

51%RememberHer ?

Wednesday 15 February, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Remember Her, International Women's Day

Exciting exhibition opening- 100 women artist take over Grade II listed building in Plaistow, East London.

A powerful public sculpture called DARKWAVE has arrived on the Barking Road to herald the forthcoming #51%RememberHer exhibition, which opens on International Women's Day, March 8th. Curated by Rebecca Feiner, the month-long exhibition will showcase the talents of more than 100 female artists, animating the Tower Gallery of the Byzantine-style, Grade II listed Memorial Community Church in Plaistow, East London.

Whether encountered from the top deck of a bus or on foot, artist Sian Kate Mooney's DARKWAVE prompts the viewer to look skywards- hinting at challenges to be overcome and resonating with the themes of the #51%RememberHer exhibition, whose title references that women make up more than half the population. Despite this statistical reality, women are still under-represented, not just in the history of art, as so wittily illustrated by the recent Guerilla Girls residency at the Whitechapel Gallery, but also legally, socially, economically, and politically. #51%RememberHer showcases the talents of both established and emergent women artists who live, work, study or have a family connection to the creative melting pot of East London.

Just as Mooney's sculpture deals with challenges to be overcome, so does the exhibition itself. #51%RememberHer is being created in double quick time on a shoestring budget, with each participating artist making a small yet vital contribution to see the exhibition realized. As curator Rebecca Feiner explains: "Despite the against all odds' nature of the project, I've been inspired both by the potential of International Women's Day and the ever-growing recognition that women's rights are human rights." She continues: "I feel optimistic that change is finally coming in the art world. Maria Balshaw taking over at London's Tate Modern, it really feels like the right time to celebrate female creativity and make this exhibition happen".

The #51%RememberHer exhibition includes painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, installation, graffiti and performance. The special opening night features the UK premier of Rosary Drawing XII by Birgitta Hosea, first performed at Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in China, and Tend, first performed at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. It also includes spoken word from Emma Roper Evans, poetry from multi media artist Sooz Belnavis and an iconic nod to Brexit Britain with a satirical mass wedding ceremony in Will You Marry Me For An EU Passport? / I've Looked At Life From Both Sides by East London-based Australian artist Kylie Boyd. On March 11th, Graffiti women will take to the Barking Road, inviting everyone from Saturday shoppers to local youth to join them in a 'graffiti jam'.

Then on Saturday March 18th, local artist photographer Philippa King will take you on a journey back in time to find out what it was like to live in Plaistow during the First World War with her history walk.

March 25th sees the opening of a Pop Up Cinema, screening a selection of cutting-edge work by female animators drawn from the Royal College of Art archives and spanning 30 years of experimentation. Under the banner Lying Belly, the short films address discomfort with appearance, sexuality, ageing, displacement and war. March 25 also sees artist Sooz Belnavis return with her empowering participatory performance piece The Red Line.

#51%RememberHer closes on April 8th in celebratory mood with Rachael House's Feminist Disco, 'Putting The Disco Into Discourse'. Embracing Lo-fi and 'revisiting the past in order not to repeat it', House will spin vinyl from the turbulent years of 1976-1983 on her two Dansette record players. The so-called second wave of feminism (punk and post punk) will be much in evidence, with feminist disco boiled sweets to enjoy, art to make, games to play and a six foot banner proclaiming a call to arms: "To be normal is not a healthy aspiration".

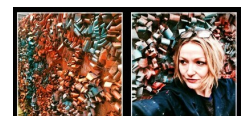
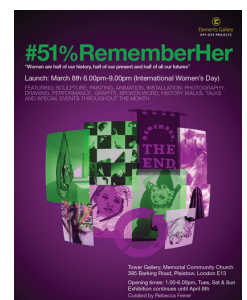
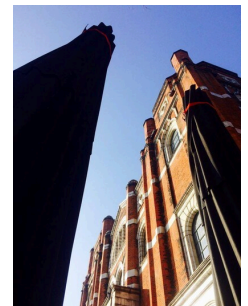
Minister of the Memorial Community Church, Mark Janes says: "We are delighted to host the inaugural #51%RememberHer exhibition, which is very much in keeping with our mission of celebrating community and empowering change. The themes of remembrance reflect the history of our building, which is dedicated to the men who died in the First World War, with 169 of their names commemorated on the

Media:

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chime bells. So it feels appropriate in the 21st century to embrace and acknowledge the role of women".

The #51%RememberHer exhibition opens on International Women's Day, Wednesday March 8th, and runs until April 8th at the Tower Gallery (East Tower), Memorial Community Church, 395 Barking Road, Plaistow, London E13.

Editors' Notes

In January 2017 in more than 60 countries worldwide, from the Caribbean island of Saint Kitts to Japan, Saudi Arabia and of course the UK, thousands of women made their presence felt by marching together to promote fundamental human rights.

#51%RememberHer would like to thank and acknowledge the community of the Memorial Community Church, People's Postcode Lottery, Newham Council, University of the Arts London, University of East London, The Royal College of Art and International Women's Day.

The Memorial Baptist Church building in Plaistow was opened in 1922 to house the West Ham Central Mission, known for welfare work that continues until this day. The congregation envisioned "A great Cathedral Church towering above the mean streets of West Ham, witnessing to the love of God and welcoming to a house of beauty and peace, burdened and weary hearts,".

The building is dedicated to the men from the church and local community who were killed in The Great War of 1914-18. In the East Tower, the names of 169 men are cast into the chime bells by Gillet & Johnson of Croydon.

#51%RememberHer is an off-site project by Elements Gallery London, the capital's first dedicated exhibition space for outdoor art, founded & curated by Rebecca Feiner.

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