JASMINE WAHI OF PROJECT FOR EMPTY SPACE CURATES ALUMNI EXHIBITION AT YOUNGARTS – OPENING OCT 9

Exhibition influenced by bell hooks’ Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom Features Works by 20 YoungArts Alumni in Design Arts, Visual Arts and Writing

MIAMI, FL (September 11, 2018) – National YoungArts Foundation (YoungArts) is thrilled to announce today, during National Arts in Education Week, its fall exhibition curated by Project for Empty Space’s Jasmine Wahi titled Education as the Practice of Freedom. The exhibition, featuring works by 20 YoungArts alumni from 1987 through 2018, will open to the public with a reception on October 9 and remain on view through Miami Art Week. Examining ideas on transgressive education based on bell hooks’s book Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom, artists working in collage, installation, painting, print, mixed media as well as sculpture and virtual reality seek to address the phases of transgressive education and prompt contemporary and forward-thinking discourse on the subject.

“I have always been impressed by the type of mentorship that YoungArts provides for young artists. It cultivates an environment that allows young people who already possess so much creative talent to push forward into a new realm of possibility,” says curator Jasmine Wahi, whose own practice focuses on female empowerment, social structures and intersectional identity. “I thought prompting YoungArts alumni to take a critical look at the idea of education was important given that the organization is dedicated to creating a space for young artists to realize their creative talents.”

hooks’s book is a critical reflection on pedagogical structures through the critical lens of understanding intersectional identities. The artists in the exhibition used this as a point of departure for a diverse array of interpretations that discuss education as a practice of freedom versus a process of oppression, explore the sentiment that learning can happen beyond the confines of a structured environment, investigate the mechanics of learning and unlearning, question the absorption of established doctrines and re-contextualize what constitutes spaces and places of pedagogy.


Carnival Foundation is YoungArts’ National Premier Partner. Support for *Education as the Practice of Freedom* is provided by Visual Arts Discipline Partner Related Group; Hearst Foundations; Wells Fargo; the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, and the Miami-Dade County Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners; and the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

**About Jasmine Wahi**

Jasmine Wahi is a curator, activist, and the founder and co-director of Project for Empty Space (PES). Her practice predominantly focuses on issues of female empowerment, complicating binary structures within social discourses, and exploring multipositional cultural identities through the lens of intersectional feminism. In 2010, Wahi co-founded Project for Empty Space, a not-for-profit nomadic organization that creates multidisciplinary art exhibitions and programming that encourages social dialogue, education and systemic change through the support of both artists and communities. In 2015, Wahi joined Rebecca Jampol to open a brick and mortar gallery for PES Newark, NJ. Though she does not consider herself to be an artist, Wahi has organized numerous interventions and happenings as part of her social activism. She will be serving as the co-chair for the College Art Association’s “Day of Panels” for The Feminist Art Project (TFAP) in 2018, organizing a day of intersectional feminist-based performances, films, and conversations.

In addition to her other work, Wahi is a faculty member at the School of Visual Arts in the MFA Fine Arts department, where she teaches a seminar on intersectional feminism and art making praxis. She is a current board member of SPEAK Mentorship, a former board member of the South Asian Women’s Creative Collective (SAWCC), and instructor for the Girls Educational Mentoring Services (GEMS) group. Wahi’s curatorial work has been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Vogue*, *Vogue India*, *Hyperallergic*, *Whitewall Magazine*, *ArtNet* and *ArtNews* to name a few.

**About the National YoungArts Foundation**

The National YoungArts Foundation (YoungArts) was established in 1981 by Lin and Ted Arison to identify and nurture the most accomplished young artists in the visual, literary, design and performing arts, and assist them at critical junctures in their educational and professional development. Through a wide range of annual programs, performances, and partnerships with some of the nation’s leading cultural institutions, YoungArts aspires to create a strong community of alumni and a platform for a lifetime of encouragement, opportunity and support.

YoungArts’ signature program is an application-based award for emerging artists ages 15–18 or in grades 10–12 from across the United States. Selected through a blind adjudication process, YoungArts winners receive valuable support, including financial awards of up to $10,000, professional development and educational experiences working with renowned mentors—such as Debbie Allen, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Rebecca Walker, Frank Gehry, Jeff Koons, Wynton Marsalis, Salman Rushdie and Carrie Mae Weems—and performance and exhibition opportunities at some of the nation’s leading cultural institutions, including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Washington, D.C.), The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), The Museum of Modern Art (New York) and New World Center (Miami). Additionally, YoungArts winners are eligible for nomination as a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts, one of the nation’s highest honors for high
school students who exemplify academic and artistic excellence.

YoungArts winners become part of a thousands-strong alumni network of artists, which offers them additional professional opportunities throughout their careers. YoungArts alumni who have gone on to become leading professionals in their fields include actresses Viola Davis, Anna Gunn, Zuzanna Szadkowsk and Kerry Washington; Broadway stars Raúl Esparza, Billy Porter, Andrew Rannells and Tony Yazbeck; recording artists Josh Groban, Judith Hill and Chris Young; Metropolitan Opera star Eric Owens; musicians Terence Blanchard, Gerald Clayton, Jennifer Koh and Elizabeth Roe; choreographers Camille A. Brown and Desmond Richardson; visual artists Daniel Arsham and Hernan Bas; internationally acclaimed multimedia artist Doug Aitken; New York Times bestselling author Sam Lipsyte; and Academy Award winners Doug Blush and Tarell Alvin McCraney.

For more information, visit youngarts.org, Facebook or Twitter. To watch a brief video about YoungArts, click here.