

One Year of Resistance: the exhibit chronicling the year in anti-Trump art

In a follow-up show to last year's exhibit, curator Indira Cesarine displays art addressing immigration, gun control, and the #MeToo movement

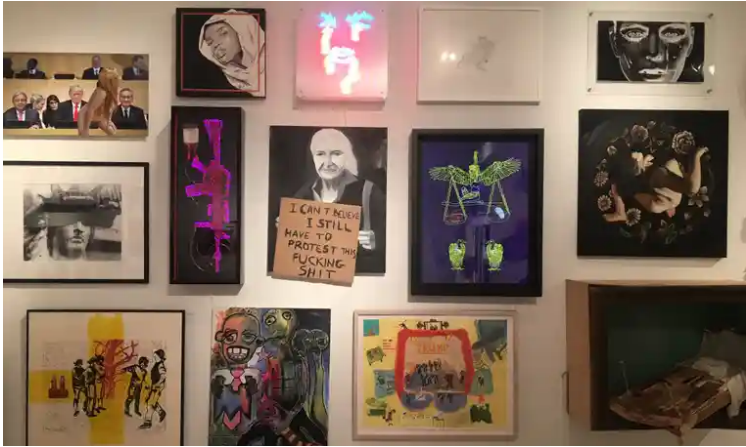
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The morning after the 2016 election, curator Indira Cesarine knew she wanted to host an art show exhibiting women's reactions to the impending presidency of Donald Trump. She posted on message boards and various social media groups and, lo and behold, corralled enough female artists together in just one month to open Uprise/Angry Women during inauguration week. Now, a year later, Cesarine is hosting a follow-up exhibit, titled One Year of Resistance, which opened Tuesday in New York. This time, submissions were open to artists of all genders; plus, the show had a lengthier gestation period, to say the least.

“The exhibit that I curated last January was an all-female show very specifically addressing Trump's misogyny, his sexism, his stance on reproductive rights, and the Access Hollywood comments,” said Cesarine, who opened Untitled Space, the Tribeca gallery which hosts both

exhibits, in 2014. She characterizes Uprise as a more “instinctive, kneejerk” response to Trump’s election, whereas with One Year of Resistance, Cesarine encouraged artists to take their time with their submissions in order to address the last 12 months, in which pushback to the administration has been robust and widespread, more broadly.



The One Year of Resistance exhibit at The Untitled Space, in New York, January 2018. Photograph: Alexandra Fanning Communications/Courtesy of Alexandra Fanning Communications

“This exhibit is not gender-specific,” she said. “The artwork responds to the rollback of immigration rights, Trump’s policies on gun control, the #MeToo movement, transgender rights, white supremacy and the neo-Nazi movement.”

To Cesarine, who has a degree in art history from Columbia University, the zealous response of the artistic community to the current political climate echoes past protest movements in which art became a vehicle of resistance: she mentions the work spawned by both the civil rights movement and the Vietnam war. There are parallels, too, to Act Up and the LGBT community’s response to the Reagan administration’s fatal negligence of the Aids crisis. What sets this latest exhibit apart, Cesarine believes, is that the locus of dissent is the president himself, rather than a global epidemic or geopolitical conflict.

“Historically, whenever there have been periods of war, there have been major art movements as a result,” she said. “The emphasis here is on par with what we’d see when we’re at a massive world war, which, really is not the case right now. This artwork, this movement, is specifically about our president, his words and actions and policies. It’s about someone who is trying to annihilate our progress.”



Indira Cesarine's Resist and Jen Dwyer's White Gloves featured at The Untitled Space One Year of Resistance exhibit, in New York, January 2018. Photograph: Alexandra Fanning Communications/Courtesy of Alexandra Fanning Communications

The group show exhibits work by more than 80 artists of varying backgrounds. While the space is small, the proximity of the pieces to one another evokes the kind of hand-in-hand solidarity that's been on display in the last 12 months. One piece, by Iranian-born artist Toubia Alipour, shows a neon-lit silhouette of the United States, with the words "Closed for Renovation" illuminated inside it. It's optimally placed in the front window of the gallery, where its message will draw foot traffic and glow at night.

The artist Ann J Lewis contributed the piece White Lies, which consists of a canvas American flag, on the back of which are written - in tiny, microscopic print - each of the president's lies from his first year in office. One of the most striking pieces, a photograph by Joel Tretin called Selling Guns like Gumballs, shows a vending machine filled with firearms. On the opposite wall is a painting by Rebecca Goyette called Sausage Party Bride, in which a woman takes an axe to a pool table surrounded by sentient male hot dogs. The artist is already turning the scene, based on the lived experience of her own mother, into a short film, and says that she is glad to see sex-positive art emerging from the #MeToo movement.



Joel Tretin's Selling Guns Like Gumballs featured at The Untitled Space One Year of Resistance exhibit, in New York, January 2018. Photograph: The Untitled Space/Courtesy of The Untitled Space

Where magazine illustrators and cartoonists have found novel ways to ridicule Trump's likeness, satirizing everything from his hair to his skin tone, One Year of Resistance includes just five images out of over 100 pieces, that feature the president himself. Cesarine says that was intentional, since she wanted the show to address Trump's behavior rather than his image .

"It's always important to make sure the exhibit isn't overly repetitive or gimmicky," she said. "We've seen enough images of Trump as a devil. It's time to move on from that. That's why there are very few representations of Trump in the show; most of the pieces are really about the issues."

One Year of Resistance is on display at The Untitled Space, New York, from 16 January to 4 February 2018. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the ACLU.

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