

For immediate release

barbican

RE/SISTERS: A Lens on Gender and Ecology

Barbican Art Gallery

5 October 2023 – 14 January 2024

Media View: Wednesday 4 October 2023, 10am – 1pm

#ReSisters @barbicancentre

Lead sponsor: Vestiaire Collective

Barbican Art Gallery presents ***RE/SISTERS: A Lens on Gender and Ecology***, a major group exhibition surveying the relationship between gender and ecology to identify the systemic links between the oppression of women and the degradation of the planet.



Fina Miralles, *Relacions. Relació del cos amb elements naturals. El cos cobert de palla* [Documentació de l'acció realitzada el gener de 1975 a Sabadell, Espanya] / *Relationship: The Body's Relationship with Natural Elements. The Body Covered with Straw*, 1975, Courtesy of MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

This expansive exhibition brings together photography, film, and installations by nearly 50 international women and gender non-conforming artists whose work is united across decades, continents, and media by an urgent engagement with, and protest against, the ongoing ecological crisis. Platforming work by artists from the Global Majority and Indigenous peoples, *RE/SISTERS* explores the indivisible bond between environmental and social justice, offering a vision of an equitable society wherein people and planet alike are venerated and treated fairly.

With women and marginalised communities often placed at the forefront of advocating and caring for the planet, *RE/SISTERS* offers a depiction of nature that explicitly resists the mechanical, patriarchal order that is organised around the exploitation of natural resources and the oppression of “othered” bodies. Across roughly 250 works, the exhibition presents a roadmap for creative forms of civil disobedience and protest: a lesser explored, cautiously optimistic route to reconsidering our relationship to the Earth and our problematic co-existence with it. Tackling unequal power structures which oppress and threaten both marginalised communities and our precious planet, *RE/SISTERS* advocates for empowerment in the face of destruction, reflecting a radical and intersectional brand of eco-feminism that is diverse, inclusive, and decolonial.

RE/SISTERS will bring together a global array of nearly 50 pioneering artists, including: **Laura Aguilar** (US); **melanie bonajo** (NL); **Judy Chicago** (US); **Minerva Cuevas** (Mexico);

Agnes Denes (US); **La Toya Ruby Frazier** (US); **Anne Duk Hee Jordan** (Korea/Germany); **Barbara Kruger** (US); **Ana Mendieta** (Cuba); **Otobong Nkanga** (Nigeria); **Ingrid Pollard** (UK); **Xaviera Simmons** (US); and **Pamela Singh** (India). At its core, the exhibition seeks to platform the urgent work of artists from the Global South and Indigenous communities, including: **Poulomi Basu** (India); **Simryn Gill** (Malaysia); **Taloi Havini** (Bougainville / Australia); **Gauri Gill** (India), as well as lesser-known but vital work from artists such as **Mónica de Miranda** (Angola/Portugal); **Josèfa Ntjam** (France); **Zina Saro-Wiwa** (Nigeria); and **Carolina Caycedo** (Colombia).

Shanay Jhaveri, Head of Visual Arts, Barbican, said: *“In this era of deepening ecological crisis, we are proud to present RE/SISTERS: A Lens on Gender and Ecology, which interrogates the disproportionate detrimental effects of extractive capitalism on women and in particular Global Majority groups. This expansive exhibition, bringing together a truly international array of pioneering artists working with film and photography, will provide a powerful message of resistance in the face of crisis, and furthermore speaks to the Barbican’s ongoing work to foreground inclusivity and sustainability. We hope that in contrast to a rhetoric that is often cynical about environmentalism, it offers visitors a thoughtful, optimistic and sometimes joyful way to consider the world’s current climate.”*

Organised thematically, *RE/SISTERS* is presented across six sections, addressing the politics of extraction; acts of protest and resistance; the labour of ecological care; environmental racism; and queerness and fluidity in the face of rigid social structures and hierarchies. Together, these groupings – encompassing a multidisciplinary range of film and photographic media – cast a new lens on critical issues at the forefront of our collective consciousness, re-framing our thinking around the environment and gender, and emphasising the radical power of care in the face of ecological destruction.

Ecological destruction and racism are two of the biggest challenges of the 21st century. They are also inextricably intertwined: there is a stark divide between who has caused, and continues to exacerbate, climate change, and who is suffering its increasingly catastrophic effects. *RE/SISTERS* explores this knotty matrix, asking how the commodification of common land and the exploitative extraction of natural resources speaks to environmental racism and a pervasive colonial-capitalist mindset, of which the physical act of extractivism (drilling, mining, pillaging resources) is a key symptom. Poignant works by **Mabe Bethônico** (Brazil) and **Simryn Gill** (Malaysia) expose the disproportionate and devastating impact of these unsustainable practices on local and Indigenous communities, whilst **Dionne Lee’s** (US) collage work interrogates the racialised histories of the American landscape and the profound structural inequalities surrounding land ownership and climate justice. Similarly, **Zoe Leonard’s** (US) powerful series *Al Río / To the River* (2016-2021) examines how the Rio Grande is weaponised in the starkly racist rhetoric around immigration in the US.

Mindful of the historic association of the feminine with nature as both a productive symbol as well as a problematic binary, *RE/SISTERS* will examine how women at once embrace and transcend traditional gender roles in advocating and caring for the planet. The exhibition explores politics of care amongst women and Indigenous communities, and how their alignment with nature has been exploited by colonial and capitalist forces which systemically degrade feminised and Indigenous bodies, and indeed the planet. Highlights include **Agnes Denes’s** (US) iconic work *Wheatfield – A Confrontation* (1982), for which she planted and harvested a wheatfield across a two-acre site close to Wall Street, New York, to reclaim the land and celebrate earth’s generative potential. This work is presented in dialogue with images and ephemera from **Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp**, including never-before-seen colour images taken by women’s UK photography collective **Format**, who celebrate their 40th anniversary this year. Also exploring the intersection of care and activism will be the powerful film work by **melanie bonajo** (The Netherlands), *Nocturnal Gardening* (2016), which presents alternative and pre-colonial uses of land in an exploration of political and social agency in marginalised communities.

With a focus on empowerment rather than despair in the face of ecological breakdown, *RE/SISTERS* seeks to encourage a more reciprocal, grateful, and joyful relationship with our animate Earth, platforming works which reclaim nature as a feminist political space and which argue fiercely for the rights of Indigenous and Global Majority groups. Artists explore the use of camouflage and performance to construct dialogues between the body and its environment, as well as troubling the binaries of male/female and nature/culture. **Ana Mendieta's** (Cuba) pioneering 'earth-body' works are critical to the exhibition, channelling Mendieta's own belief in "one universal energy," whilst **Laura Aguilar's** (US) series *Nature Self-Portrait* looks to muddy the boundaries between body and earth. Taking the notion of transformation yet further, the exhibition explores liquidity and fluidity in a tender consideration of queer ecologies and hybridity. **Anne Duk Hee Jordan's** (Korea/Germany) mesmeric film installation *Ziggy and the Starfish* (2018) presents hermaphroditic examples of aquatic life, drawing playful parallels with non-binary identity and questions of gender, whilst the Indigenous queer performance artist and activist **Uýra** (Brazil) uses their drag persona to transform into a hybrid plant-human organism and advocate for greater environmental awareness in the Amazon basin.

Participating Artists:

Laura Aguilar (US); **Hélène Aylon** (US); **Poulomi Basu** (India); **Mabe Bethônico** (Brazil); **JEB (Joan E Biren)** (US); **melanie bonajo** (The Netherlands); **Carolina Caycedo** (Columbia); **Judy Chicago** (US); **Tee Corinne** (US); **Minerva Cuevas** (Mexico); **Agnes Denes** (US); **FLAR (Feminist Land Art Retreat)** (US); **Format Photography** (UK); **LaToya Ruby Frazier** (US); **Gauri Gill** (India); **Simryn Gill** (Malaysia); **Fay Godwin** (UK); **Laura Grisi** (Italy); **Barbara Hammer** (US); **Taloi Havini** (Bougainville / Australia); **Nadia Huggins** (St Vincent and the Grenadines); **Anne Duk Hee Jordan** (Korea/Germany); **Barbara Kruger** (US); **Dionne Lee** (US); **Zoe Leonard** (US); **Chloe Dewe Mathews** (UK); **Mary Mattingly** (US); **Ana Mendieta** (Cuba); **Fina Miralles** (Spain); **Mónica de Miranda** (Angola/Portugal); **Neo Naturists (Christine Binnie / Jennifer Binnie / Wilma Johnson)** (UK); **Otobong Nkanga** (Nigeria); **Josèfa Ntjam** (France); **Ada M. Patterson** (Barbados); **PARI (People's Archive of Rural India)** (India); **Ingrid Pollard** (UK); **Zina Saro-Wiwa** (Nigeria); **Susan Schuppli** (Canada); **Seneca Women's Encampment for the Future of Peace and Justice** (US); **Fern Shaffer** (US); **Xaviera Simmons** (US); **Pamela Singh** (India); **Gurminder Sikand** (India); **Uýra** (Brazil); **Diana Thater** (US); **Mierle Laderman Ukeles** (US); **Andrea Kim Valdez** (UK); **Francesca Woodman** (US); **Sim Chi Yin** (Singapore)

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Notes to Editors

Press Information

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Press images available online

The image sheet is available on [press room](#). Please contact the press team for high-res images.

Barbican Press Room

All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Communication team's contact details are listed on our website at <https://www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room/>

Press Tickets

All press tickets will need to be booked 48 hours in advance by contacting a member of the Barbican's Visual Arts Press team. Our inbox is monitored Monday to Friday 10am-6pm. Please let us know if you have any access requirements. We look forward to welcoming you to the Barbican.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Barbican Art Gallery, Silk Street, London, EC2Y 8DS
www.barbican.org.uk

Tickets on sale soon

Opening Hours

Saturday – Wednesday 10am - 6pm (last entry 5pm)

Thursday – Friday 10am - 8pm (last entry 7pm)

Bank holidays: Please check the website as opening times vary.

Exhibition

RE/SISTERS: A Lens of Gender and Ecology is at Barbican Art Gallery from 5 October 2023 to 14 January 2024. The exhibition is curated by Alona Pardo, assisted by Colm Guo-Lin Peare, with advisory support from Prof Kathryn Yusoff and Suzanne Dhaliwal across its conceptualisation. Architectural design is by women-led practice vPPR and graphic design by The Bon Ton. This exhibition has been generously supported by lead sponsor Vestiaire Collective.

Vestiaire Collective

Vestiaire Collective is the leading global platform for pre-loved luxury fashion. The company's mission is to transform the fashion industry for a more sustainable future, promoting the circular fashion movement as an alternative to overproduction, overconsumption and the wasteful practices of the industry. Driven by the philosophy "Long Live Fashion," Vestiaire Collective offers a trusted space for its community to prolong the life of its most-loved fashion pieces. The platform's innovative features simplify the selling and buying process and give its members access to one-of-a-kind wardrobes around the world. The company boasts a curated catalog of five million rare and highly desirable items. Founded in Paris in 2009, Vestiaire Collective is a Certified B Corporation® and is active in 80 countries worldwide. To learn more, download the app, visit vestiairecollective.com and follow @vestiaireco on Instagram.

Book

The exhibition is accompanied by a generously illustrated catalogue co-published with Prestel, organised around six themed chapters with essays by key thinkers including Kathryn Yusoff, Astrida Neimanis, Catriona Sandilands, Greta LaFleur, Lucy Bradnock, Christine Okoth, Anna Feigenbaum, Angela Dimitrikaki, Ros Gray and Alona Pardo. Design by The Bon Ton. Price: £39.99

Events

A rich and varied programme of events will accompany the exhibition. Check the website for more information nearer the time: www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery

Symposium – RE/SISTERS: A Lens on Gender and Ecology

Barbican Centre

Thursday 7 – Friday 8 December 2023

Ticket price TBC, please check the website

This day and a half-long symposium explores how womanist politics have consistently resisted the mechanical, patriarchal order that is organised around the exploitation of natural resources and the oppression of “othered” bodies.

A collaboration between Barbican Art Gallery and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, this gathering uses the themes and works included in *RE/SISTERS: A Lens on Gender and Ecology* to explore the indivisible bonds between gender and environmental justice.

Bringing together artists, scholars and curators, the symposium will explore how women, gender non-conforming and marginalised communities are often placed at the forefront of advocating and caring for the planet.

Barbican Art Gallery and The Curve

Our visual arts programme embraces art, architecture, design, fashion, photography and film. Many of our exhibitions explore the interconnections between disciplines, periods and cultures, and aim to imagine the world in new ways. Designers, artists and architects are our collaborators in this process.

We invest in the artists of today and tomorrow; The Curve is one of the few galleries in London devoted to the commissioning of new work. Through our activities we aim to inspire more people to discover and love the arts. Entrance to The Curve is free. Through Young Barbican we offer £5 tickets to 14 – 25 year olds for our paid exhibitions, children under 14 attend for free.

Our exhibitions are complemented by comprehensively researched catalogues and a full range of public events. In partnership with renowned museums and art galleries, many of our exhibitions travel to reach both national and international audiences.

The Barbican believes in creating space for people and ideas to connect through its international arts programme, community events and learning activity. To keep its programme accessible to everyone, and to keep investing in the artists it works with, the Barbican needs to raise more than 60% of its income through ticket sales, commercial activities and fundraising every year. Donations can be made here:

www.barbican.org.uk/join-support/support-us/for-individuals/make-a-donation

About the Barbican

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have a large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We are the home of the London Symphony Orchestra, and a London base of the Royal Shakespeare Company. We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our other partners and associates: the Academy of Ancient Music, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Boy Blue, Britten Sinfonia, Cheek by Jowl, Drum Works, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and We Are Parable.

For more information, visit our [website](#) or connect with us on [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Spotify](#) | [LinkedIn](#)