

Institute of Contemporary University Art of Pennsylvania

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First US Solo Museum Exhibition of Deborah Anzinger to Open at ICA in Philadelphia

Philadelphia, PA, December 13, 2018 – On April 26, 2019, the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania (ICA) will present the first US solo museum exhibition of Jamaican artist Deborah Anzinger. *Deborah Anzinger: An Unlikely Birth* brings together sculpture, video, painting, and installation, combining both synthetic and living materials, to consider geographical, ecological, and spatial paradigms. The exhibition reveals how the artist disrupts existing relationships and hierarchies as they pertain to the politics of land, the body, and space. *Deborah Anzinger: An Unlikely Birth* is curated by ICA Whitney-Lauder Curatorial Fellow Daniella Rose King and will be on view through August 11, 2019.

Working at the intersection of black feminist thought, geography, and space while coalescing concerns Anzinger has long held, *Deborah Anzinger: An Unlikely Birth* explores a plethora of issues urgently facing our civilization—the environment, the economy, and human rights—and their aggressors, capitalism, and globalization. Through the work on view, Anzinger offers intimate networks and alternative ways of being in the world as possible answers to these intersecting problems. Thinking through reproductive labor, the transference of energy, and sanctuary, the artist compounds these fields with the testimony of individuals from Jamaica as a means of re-centering marginalized voices.

“The tremendous talent and dedication of the curatorial team at ICA drives our mission and programming. Our Whitney-Lauder Curatorial Fellow program fosters the growth of emerging curatorial talent, which enriches our own curatorial capacity, culminating in some of the most exciting exhibitions on view at the Museum,” said Amy Sadao, Director of the ICA.

“*Deborah Anzinger: An Unlikely Birth* builds on concerns mapped out in my first exhibition at the ICA, *The Last Place They Thought Of* (2018), which investigated how geographical, ideological, and spatial paradigms determine and reproduce uneven social relations,” said King. “I am thrilled to work with Deborah Anzinger to explore her particular investments and inquiries in this terrain, which is at once a departure from and an expansion of these themes within her own distinct palette.”

The exhibition title, *Deborah Anzinger: An Unlikely Birth*, is taken from a major work in the exhibition and also speaks to the plantation as progenitor of capitalist economies, social organization, and environmental conditions, as well as the invisibility of reproductive labor. It is shown alongside a number of new commissions and works of varying scale. Located on ICA’s second floor gallery space, the installation explores themes of consumption and renewable energy, spectatorship, and participation.

Botanicals and stand-ins for organic matter appear in paintings and other areas of the exhibition to troubling notions of the 'natural' and gesture towards the more nuanced nature of our relationship to materials.

Speaking to the range of media Anzinger employs in her work, she states "The materials I bring into the paintings (aloe, polystyrene, and mirrors) embody a more complicated understanding of existence and relation to the 'other.' By presenting alternative narratives that challenge their traditional associations and meanings, such as transforming polystyrene into support systems for living plants, I attempt to share the envisioning of new, more equitable paradigms for value and space."

Highlighting alternative models of being, Anzinger cites local ecological programs in Philadelphia and Kingston, including; alternative waste water systems; stormwater and rain gardens; and community gardens and urban farms undertaking important work around sustainable organic food production and composting. In the exhibition, the artist will amplify these approaches and models taking place on differing scales.

In Anzinger's work we see the erosion of boundaries between the body and the land, as well as a re-envisioning of geography through the lens of black feminisms. Her artistic approach facilitates a new way of interrogating, understanding, and reckoning with the realities of the current Anthropocene age, considered to be the first geographical period where human activity has irreversibly affected the environment, as both a psychological and social space. In *Deborah Anzinger: An Unlikely Birth*, Anzinger astutely and intuitively traces the interconnectedness of economy, subjectivity, environment, history, individual action, and societal responsibility in her work through an array of complex and multifaceted forms, textures, material, and environments. Works featured in the exhibition will burst open the seams of the conservative, regressive, and inherited beliefs tightly held throughout western civilizations, and offer openings and opportunities to rethink the challenges and catastrophes facing our present and future realities.

ABOUT DEBORAH ANZINGER

Deborah Anzinger (b.1978, Kingston, Jamaica) received her BS from Washington College in 2001 and her PhD from Rush University Medical Center in 2006. She is the founder of contemporary art organization New Local Space (Kingston, Jamaica). Anzinger's work has been exhibited at Sargent's Daughters (New York, NY), the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Art (Brooklyn, NY), Royal West of England Academy (Bristol, UK), the National Art Gallery of the Bahamas (Nassau City, The Bahamas), the National Gallery of Jamaica, (Kingston, Jamaica) and Corcoran Gallery of Art, (Washington, DC) and will be included in a group exhibition at Perez Art Museum Miami, (Miami, FL) in 2019. Her work has been included in reviews in *The New Yorker*, *frieze*, *Huffington Post*, and *Artforum*; and published in *Small Axe Journal* (Duke University Press) and *Caribbean Quarterly* (Taylor & Francis).

ABOUT DANIELLA ROSE KING

Whitney-Lauder Curatorial Fellow Daniella Rose King is a London-born writer, curator, and producer concerned with the social history of art, particularly when it brings to light forgotten, oppressed, or difficult histories, moments of struggle, and spaces of resistance. Prior to joining the Institute of Contemporary Art she was based in New York where she worked with Naeem Mohaiemen on the documenta 14 commissions, *Two Meetings and a Funeral* and *Tripoli Cancelled*, and Simone Leigh as curatorial researcher for her New Museum exhibition and residency "The Waiting Room," and Tate Modern project "Psychic Friends Network." In 2017 she curated "On Visibility and Camouflage: Black

Women Artists for BLM” at We Buy Gold in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, and King was the 2015-16 Whitney Independent Study Program Helena Rubinstein Curatorial Fellow. She has contributed to exhibition catalogues, magazines, journals and online platforms. Her writing has appeared in the Studio Museum in Harlem 2017 Artist in Residence Brochure, *Ocula Magazine*, *frieze*, *Art-Agenda*, *Art Monthly*, *Ibraaz*, *Harpers Bazaar Art*, *New African Magazine*, *Contemporary And*, *Portal 9 Journal*, and *Nafas Art Magazine*. King was Assistant Curator at Nottingham Contemporary; Program Curator at MASS Alexandria, Egypt; Exhibitions and Events Manager at Iniva, London; visiting curator at Cornerhouse (now HOME) in Manchester and deputy curator of the Cyprus Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale, and is co-founder of the curatorial collective, DAM Projects.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania is a non-collecting institution presenting exhibitions at the forefront of contemporary practice and culture that challenge audiences to think in new ways. The ICA is free for all to engage and connect with the art of our time. Since its founding in 1963, ICA has served as a laboratory for the new, introducing and supporting the production of urgent and important contemporary art, beginning with ICA’s inaugural show of paintings by Abstract Expressionist Clyfford Still, followed by the first museum show of works by Andy Warhol in 1965. Throughout its history, ICA has been instrumental in identifying and developing many promising artists before they attained prominence within the international art world, some of whom include—in addition to Warhol—Laurie Anderson, Richard Artschwager, Vija Celmins, Karen Kilimnik, Barry Le Va, Glenn Ligon, Robert Mapplethorpe, Agnes Martin, Pepón Osorio, Tavares Strachan, and Cy Twombly.

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