

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

For Immediate Release

CLARITY HAYNES: COLLECTIVE TRANSMISSION April 28 to September 6, 2021

In April 2021, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum will inaugurate *Aldrich Projects*, a single-artist series that spotlights a singular work or a focused body of work by an artist every four months on the Museum's campus. The first in this series is *Clarity Haynes: Collective Transmission*. Sited in the Leir Atrium, Haynes debuts two new paintings, *Birth Altar, 2020–2021* (2021) and *Altar for Femme Joy* (2020), from her ongoing *Altar* series, 2000—. Haynes describes her *Altars* as queer feminist spaces liberated from patriarchy. She says: "In a time of toxic masculinity and violence, to put forth joyful feminist principles feels radical. To create one's own archive, altar, cosmology, autonomous space is an act of taking care." *Clarity Haynes: Collective Transmission* will be on view at The Aldrich April 28 to September 6, 2021.



Clarity Haynes, *Birth Altar, 2020-2021, 2021* (left), and *Altar for Femme Joy, 2020* (right). Courtesy of the artist and New Discretions. Photo: Tom Powel Imaging

The *Altars* are paintings of life-size shrines Haynes composes in her studio. The heart-shaped *Birth Altar, 2020-2021*, claims crowning and birth imagery as symbols of courage and resistance. It also aligns Haynes within a revolutionary art history, specifically citing the heart-shaped canvases of Miriam Shapiro, a leader of the Pattern and Decoration movement and the central core imagery of the Feminist Art Movement; the heart here implying the vulva. Within her composition, Haynes honors the legacy of feminist art by "pinning" artworks by groundbreaking artists—Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (*Primordial Goddess* place setting) (1974–79); Ana Mendieta's *Escultura Rupestres* (*Rupestrian Sculptures*) (1981); and Louise Bourgeois's *Untitled* drawing from 1943—together with trompe l'oeil images of anonymous people giving birth. Coupled with these are other symbolic tributes to care, a necklace with a dangling heart pendant and a protective face mask designed by Chicago.

Altar for Femme Joy, Haynes says, "presents femme aesthetics without apology. Femme joy can be accessible to anyone, for it is not tied to biology; the word *Femme* is about gender expression." Haynes' pink, triangle-shaped canvas, a reclaimed emblem of LGBTI power, operates as both a tabernacle to this color's persistent politicization and as a self-portrait. Haynes' dense arrangement teems with feminized agency. Highly-personalized keepsakes—from a Trans Pride Flag button and a glittery star cut from a gifted valentine, to patterned fragments of the artist's clothing and a torn sheet of her own palette paper—emphatically express femme power as queer, intimate, independent, and free.

Also on view in the Atrium is Haynes' *Collaborative artist book* (2020), a series of participatory artworks she contributed to the *Aldrich Care Box*, a year-long traveling exhibition available for loan to the public. Haynes' 7 x 7-inch spiral-bound books, each with a distinctive multi-media cover, contain a series of prompts that invite reflection and interaction. Inspired by the pioneering feminist artist Mary Beth Edelson's *Story Gathering Boxes* (1972–2014), which ushered in the first vestiges of social practice, Haynes' books function as an exquisite corpse.

Accompanying this presentation is an audio piece by Haynes about the works on view.

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Clarity Haynes is a queer feminist artist, writer, and educator, whose work spans painting, drawing, and social practice. She received her MFA from Brooklyn College and CFA from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Her work has been widely exhibited, including at Denny Dimin Gallery in New York, NY, presented by New Discretions; the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; Kniznick Gallery at Brandeis University, Waltham, MA; and Mana Contemporary in Jersey City, NJ. She has received awards from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the MacDowell Colony, and Yaddo.

Clarity Haynes: Collective Transmission is organized by Senior Curator Amy Smith-Stewart.

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