

LA CRIÉE
CENTRE D'ART
CONTEMPORAIN
RENNES - F

AT THE GATES

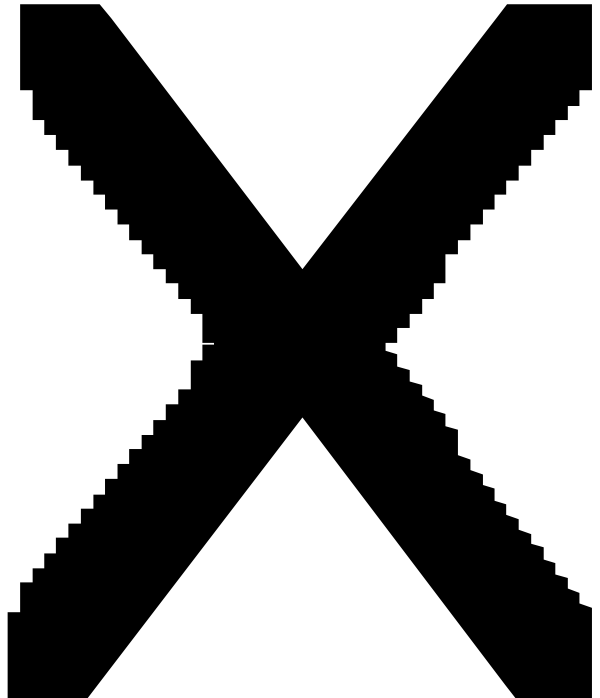
MAJA BAJEVIC, CAMILLE DUCELLIER,
MONIQUE FRYDMAN, JESSE JONES,
NAVINE G. KHAN-DOSSOS, TERESA MARGOLLES,
OLIVIA PLENDER, ARTISTS' CAMPAIGN
TO REPEAL THE EIGHTH AMENDMENT

from 15 June to 25 August 2019

curators

Tessa Giblin, director of
Talbot Rice Gallery, and
commissioner & curator
of *Tremble Tremble*,
Ireland at Venice, 2017,
adapted for La Criée with
Sophie Kaplan

La Criée centre for
contemporary art
place Honoré Commeurec
35 000 Rennes
France
+332 23 62 25 10
la-criee@ville-rennes.fr
www.la-criee.org



CURATOR'S INTRO

Inspired by the tidal wave of change that has been sweeping the world, *At the Gates* is an exhibition celebrating the distinctive and powerful voices of artists engaging with social histories and personal politics. Often brushing up against the law or institutions of power, the works in this exhibition amplify the global struggle towards female self-empowerment, and in the case of the Simone Veil bill and Ireland's historic fight for abortion rights against the Eighth Amendment in 2018, the right to bodily self-determination.

At the Gates at La Criée presents eight international artists and collectives who rub up against the law or institutions of power, in artworks that tell stories of violence, campaigning, rehabilitation and exploitation in and around women's histories. Drawing strength from the historian and activist Silvia Federici, and her historical alignment of the early accumulation of capital and the systematic oppression of women during the witch trials, *At the Gates* is motivated by the complex struggle of women to find, protect, and even rehabilitate their voice. These artists and their individual projects attest to the volume of these voices, images, banners, objects and artworks as they amass and become part of public discussion.

The title *At the Gates*, is partly inspired by Franz Kafka's parable *Before the Law*, included in this exhibition guide. This is a story about a man who spends his life standing at the gates of the law awaiting permission to enter. The title also borrows from American suffragist Lavinia Dock who said in 1917: 'The old stiff minds must give way. The old selfish minds must go. Obstructive reactionaries must move on. The young are at the gates!'

At the Gates celebrates artists who are not waiting for permission: "It is about understanding that you first have to disturb, you first have to disrupt, there first has to be an upheaval... you knew, in witch-like fashion, exactly what we needed to do and to hear and to see and to fear." – Ailbhe Smyth speaking at the opening of Jesse Jones' 'Tremble Tremble', the weekend after Ireland's historic referendum to legalise abortion 'Repeal the Eighth Amendment' was won in 2018.

Tessa Giblin

MAJA BAJEVIC

How Do You Want to Be Governed?, 2009

single channel video on monitor, colour, sound, 10 mins 40 secs

For La Criée, Maja Bajevic contributes her enduring work *How Do You Want to Be Governed?*. This small, human-sized monitor holds one of the key works in the exhibition, depicting a woman being first asked, but increasingly harassed with the question – ‘how do you want to be governed?’ The subject, Maja Bajevic, remains mute throughout the interrogation, passively resisting the increasingly aggressive interlocuter, whose voice we hear and whose arms we see reaching out to pinch, slap, grasp the artist’s face. Her strength, in the face of a question impossible to answer from a position of inequality, is pronounced. Bajevic made the work in 2009 after the 1976 artwork by Rasa Todosijevic, *What is Art?*, which was shown in La Criée in 2013 for the exhibition *Two Lines of Life*. Showing *How Do You Want to be Governed?* today, 10 years after it was made, creates as much of a conversation with the Bajevic of 10 years ago as it does with the Todosijevic of 50 years ago. Resistance is a constant labour, and while the artist remains resolute and silent in *How Do You Want to Be Governed?*, her act of defiance in enduring the harassment of a ‘rigged game’ speaks volumes.

French/Bosnian artist Maja Bajevic’s (b.1967) solo exhibitions include: Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich, 2016; CUNY’s James Gallery, New York, 2013; DAAD Gallery, Berlin, 2012; Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2011; P.S.1 MoMA, New York, 2004. She represented Bosnia and Herzegovina at the 50th Venice Biennale, 2003, and was included in *All the World’s Futures*, 56th Venice Biennale, 2015, and Documenta 12, 2007.

CAMILLE DUCELLIER

Sorcières, mes sœurs, (Witches, my sisters), 2015
film 16 mm, 30 min

Multimedia artist Camille Ducellier is renowned for her politically engaged work that focuses on feminism, gender and identity, as well as the rehabilitation of the figure of the witch in a feminist and queer perspective.

The artist considers the figure of the witch as a political ally: 'As a feminist, I strongly feel like an inheritor to the history of witches, and I am deeply concerned by this cultural and historical trauma. On a symbolic level, the witch represents every liberated, independent, subversive, dangerous, and unconventional woman, while reconnecting us with pagan, magic, and esoteric practices across history. Today, connecting all of those who have preceded us by subverting the stigma should give us the necessary agency and the acuity for exploring current norms and the consequences they have on minorities. I see past and present-day witches as political allies that will help us overturn our worlds in the making.'

Sorcières, mes sœurs is composed of five portraits of women and/or feminists belonging to different generations, styles and contexts, who all assert their position as witches, and whose collective voice has a subversive power. 'Performing an act of apostasy, treating burns, displaying one's genitals, talking to nature or celebrating Joan of Arc, each character proposes a contemporary political vision of the archetype of the witch. As a continuation of my filmic approach, editing, camera movements and post-production effects have been kept to a minimum. The framing, the lengths of the shots and the synchronized and unsynchronized speech of the characters make up the formal issues of the film. Faces to break the spell.'

Shot in 16 mm, the film follows a feminist cinematic tradition, and uses both documentary (filmed interviews, archival images) and experimental sources. It begins and ends with two literary sequences: an autofictional text read by its author Chloé Delaume, and a visual/verbal litany of names given to women, where their

derogatory or at least — a priori or historically — suspect character is turned into a dynamic, living and positive power.

The artist's interest in witches is at the origin of several earlier works, including *Reboot ME* (2016), the *Salvia* series (2016), sound documentaries such as *Le Guide du voyageur astral* (2015) and *La Lune noire* (2016), as well as *Starhawk* (2017), a filmed interview focused on the titular American witch, author, activist, ritualist, and major figure in witchcraft, ecofeminism and contemporary theory.

(SK)

Further to the exhibition at La Criée, *Starhawk* will be screened on July 3, 2019, 6 pm, at the Musée des beaux-arts alongside *Histoires d'A*.

Camille Ducellier's latest mini-series is broadcast on the France Télévisions platform. She collaborated with choreographer Nina Santes on the *Hymen Hymne* project and the film *Starhawk*. Her films have been screened at the Haute école d'art du Rhin in Strasbourg, 2018, at the Festival Mauvais Genres, Dunkerque, 2018, at Witch, Wake up, Lille, 2017, *Rêver l'obscur*, Théâtre de l'usine, Geneva, 2017, at the Festival Bandits Mages, Bourges, 2016, at Image + Nation, Montréal, 2016, *Au bazar du genre*, MUCEM, Marseille, 2014.

MONIQUE FRYDMAN

Histoires d'A, poster, facsimile, 1973

Histoires d'A, preparatory drawing, 1973

During the Spring of 1973, within the context of the struggle for the right to abortion led by activists from the Mouvement pour la liberté de l'avortement et de la contraception [Movement for Abortion and Contraception Freedom] (MLAC), Charles Belmont and Marielle Issartel directed the documentary film *Histoires d'A*, subtly referring to the French erotic novel and later film, *Histoires d'O*. Supported by doctors from the Groupe Information Santé [Health Information Group] (GIS), *Histoires d'A* was aimed at providing information on the Karman method, an abortion procedure involving vacuum aspiration, provided free of charge by the GIS practitioners. Initially commissioned as a short, didactic film, *Histoires d'A* turned into a feature-length film. Prior to the passing of the Simone Veil bill legalizing abortion in France, the film was completely banned, and could only be seen at illegal screenings. This period was characterised by months of 'civil disobedience and provocations, like the manifesto signed by 331 (later 600) doctors who declared themselves guilty of providing free, illegal abortions — an announcement that broke with age-old clandestine practices. The point was to put pressure on the government and public agencies by constantly forcing them to either submit to the provocation or retaliate to it — a no-win situation. This is the context in which the Simone Veil bill was passed [in January 1975]' (M. Issartel). Ever since, *Histoires d'A* became an emblematic piece of militant, political and social cinema, and has regularly been shown by associations, doctors, feminist groups and in cinémathèques.

Charles Belmont and Marielle Issartel were members of the same activist group as painter Monique Frydman when they invited her to design the poster of their film. It was made urgently, concerned with creating an image

that efficiently served their cause. Like the film, the poster was banned and harshly criticized by abortion opponents who denounced its scandalous nature. However, as Monique Frydman recalls, her work was far from being suggestive or provocative. The poster is a collage made out of photographs of women activists, framed by the drawings of two pregnant women facing each other, one in red tones, the other in blue. Their bellies, on which their hands are resting, converge without touching. The choice of complementary colours, as well as the two pyramids that structure the composition — one formed by the hair of the pregnant women, the other, upside down, by their chests — enhance the poster's visual impact.

The softness and roundness of these feminine figures, evoking fertility goddesses, counters the monstrous images regularly associated with the abortionist movement. They are also rooted in Western painting's traditional modes of female representation. Monique Frydman was indeed inspired by imagery surrounding the figure of a bathing Diana, and more particularly by the anonymous portrait of Gabrielle d'Estrées (a mistress of Henry IV) and her sister. This famous 16th-century painting shows two women, naked from the waist up, with one pinching the other's breast. Unlike the painting exhibited in the Louvre, the women in Frydman's collage are not looking at us, but face toward the inside of the picture — and therefore toward the activists, offering them support and protection. (SK)

Several paintings by Monique Frydman are also shown in *Créatrices* at the Musée des beaux-arts, where *Histoire d'A* will be screened on July 3, 2019 at 6 pm.

Recent Monique Frydman's (b. 1943, Nages) solo-exhibitions include: Fondation Parasol Unit in London, 2017, Salon Carré du Musée du Louvre in Paris, 2013, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Japan, 2011 and at La verrière Hermès in Brussels, 2008.

NAVINE G. KHAN-DOSSOS

Bulk Targets 1-100, 2018

gouache on cardboard, each 100x70 cm

The paintings being shown by Navine G. Khan-Dossos are titled *Bulk Targets 1-100* and were originally made for an exhibition that the artist called *Shoot the Women First*. Their joyful, bauble-like decorative quality belies their original purpose, as the paintings are made on real shooting-range targets that the artist sourced in bulk from the U.S. Khan-Dossos has hand painted each card, mimicking geometric shapes that are used to indicate specific parts of the target to be aimed for on command, designed to teach shooters how their rounds will affect the human body. Called 'The IQ Target', they were created to allow trainers to instruct their students: 'shoot the yellows', 'shoot the squares', or more complex instructions, 'shoot the squares in order from light to dark but not if they overlap the white.' These instructions connect for Khan-Dossos around what she had been reading about anti-terror squad approaches to female terrorists, to shoot the women first. The pink shapes are an addition by the artist to the established shooting range code, and reference gay rights movements and AIDS activism, but also point to the local history of the Breeder Gallery in Athens, sitting in a neighbourhood where women were targeted and publicly stigmatised as bio-terrorists. Khan-Dossos writes as an introduction to *Shoot the Women First*, 'The violence represented is not merely physical, but embodies a wider threat to society by those who exist on the periphery of mainstream politics and culture... Within the Greek context, they were shaped by the 2012 arrests of female drug-users suspected of doing casual sex work in Athens, the forced HIV testing of these women, and the imprisonment of those with a positive test result, accused of grievous bodily harm (GBH) by transmitting the virus. The release of the suspects' personal information by the police to the media led to further stigmatisation and terrorising of female sex workers and women living with HIV.'

Jasmina Tumbas writes in ASAP Journal, 'Khan-Dossos' feminist lens puts forth the argument that *Shoot the Women First* is not just about the terror political women might pose for Interpol, but the terror of and for those women, who demand to be paid for their labour below the belt.' When shown originally in Athens, the choreographer Yasmina Reggad created a performance with Khan-Dossos, in which women who were wearing the targets on their backs moved around the gallery, their movement based on martial arts and formations used by riot police in conflict situations. She turned her female performers into targets and now forces us to confront those targets on the wall. She doesn't aim the gun, doesn't cock the trigger, but instead asks the viewer to do it in their mind's eye.

Navine G. Khan-Dossos' (b.1982, London) works between London and Athens, her solo-exhibitions include: Showroom, London (currently); Swimming Pool, Sofia; The Breeder Gallery, Athens, 2018; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2017; Fridman Gallery, New York, 2017; Benaki Museum Islamic Art Collection, Athens, 2016; NOME, Berlin, 2016; Galerie Roger Katwijk, Amsterdam, 2016.

JESSE JONES

Thou shalt not suffer, 2019

inscribed hammers, digital archival print

Evolving out of the multi-media performance installation *Tremble Tremble*, Jesse Jones has created a new work for La Criée called *Thou shalt not suffer*. Jones takes the figure of the Sheela Na Gig as a matriarchal icon from pre-Christian Ireland, a figurine goddess that traditionally marked the threshold to a holy space, and turns it into a 12 headed fertility totem. The extraordinary figure of the Sheela Na Gig also has comparative figures in Britain and France, with the unmissable shared characteristic of baring her teeth and exposing her vulva.

Beneath this spiralling image are a set of hammers. These objects, proposed as emancipatory tools, refer to the *Malleus Maleficarum* through the words inscribed on them. The 15th century tome, commonly known as 'the hammer of the witches' was written by a monk as instruction of how to identify, convict and dispose of women during the historical period of the witch trials. It is one of the most destructive and barbaric texts in the history of humankind, and in its day the *Malleus Maleficarum* was outsold only by the Bible. Throughout *Tremble Tremble*, Jones regurgitates and remoulds this odious tome, reversing the words to cast a new spell for the 28 generations of women to have survived the witch trials. The work Jones presents in *At the Gates* is a talisman to *Tremble Tremble*, in which she isolates the phrase 'thou shalt not suffer' – reclaiming the agency of women by castrating the original phrase from the *Malleus*: 'thou shalt not suffer a witch to live'.

Jesse Jones brings the exhibition a full circle, as *At the Gates* was originally conceived as a companion exhibition to *Tremble Tremble*. Jones dives back into the context of the exhibition that looks to artists who are agitating at the gates of power, sometimes even 'at the gates of the law' as in Kafka's parable, and provides the exhibition with its own totem, a Sheela Na Gig to watch over this threshold and all who rally against institutions of power and histories of oppression.

Dublin-based artist Jesse Jones (b.1978) represented Ireland at the Venice Biennale 2017 with *Tremble Tremble*, which then travelled to the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, LASALLE College of the Arts, and Project Arts Centre, Dublin, and will be presented at Guggenheim, Bilbao in 2019. Other recent projects include Artangel's *In the Shadow of the State*, with Sarah Browne, 2016; The Hugh Lane, Dublin, 2016 and 2012; Artsonje Centre, Seoul, 2013; CCA, Derry - Londonderry, 2013; Spike Island, Bristol, 2012.

TERESA MARGOLLES

Nkijak b'ey Pa jun utz laj K'aslemal (Opening Paths to Social Justice), 2012-2015
embroidery on fabric, 200 x 200 cm

Nkijak b'ey Pa jun utz laj K'aslemal (Opening Paaths to Social Justice), 2015
single channel video, colour, sound, 10 mins 59secs

The violence experienced by women is a consistent focus of Teresa Margolles' artistic practice. In *At the Gates*, Margolles presents an embroidered shroud and a documentary video, showing the making of the work. Entitled *Nkijak b'ey Pa jun utz laj K'aslemal (Opening Paths to Social Justice)*, designs are embroidered onto fabric previously stained with blood from the body of a woman assassinated in Guatemala City. A potent, auratic material to begin with, Margolles asked people from different communities throughout the Americas to work back into these objects of trauma. In documentary films we see that the groups of artisans – including the Kunas of Panama, the Taharamaras of Mexico, and the Mayans of Guatemala – show care and respect for the dead woman, and acknowledge her and her ongoing gift as they work, often asking her permission in various gestures or ceremonies. As one of the Guatemalan embroiderers states during the video shown at La Criée, 'the blood spread on this fabric could have been one of us... Her blood is going to help us all. She is giving us freedom. She is giving us the voice, the energy, and the strength to be able to report, so other sisters don't have to go through what she lived through, what she suffered.'

These artisans describe their actions variously as 'repairs', 'healing' or 'embellishments', while Margolles herself refers to them as 'microphones' through which local participants could express their concerns. In this particular work, the Mayan women describe their images as being drawn from their surroundings and their love of the natural world: 'You can see that the lake is surrounding us. We are surrounded by water, by the mountains, by nature. They are the ones who give us back happiness. Maybe you noticed that in the fabric we embroidered the moon. The moon is our Grandma. She is always watching over us, even when it is rainy or foggy. This fabric will speak on behalf of the sister

who has her blood on it, and it will speak on behalf of all of us who need peace in this place.’ They discuss the global sisters who need their strength, the other regions of the world where violence towards women is still extreme.

Margolles’ desire to display the textiles on lightboxes was nuanced. She wanted them to be able to be touched, not to create an unbroachable distance between the embodied material and the viewer. She also wanted to reveal the many layers of ‘messaging’ within them, from the sharp, colourful lines of the embroidery, to the faded stains of blood. In her practice, Margolles wants us to undergo an experience, whether filling a room with bubbles that have been made from the water that washed bodies clean in a morgue, or laying a new floor of concrete mixed with the same morgue waters. Her classical museological display evokes the ethics and politics of display; it also creates a powerful aura. These hallowed textiles, now complex objects that encapsulate terror, trauma, healing, faith, love and community, are hovering in their darkened room, pulsating in the white light from beneath and the soft light from above. Although the artist shies away from readings of relics, her presentation of the work recalls the sacred. A quality that is here enhanced by her collaborators, with the Mayan women, who made the version on display here, pouring their love of community, belief in healing, faith in nature and the moon, waters and the land into a fabric stained with one of humanity’s dark moments.

Mexican artist Teresa Margolles (b. 1963) has exhibited extensively across the world. Recent solo-exhibitions include: *A new work by Teresa Margolles* at Witte de With, Rotterdam; *Sutura at daadgalerie*, Berlin; *Ya Basta Hijos de Puta* at Padiglione d’Arte Contemporanea (PAC) Milan, all 2018; *Mundos* at Musee d’art contemporain, Montreal, 2017; *We Have A Common Thread* touring from the Neuberger Museum, New York, 2015, to Colby Museum of Art, Maine, 2016, and El Paso Museum of Art, Texas, 2017. In 2009 she represented Mexico at the 53th Venice Biennale.

OLIVIA PLENDER

Learning to Speak Sense, 2015

sound installation with hand painted instructions on canvas, 260x 180 cm

Olivia Plender's practice is devoted to historical research about social movements of the past. Her sound installation *Learning to Speak Sense* reflects the trauma and violence experienced by those trying to find their voice in the face of authority. This artwork evolved from Plender's own unforeseen encounter with the powerlessness that comes with the loss of the voice. Plender said, 'When I lost my ability to speak for a whole year, after an illness in 2013, it profoundly changed the way that I thought about that subject. Being literally voiceless, I felt vulnerable in public space and over the course of my treatment I was exposed to a lot of institutional settings, such as hospitals... Many of the words, phrases and sentences that I was given as exercises by the hospital [appeared] to me to have some kind of hidden political message. For example... "Many Maids Make Much Noise", or another phrase that I had to repeat "Militant Miners Means More Money", both seem to speak about the power of the collective voice to be heard, demand attention, to "make noise". In the British context, any reference to "militant miners" immediately seems to indicate the miner's strike of the 1980s... I became convinced that there [was] an anonymous author working as a care worker within the hospital system, who distributes their clandestine messages through the voices of individuals who are learning to speak. I find this idea very poetic.'

In commenting on the role that art plays in the face of politics, Olivia Plender reminds us that history is a malleable thing, and that she's bringing to light marginalised positions. History shapes the future, and whilst art is not always directly political it plays a vital role in reimagining the past. In *Learning to Speak Sense*, Plender exposes us to the rehabilitation of one of our most powerful vehicles for communication – the voice – in an artwork both historically aware, and deeply personal.

Based in Stockholm, Olivia Plender's (b. 1977, London) solo exhibitions include: Maureen Paley, London, 2016; ar/ge kunst, Bolzano, 2015; MK Gallery, Milton Keynes; Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol; CCA, Glasgow, 2012; Gasworks, London, 2009. Major group exhibitions include: The Gothenburg Biennial, 2017, Folkestone Triennial, 2011; British Art Show 7, 2010-11; Taipei Biennial, 2010; Tate Triennial, 2006 and 2009; The Greenroom, Hessel Museum of Art, CCS Bard, New York, 2008.

ARTISTS' CAMPAIGN TO REPEAL THE EIGHTH AMENDMENT

Dragonslayer, 2017

The Journey Banner, 2017

Six of Swords, 2018

Bannerettes: R-E-P-E-A-L, 2017

Madonna of the Eyes, 2017

Respect, 2018

Our Toil Doth Sweeten Others, 2017

Motivated by the Catholic Church in Ireland, the Eighth Amendment was an addition made to the Irish constitution in 1983 that equated the life of a pregnant woman with that of an unborn child. It had dire consequences for many women because it prohibited abortion, even when there was a risk to a woman's health, the pregnancy stemmed from rape, or fatal foetal abnormality. Set-up in 2015 by Cecily Brennan, Alice Maher, Eithne Jordan and Paula Meehan to find positive ways to raise awareness and bring people together to join the fight for women's rights to bodily autonomy, the Artists' Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment quickly won the support of thousands of artists. Wanting to utilise existing skills, banners were adopted as a vehicle for the campaign, connecting the project to histories of protest and community driven activism. The banners in *At the Gates* were made by Sarah Cullen, Rachel Fallon, Alice Maher, Breda Mayock and Áine Phillips. Their designs reflect a desire to remake familiar narratives in a way that empowers women and subverts the familiar religious and state enforced patriarchal order. *Dragonslayer* is based on Orazio Gentileschi's work *David and Goliath*, replacing David with a leather-jacket-wearing woman who slays the Eighth Amendment Dragon with her sword. It shifts the usual hierarchy in art history that depicts (often naked) women as vulnerable and passive. In *Madonna of the Eyes*, the Virgin Mary becomes an active prophet-like figure, opening out her cloak to reveal a commitment to repeal.

The eyes that adorn the cape represent the protection of an all-seeing community, continued through

the *Bannerettes*. Remaking the silk scarf Grayson Perry made for the Tate – offering a navigation system for a lost artist moving through the wilderness of modern art – *The Journey Banner* conjures a dark vision of how a pregnant woman must navigate the perils of childbirth in Ireland, including the trauma of having to travel for abortion. The artists reviewed women’s magazines in order to be able to react against the messages of 19th and 20th century visual culture. *Our Toil Doth Sweeten Others* is appropriated from a Beekeeping Association Manual. In place of the bee is a vulvic eye form, suggesting the wide-scale labour of women and its direct connection to the body. *Six of Swords* references the spiritual world and is taken from the tarot card of that name. In many versions of this card, a boatman is depicted rowing a huddled, cloaked woman across a body of water. Here the woman propels herself with a repeal banner – heading towards bodily self-determination.

Many of these banners were at various marches throughout the campaign. When first shown in Limerick, these banners were taken on a peaceful procession through the city with dancers, performers dressed in Magdalene costumes, designed aprons and accompanied by a song written by Breda Mayock, *This is How We Rise*. (‘We see you through our eyes, see these are our rights, we’ll see them through this time...’). They were then displayed alongside videos of actors recreating women’s testimonies, evidencing the damage caused to women’s lives by the Eight Amendment and the systematic discrimination it effectively condoned. On 25 May 2018, the Irish people voted by 66.4% to repeal the Eighth Amendment, paving the way for new abortion laws that will improve women’s healthcare and provides a more hopeful future for equality. (JC)

The Artists’ Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment was set up in 2015 by the artists Cecily Brennan, Alice Maher and Eithne Jordan, and the poet Paula Meehan. They were active throughout the campaign and participated in the EVA International Festival, Limerick, 2018, marching through the streets bearing banners created by Alice Maher, Sarah Cullen, Rachel Fallon, Aine Phillips and Breda Mayock.

BEFORE THE LAW

by Franz Kafka (translated by Ian Johnston)

Before the law sits a gatekeeper. To this gatekeeper comes a man from the country who asks to gain entry into the law. But the gatekeeper says that he cannot grant him entry at the moment. The man thinks about it and then asks if he will be allowed to come in sometime later on. "It is possible," says the gatekeeper, "but not now." The gate to the law stands open, as always, and the gatekeeper walks to the side, so the man bends over in order to see through the gate into the inside. When the gatekeeper notices that, he laughs and says: "If it tempts you so much, try going inside in spite of my prohibition. But take note. I am powerful. And I am only the lowliest gatekeeper. But from room to room stand gatekeepers, each more powerful than the last. I cannot endure even one glimpse of the third." The man from the country has not expected such difficulties: the law should always be accessible for everyone, he thinks, but as he now looks more closely at the gatekeeper in his fur coat, at his large pointed nose and his long, thin, black Tartar's beard, he decides that it would be better to wait until he gets permission to go inside. The gatekeeper gives him a stool and allows him to sit down at the side in front of the gate. There he sits for days and years. He makes many attempts to be let in, and he wears the gatekeeper out with his requests. The gatekeeper often interrogates him briefly, questioning him about his homeland and many other things, but they are indifferent questions, the kind great men put, and at the end he always tells him once more that he cannot let him inside yet. The man, who has equipped himself with many things for his journey, spends everything, no matter how valuable, to win over the gatekeeper. The latter takes it all but, as he does so, says, "I am taking this only so that you do not think you have failed to do anything." During the many years the man observes the gatekeeper almost continuously.

He forgets the other gatekeepers, and this first one seems to him the only obstacle for entry into the law. He curses the unlucky circumstance, in the first

years thoughtlessly and out loud; later, as he grows old, he only mumbles to himself. He becomes childish and, since in the long years studying the gatekeeper he has also come to know the fleas in his fur collar, he even asks the fleas to help him persuade the gatekeeper.

Finally his eyesight grows weak, and he does not know whether things are really darker around him or whether his eyes are merely deceiving him. But he recognizes now in the darkness an illumination which breaks inextinguishably out of the gateway to the law.

Now he no longer has much time to live. Before his death he gathers up in his head all his experiences of the entire time into one question which he has not yet put to the gatekeeper. He waves to him, since he can no longer lift up his stiffening body. The gatekeeper has to bend way down to him, for the difference between them has changed considerably to the disadvantage of the man. "What do you want to know now?" asks the gatekeeper. "You are insatiable." "Everyone strives after the law," says the man, "so how is it that in these many years no one except me has requested entry?" The gatekeeper sees that the man is already dying and, in order to reach his diminishing sense of hearing, he shouts at him, "Here no one else can gain entry, since this entrance was assigned only to you. I'm going now to close it."

SILVIA FEDERICI

inspiring the exhibition

Silvia Federici will be given an honorary degree by the University of Edinburgh during *At the Gates* in La Criée. Silvia Federici is a feminist writer, teacher and activist. In 1972, she co-founded the International Feminist Collective, which launched the Wages for Housework campaign. She has been instrumental in developing the concept of 'reproduction' as key to class relations, and central to forms of autonomy and the commons. Federici is celebrated for her decades of research and political organising, is active in anti-globalisation movements, the US anti-death penalty movement, and student and teacher struggles against the structural adjustment of African economies and educational systems. She has written numerous influential books on capitalism and feminist movements, including *Caliban and The Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (2004), *Revolution at Point Zero* (2012) and *Witches, Witch-Hunting, and Women* (2018) and *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and Politics of the Commons*.

Something of a spirit-guide for this exhibition, Federici's writing continues to inform *At the Gates*, and the growing army of students, artists, historians and feminists who have been enabled by her.

TESSA GIBLIN

exhibition curator

Tessa Giblin is Director of Talbot Rice Gallery, University of Edinburgh, where she curated *At the Gates*. Other recent exhibitions have focused on *Borderlines* in the age of Brexit; and exposing research and collections from the University through ambitious solo exhibitions with Lucy Skaer (2018) and the forthcoming Samson Young (2019). She was Commissioner and Curator of Ireland at the Venice Biennale 2017, with the artist Jesse Jones. From 2006 – 2016 she was Curator of Visual Arts at Project Arts Centre, Dublin – a busy multi-disciplinary arts centre, consisting of two theatres and a gallery, where she made commissioning new work a hallmark of her exhibitions. From 2015-16 she curated a series of exhibitions for the steirischer herbst, Graz; Extra City Kunsthal, Antwerp; and Project Arts Centre, Dublin, around issues of nuclear waste burial and the implications for art and forms in the Anthropocene. Tessa Giblin now lives in Edinburgh with her family. She was raised in Christchurch, New Zealand, where she attended Canterbury University School of Fine Arts, and began her curatorial formation through the network of artist-run spaces across Aotearoa/New Zealand.

thanks

Her sincere thanks to all the artists who have participated in the exhibitions in both Talbot Rice Gallery and La Criée. Special thanks to Melissa MacRobert, Exhibitions Manager and Colm Clarke, Gallery Technician of Talbot Rice gallery for their support of this tour, and to Sophie Kaplan, Directrice of La Criée, who has extended the exhibition into the French context, and her colleagues. Her thanks to the galleries and lenders who made *At The Gates* in La Criée possible: The Breeder, Athens; Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich; Maureen Paley, London.

Guide written by Tessa Giblin, Director of Talbot Rice Gallery, University of Edinburgh with initialled texts by Sophie Kaplan, Director of La Criée (SK) and James Clegg, Assistant Curator of Talbot Rice Gallery (JC).

GREEN FLASHES

Les nourritures criées

Hilary Galbreath
Valérie Mréjen
Aziyadé Baudouin-Talec
Barbara Manzetti

Wednesday 26 June, 6:30 pm
La Criée centre for contemporary art

literary and culinary performances

a proposal by Aziyadé Baudouin-Talec,
Les écritures bougées

As a market is the sonic equivalent of several symphonies, both cacophonous and melodic, performed simultaneously, and as correlations between sounds, words, and flavors are endlessly renewed but impossible to taste, I wished to materialize the program proposed by Albertine in Marcel Proust's *The Captive*: presenting an assemblage made out of words that are sung in relation to food and its flavor, in the company of writers, artists and performers. How far can we go until the imaginary world of a flavor carried by melodic words turns into a taste? What impossible correspondences, what parallel worlds may we discover?

Food comes across as a sonic, visual and gustatory landscape. Each artist will provide a text accompanied by a particular food or dish in order to share the taste of their words with the audience.

Starhawk

Histoires d'A

Wednesday 3 July, 6 pm
Musée des beaux-arts, Rennes

projection and meeting with Marielle Issartel

***Starhawk*, Camille Ducellier, 12 min, HD, 2017**

This interview with Starhawk (American witch, author, and ecofeminist activist) was filmed in San Francisco in February 2017 during a research residency with choreographer Nina Santes

***Histoires d'A*, Charles Belmont and Marielle Issartel, 1h30, 1973**

During the Spring of 1973, within the context of the struggle for the right to abortion led by activists from the Mouvement pour la liberté de l'avortement et de la contraception [Movement for Abortion and Contraception Freedom], Charles Belmont and Marielle Issartel directed the documentary film *Histoires d'A*.

Supported by the doctors from the Groupe Information Santé [Health Information Group], *Histoires d'A* was aimed at providing information on the Karman method, an abortion procedure involving vacuum aspiration.

The film was completely banned, and could only be seen at illegal screenings.

Ever since, *Histoires d'A* became an emblematic piece of militant, political and social cinema, and has regularly been shown by associations, doctors, feminist groups and in cinémathèques.

CRÉATRICES

Creators, Freeing herself by art

Musée des beaux-arts de Rennes

from 29 June to 29 September 2019

Thanks to the work of numerous art historian women during the last forty years, and also due to the rediscovery of important women art items in museums by their curators, the richness and the diversity of the feminine artistic creation have at long last arisen.

But it still lacks very important parts of this creation to be known by the publics of the museums, above all when it concerns the art of medieval or from the Renaissance periods. In the matter of fact, if the great successful monographic exhibitions dedicated to Niki de Saint-Phalle or Elizabeth Vigée Le Brun showed a positive impact to the public who appreciated them very much, we still have not made clear understood the originality of the women creations paths.

The exhibition of the Musée des beaux-arts de Rennes proposes a real brand new point of view from five specific chapters, from the prehistoric times to today. But instead of a chronological approach of the paintings, sculptures or art objects, by using a contemporary point of view we would like to create connections between the items which may open the imagination.

curator Marie-Jo Bonnet

information

Musée des beaux-arts de Rennes
20 quai Emile Zola, Rennes

www.mba.rennes.fr

Tuesday to Friday: 10 am - 5 pm
Saturday and Sunday: 10 am - 6 pm
closed on Mondays and public holidays

full price: 6 €

La Criée centre for contemporary art
place Honoré Commeurec
35000 Rennes - France
www.la-creee.org

opening times

Tuesday – Friday, 12 noon – 7pm
Saturdays, Sundays & public holidays: 2 – 7pm

admission free

La Criée is a City of Rennes cultural facility
and enjoys the financial support of:
Ministry of Culture and Communication (Brittany Region
Cultural Affairs Office),
Brittany Region,
Ille-et-Vilaine Département.

La Criée is an Accredited National Centre for
Contemporary Art.



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH



MUSÉE
DES BEAUX-ARTS
DE RENNES



rennes
VIVRE EN INTELLIGENCE