1936), which depicts an argument between the artist and his first wife, the painter Hilda Carline, to a commissioned film by Jenna Bliss, *Poison the Cure* (2017), which incisively portrays, through fractured

speculative narrative encounters, the role of the American state in the global trade of drugs and pharmaceuticals. Lucy Orta’s *Refugee Wear* (1992–98), a series of clothes fashioned from tents and sleeping bags, is uncannily prescient given the ever-swelling population of the homeless and displaced, both globally and on the streets of London; while Anicka Yi’s *Deep State* (2017) evokes a more tongue-in-cheek sense of organic place—suspended lightboxes containing photographs of cultured bacteria from the offices of the gallery.

At the physical and perhaps notional heart of the show are reconstructions (perhaps re-edits?) of two seminal London feminist exhibitions of the 1970s: *Fenix*° (Su Richardson, Monica Ross, and Kate Walker, 1977) and *A Woman’s Place* (1974), South London Art Group’s large-scale domestic installation at 14 Radnor Terrace, Lambeth, which offered a critique of domestic life and the creative spaces available to women artists at the time. These are described in further detail in the exhibition’s impressive accompanying publication, which sensitively tenders the “feminist curatorial strategy” employed by Budd and Pearce as one that privileges collaboration, discourse, and inclusive, non-hierarchical approaches. In keeping with this ethos, the gallery hosts an ambitious run of workshops, performances, events, and panel discussions that consider the potential for both art and domestic spaces to be animated, open, and in flux.

Emily LaBarge

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April 21—June 11, 2017