

ARTISTS SPACE

Jordan Lord:

Prophetic Memory

List of Works

1. *Expressions*, in collaboration with Annette Carter

HD video, 36 min, looped

Exhibition design, images and annotated descriptions, projection

My grandmother, Annette Carter, has worked as an interior designer since 1979 and became a member of the American Society of Interior Designers in 1987. In addition to specializing in designing residential interiors throughout the New Orleans area, my grandmother has also designed several commercial jobs, including the offices for a savings and loan, where my dad worked as a lender; the ornate, marbled restrooms at a gourmet restaurant in the French Quarter; as well as student common areas at a local university, among others.

In the late 1980s, my grandmother began working as an in-house interior designer at Expressions, a design studio that made unique custom furnishings and offered interior design services to its customers. As of 1993, the company had 51 stores in 26 states, with its headquarters in New Orleans, catering to wealthy clients on St. Charles Avenue. A magazine article in which my grandmother's design work was featured, from the New Orleans *Gambit's* style and design magazine *Home Smart*, describes Expressions as "a way of thinking as much as it is a store." My mom recalls the "gorgeous plush fabrics" and elaborate, vignетted displays throughout the store that integrated furniture, accessories, lighting, and themed architectural features. I don't ever remember going there, but I remember when my grandmother and dad gave my mom an embroidered tapestry sofa and matching chairs from Expressions as a graduation present, my mom cried.

Although my grandmother is 85, she continues to take on design jobs for long-time clients. For my exhibition at Artists Space, I asked her to collaborate with me in creating the exhibition design. Because of budget and time limitations, Covid-19, and her physical capacities, we decided that the best way to realize her vision would be to design an imaginary exhibition of what she would have done if the physical installation had been possible.

The video features my grandmother's, my mother's and my descriptions of Artists Space in between exhibitions--viewed on my mom's tv in Gulfport, Mississippi and my computer in New York--alongside my grandmother's descriptions of the exhibition spaces she imagined for the show. Artists Space's image archive also now hosts images and annotated descriptions of the pieces of furniture my grandmother selected from an estate sale website I used to furnish my own apartment.

2. *Prophetic Memory (Live Replay)*, 4K video, 90 min., looped, 2021
With Annette Carter and Deborah Lord

This film is arriving too early and too late.

It's been made amid overlapping states of emergency (both personal and collective), each of which has been paradoxically predictable and no less urgent. Over the course of its production, many of these ongoing states have fallen in and out of "liveness" in their media coverage, which invariably treats each wave of each ongoing emergency as "unexpected." These waves are reported "live," then covered by other states of emergency, both imaginary and real.

This version of the film is covered by a recording of my mother, grandmother, and me watching and reacting to it. The film concerns my grandmother's life, her relationship to aging, disability, and memory and where remembering animates repetitions of the past that are simultaneously live, means of living and of forgetting.

Here, memory compresses timelines, becomes history.

This first iteration of the film itself is literally a compression of timelines. A lot of its making was a necessarily imprecise process of synchronization. Its audio is composed of a manual synchronization of the audio from the film my grandmother, mom, and I were watching and the time in which we watched it. In order to find points at which these different audio recordings could be synchronized, I looked for the same patterns on the soundwaves that the different audio tracks were composed of--mostly generated by claps, coughs, and breaths.

There are things that are in the frame that you might not notice. Throughout the recording of the primary image in the film, my grandmother's heart was beating out of rhythm in afib, while the microphone captured the tick of my mechanical heart valve.

In the film, an audio recording plays in which we each take turns audio describing aspects of the image of us watching it. Although this was our first time seeing it, my mom describes it as our second time.

3. *Fire Sale (2012-2018)*

Reading lists, books, PDFs

On May 9, 2012, I began interning at Artists Space. After my internship ended, I was hired as the bookstore and events manager of the then-new Artists Space: Books & Talks, located at 55 Walker Street, a satellite location of the exhibition space that hosted public programs--usually panel discussions and screenings--and a bookstore that also functioned as a curatorial project.

The idea for the bookstore was that artists and writers were invited to choose 10 books to be part of the bookstore. It was my job to source the books (whether used or new), arrange, and sell them in the bookstore. In addition to selling beer, booking technicians, and setting up chairs at events, my job was also to implement our director's interior design vision of the space: sourcing Persian rugs, buying Max Bill Ulm stools, using a vacuum cleaner to fill a large denim beanbag chair with styrofoam beads, buying mosaic tiles and hiring a contractor to install them. Many days, no one would come in the space, and I would play my music very loudly.

At the same time, another function of Books & Talks that was not publicly displayed was its use as a meeting space for a number of political and art-related groups that were given keys to use the space in its off-hours. One of these groups was No Total, a reading group that I became part of, which eventually began organizing performances at 55 Walker over the next four years.

I preemptively quit my job because I assumed I was going to be fired. Not once but twice, I accidentally dropped the keys that unlocked elevator access to the space into the elevator shaft. But before I did, we hosted a fire sale, to get rid of a large inventory of Artists Space-produced publications, most of which were pamphlets produced for past shows, including some of the more famous shows produced there like *Pictures and Witnesses: Against our Vanishing*, as well as a book that invited 5000 artists to reflect on the 25-year history of Artists Space in 1998.

That day, I met some of the artists and writers, who would become my closest friends and interlocutors, and in the short period before and after, I met many others--in the elevator, at events that took place at the space, in reading groups that met in the space, and in performances that I took part in there.

I've asked 10 of these people to each select 10 books to be shelved on the same walls, where the bookstore used to hang at 55 Walker St. Most of them I've known for nearly a decade, one I've only just met and one I never got to meet, except through their work, but I met or grew closer to each of these people because of how we encountered each other through Artists Space.

Each of these selected books will be available as a free takeaway during the opening hours of 55 Walker Street from August 4th to September 4th. A link to a free PDF of each book will also be included on a running list of each of the books selected.

4. *Live Recording*

Ongoing press releases; in-progress works list captions; edited website algorithm; annotations to image, video, and text archives

"[...] I found myself deeply suspicious of my own reassuring statements to my anxious friends that I was feeling more alive again. Surely I had been no less alive when I was more sick, except under the accountings of an intuitive and immediately problematic notion of 'liveliness' [...]." -Mel Chen, *Animacies*

"By plotting the ways in which neither cinema nor theatre are live, I want to consider exactly the opposite proposition: that in thinking cinema and theatre together, they might be the means by which liveness could be further described both as and not only as the product of an extraordinary kind of negation [...]." -Ian White, "Performer, Audience, Mirror: Cinema, Theatre, and the Idea of the Live"

Artists Space--like other institutions whose central mission involves the presentation of art--communicates through several more-or-less visible apparatuses the life of an artwork from announcement to exhibition to archive.

Though this is perhaps obvious, one of the central means by which Artists Space seeks to fulfill its mission is by delimiting an exhibition, event, or artwork's future, present, and past (almost always in that order). First, signalling what is to come by sending out press releases to targeted members of the press, newsletters to subscribing publics, and website announcements that share similar information with more diffuse audiences; then, often changing where these texts are located to denote that the work or exhibition is currently happening, by surfacing it on components of the website such as its homepage or calendar to announce that it is available to be experienced, and if happening physically at the gallery, opening the institution's doors and circulating these texts in hard copy; and, finally, once the show has "closed" or the event has ended moving it to a section of the website called "past," often alongside documentation materials but generally not changing the tense of the writing in which the press release or announcement is shared.

An artwork is perhaps an exemplary object insofar as its life and its liveness are in many senses shared but, nevertheless, not the same. Of course, the conditions for experiencing an artwork physically come with variegated stakes, terms, barriers, and conditions for different audiences,¹ often referred to as its (in)accessibility.

But if liveness--and the access that liveness promises--is fundamentally about sharing some form of presence, these variegations also unfold into a question of when²: is it possible for audiences to experience the work, are various components of the work available to be experienced, at what stage of a process is it encountered; and does the life of a work begin, continue, and end.

Which is also to say by what means is a life recorded?

Or, to put it differently, how does a life become past?

Or shared as currently live?

Throughout the course of this exhibition, which is already unfolding, its press release and list of works will be continually updated as its various components, all of which are in-progress, change and become more or less accessible to more people.

The image, text, and video archives of Artists Space's website will be adapted for the purposes of this exhibition so that each page's display of archival material, which is currently set to be randomized, is sortable. As various materials are selected to be presented in a particular order, these materials will also be annotated with new information.

1 See Park McArthur's exhibition, *Edition One and Two Fantasies*, Essex Street, 2020. <https://exhibition146.essexstreet.biz/>

2 See Carolyn Lazard's exhibition, *SYNC*, Essex Street, 2020. <https://essexstreet.biz/exhibition152/>

5. *Supporters*

Donations, exhibition materials including time and labor