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A large, multi-tiered sculpture made of woven wicker and wire mesh is the central focus. It features a central mirror and a small cabinet. The sculpture is displayed on a white platform in a gallery space with blue and white walls and a high ceiling. To the left, a large black quilted artwork hangs on the blue wall. To the right, two colorful abstract paintings and a dark, textured sculpture are visible on the white wall.

SHE IS HERE

Co-Curated by Kristen V. Cahill & Daricia Mia DeMar
August 22, 2020 — January 31, 2021

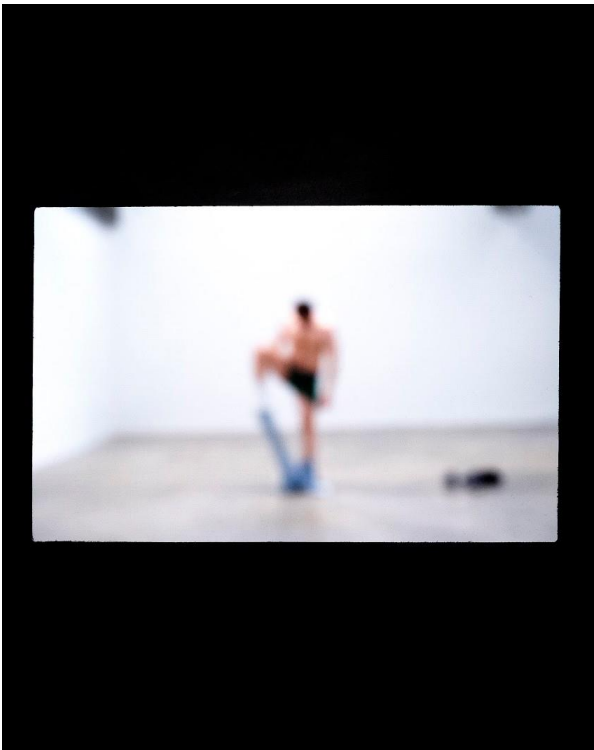
Gallery 1,2,3,4, Chute Space and Sliver Space

She Is Here pays tribute to the essence, the ideas, and the labor of women. Her presence exists as mother, as ancestor, and as legacy. She is a vessel, a voyeur, a weaver, and a storyteller. She is a collector, builder, maker, painter, and producer. Her vision is keen. Her ability is limitless. She is the womb. She is the portal into this world. She nurses. She nurtures. She is solid ground. She is fertile soil.

Selected from the 2001 to 2020 Studio Artist Program residents, 20 multigenerational, multicultural, and multidisciplinary artists contributed daring, humorous, and pensive artwork. *She Is Here* defies existing norms for art institutions where recognition and inclusion of women is underwhelming. *She Is Here* celebrates women working with women, and women supporting women.



Stretch, Tone, and Firm by Ann Rowles



She Looks by Christina West

Common themes blossom and intertwine, each artist planting her seed in the collective garden. Interconnecting impressions of identity, femininity, home, motherhood, domesticity, spirituality, ritual, body image, and aging reappear and overlap.

Historically significant, *She Is Here* is the first exhibition at Atlanta Contemporary following the impact of COVID-19, shelter in place, and social distancing. New artwork is informed by the wave of the pandemic, as well as the substantial shifts in race relations and massive social and political divides that 2020 has unleashed.

From the Executive Director Veronica Kessenich, to the co-curators, to each of the artists featured in the exhibition, *She Is Here* honors women’s work and women’s lives.

She is Here for reflection. She is Here for peace. She is Here for us.



Onar (repair the dream) by Pam Longobardi

Onar (repair the dream)

Pam Longobardi
August 22, 2020 — November 7, 2020

Chute Space

Pam Longobardi’s parents, an ocean lifeguard and the Delaware state diving champion, connected her from an early age to the water. She moved to Atlanta in 1970 and saw her neighborhood pond drained to build the high school she attended. Since then, she lived for varying time periods in Wyoming, Montana, California, and Tennessee, and worked as a firefighter, tree planter, scientific illustrator, an aerial mapmaker, waitress, bartender, collaborative printer and color mixer. Her artwork involves painting, photography, and installation to address the psychological relationship of humans to the natural world. After discovering mountains of plastic on remote Hawaiian shores in 2006, she founded the Drifters Project, centralizing the artist as culture worker/activist/researcher. Now a global collaborative entity, Drifters Project has removed tens of thousands of pounds of material from the natural environment and re-situated it in social space. Winner of the prestigious Hudgens Prize and Distinguished Professor at Georgia State University, Longobardi has been featured in National Geographic, SIERRA magazine, the Weather Channel and in exhibitions across the US and in Greece, Italy, Monaco, Germany, Finland, Slovakia, China, Japan, Spain, Belgium, Poland and the UK. The work provides a visual statement about the engine of global consumption and the vast amounts of plastic objects and their impact on the world’s most remote places and its creatures. Longobardi’s work is framed within a conversation about globalism and climate change.

SHE IS HERE

the body as architecture and West as the architect. Jane Foley’s *Big Sad Lamp* refuses to conform to preconceived notions of identity or normative behavior. Garver converted an air-filled, swimming pool, inflatable palm tree into a 300 lbs sculpture. *Big Sad Lamp* is solid concrete and plaster but creases and bulges like a woman’s pudgy torso, belly button included. Artwork in *She Is Here* reveals the will and imagination of women flourishing as artists. This exhibit treasures the accepted nature of women as creators and champions the vast creative genius women hold.



Big Sad Lamp by Jane Foley

Because You Are Loved (Altar for the Ancestors)

Kelly Taylor Mitchell
August 22, 2020 — November 7, 2020

Sliver Space

Kelly Taylor Mitchell (b. 1994, USA) is an artist and educator who lives and works in Atlanta, GA where she is currently an Artist-in-Residence with the Studio Artist Program at The Atlanta Contemporary and a Working Artist Project Fellow at MOCA GA. Kelly is an Assistant Professor of Art and Visual Culture and the Art Program Director at Spelman College. Kelly’s multidisciplinary practice centers oral history and ancestral memory woven into the fabric of the Africana Diaspora, in order to present speculative futures, specifically related to concepts of community autonomy, swamp marronage, and inherited/constructed identity. Utilizing printmaking, papermaking, sculpture, and textiles her work manifests as immersive installations, performative objects, and partnered artists books offering a venue for the sensorial –specifically smell- to connect to, convey, and reimagine rituals and rites of autonomous kin, collectives, and individuals of the Africana Diaspora.



Because You Are Loved (Altar for the Ancestors)
by Kelly Taylor Mitchell

SHE IS HERE for reflection.

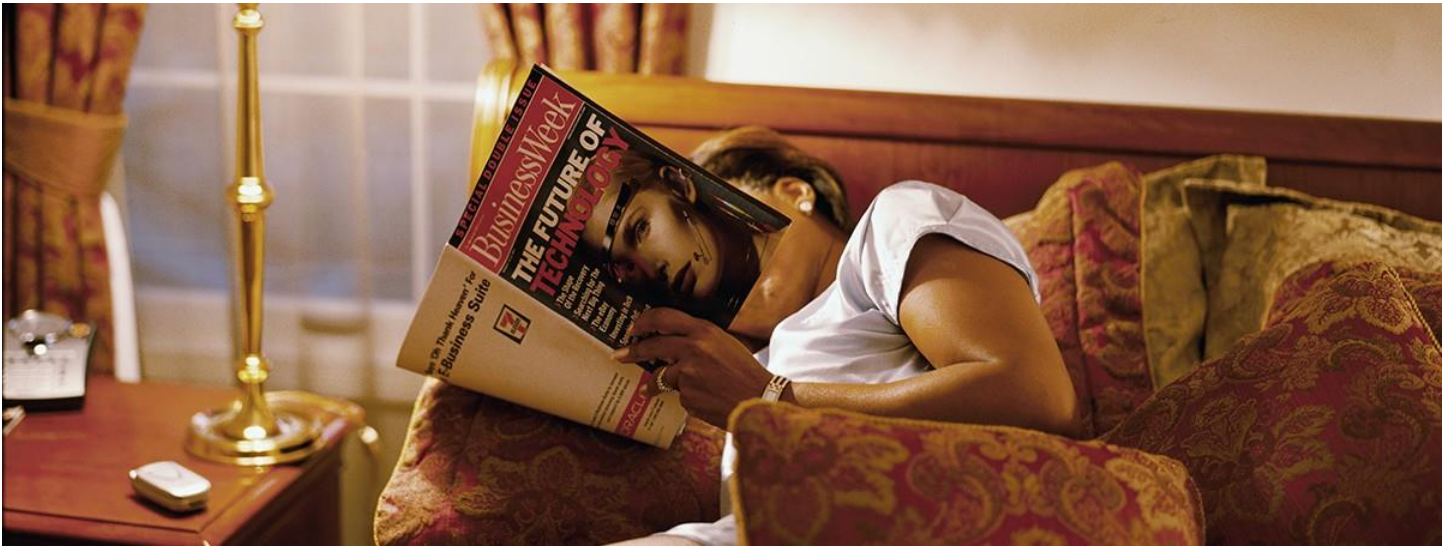


Stay Distant by Sarah Emerson

It’s not unusual for women to be linked to emotive characteristics, to be empathetic or vulnerable. The possibility for women to embody these states of being is welcome in *She Is Here*, so are the infinite other aspects of feminine nature. 20 artists captured the contemplative, the playful, the spiritual and the scientific, the gentle and rough impressions of life.

Like a news headline, work by Sarah Emerson underscores the unyielding tumult of 2020 with *Frontline* and *Stay Distant*. The paintings call viewers to mind the moment, where uncertainty has become the norm. Cautious, fearful or frightened eyes lie blanketed in darkness and traces of the American flag litter the landscape. She conveys the now.

SHE IS HERE for peace.



Suburbia: Untitled 12 by Sheila Pree Bright

A hope for *She Is Here* was to find artists who developed a special connection during their time in the Studio Artist Program. NIKITA and Jill Frank bonded as residents from 2011-2014 and remain close friends. An artistic collaboration had been an aspiration for them that was realized with NIKITA’s audio piece *WHISTLE* and Frank’s *Jalaiah Relaxing*. *WHISTLE* is inspired by the clash between institutional promises of inclusion and accessibility, with the reality of exclusionary practices, like gendered restrooms. A recording of Frank whistling plays in a stall of the designated male space subverting conventional gender norms. *Jalaiah Relaxing* is an experimental photo



Jalaiah by Jill Frank

SHE IS HERE for us.

and video installation of teen dance sensation Jalaiah Harmon filmed by Frank Harmon is the creator of the viral and controversial Renegade dance. Best known for her performance, Frank captures her at rest, resisting the camera’s gaze. Audio was scored by NIKITA.

It’s common for mothers and daughters to share a special connection, for women to witness their mother’s identity in themselves. *How Am I Feeling Today* by Cecelia Kane harnesses the memory of her mother in a series of self-portraits that begin as daily bathroom mirror selfies and are completed on antique handkerchiefs. For 89 days Kane documented her feelings by taking a photo and printing them on her mother’s hankies, who lived 89 years. Over a



How Am I Feeling Today? by Cecelia Kane



Blue Dress by Lillian Blades

ten-year period she quilted, beaded and painted on the handkerchiefs investigating herself and celebrating her mother. Lillian Blade’s dress assemblage is also in honor of her mother who died shortly after she was born. The dress is made of organic material and found objects that create a vessel for loving memory and joy.

Like the Venus of Hohle Fels some of the worlds earliest artifacts are female figures. Women’s bodies have captivated the imaginations of artists for centuries. *Stretch, Tone & Firm* by Ann Rowles is a playful commentary on the modern obsession of women’s body image. Inspired by Jane Fonda fitness videos, Rowles crafted large-scale, female form, mid-sections from chicken wire. The labor of manipulating such an inflexible material must have been a serious workout, creating an exciting visual and conceptual artwork. Christina West completely subverts long standing stereotypes of women. She built the architectural structure to house her *She Looks* video installation. She also slashes the conventional perspective of the male gaze by directing and filming a nude male model performing. This extends the narrative of