

if i told you...

Presented by The Beacon Atlanta & Medium Arts

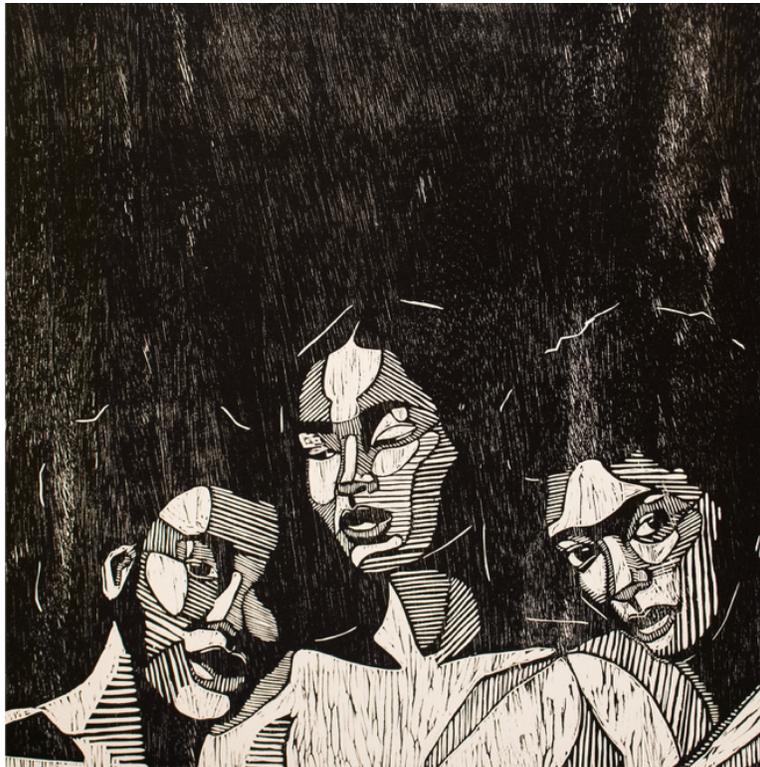


Image: Jasmine Nicole, "Down," woodcut print, 2018.

February 7, 2019

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." Maya Angelou wrote these words in her seminal memoir, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, in which she shared stories from her shortened childhood of capricious family life, racial inequity, sexual abuse, and unimaginable resilience. The truth behind this quote brought together a room of thirteen women with a resolution to drive the Atlanta creative community in a direction for which generations of women have tirelessly ached and fought. *If I told you...* is a group-curated exhibition which substantiates the testament of the women, and women-identifying individuals, of this community. The multifaceted exhibition—which opens with a reception February 14, 7-10pm, at the Beacon Atlanta—is a group art show with accompanying public

programs focusing on female artists and those who identify as female, to discuss issues of sexual harassment and violence in our community.

The project began when recent news exposed a local Atlanta artist with numerous allegations of harassment. In one swift movement, the Atlanta creative community listened to accounts of the many women who came forward and decided to take steps both small and widespread to stand up against these kinds of transgressions. Gina Livingston, Founder of Medium Arts contacted The Beacon, suggesting that a group of female-identifying artists and curators would be able to activate the space in a way that pushed forward dialogue surrounding issues of sexual violence in the arts community. For Philippe Pellerin of Pellerin Real Estate, that meant partnering with this group to reclaim the space which was to hold the former occupant's gallery at The Beacon. Pellerin decided to rectify this space by turning it into a platform for emboldened conversation. "The Beacon is pleased to welcome Medium Arts and the consortium of extremely talented artists that make the *If I told you...* show possible. This event and the circumstances it represents bring forth a discourse critical to our evolution as a society that affords every person dignity and respect. Our team is grateful to this diverse group for putting together a thoughtful, appropriate and engaging exhibit on a topic that is difficult to discuss—but must be discussed nonetheless."

If I told you... was a plan of quick momentum that became a project of broad expanse and many nuances. The exhibition and accompanying programming seeks to engage in a broad conversation on what happens to girls, women, and those who identify as women, from all walks of life who have told and were not believed, asked for help and were declined, or sought refuge and were rejected. All curatorial and programmatic efforts are intersectional and intentional.

In addition to a mindfully-curated exhibition of work by Atlanta, female artists, the team will construct a space within the gallery to serve as site of sharing, healing, and awareness. A designed alcove will be furnished by Quianah Upton of Arbitrary Living. Programming will include a performance by local women's activist, Jessica Caldas; an all female comedy showcase; a film series led by Dr. Michele Schreiber; a poetry slam led by Teresa Davis; healing events including yoga, body mapping, meditation, and sound bathing; and a confessional installation and film by Melissa Alexander, which will thread together the stories of women who chose to share their experiences within the space. Events will also center around discussions on directed topics and a full week of programming will be led by the nonprofit organization, *Men Stopping Violence*, which fights against domestic violence the social norms that enable it.

The title *If I told you...* is an unfinished statement, one that represents the chasm between the the depth/breadth of experiences women encounter and public awareness. But ellipses also represent the opportunity to change an outcome, and change one's story. Likewise, the show in full realization will demonstrate the beauty, courage, wisdom survivors have to offer, while providing a space *for* them whether they decide to bear witness to these sorrows or bear the weight no more.

All programming is free and open to the public, though tickets may be limited. The show will open on Thursday, February 14 from 7-10pm, with a reception and refreshments. The show will also have a closing reception (Thursday, March 28, 7-10pm), during which writing, audio, and films created during the exhibition will be on display in a final week that aims to embody the resilience and force of survivors holding the Atlanta creative community to a higher standard.

A website has been set up for the project to live on after the exhibition's closing. Ifitoldyougallery.com will serve as an archive for the completed films and writings, as well as artist bios and a [schedule of programming](#).

Curated and Presented by:

Gina Livingston, Founder, Medium Arts

A.D. "Kaya" Clark, Photographer/Artist

Melissa Alexander (Phillis.Iller), Photographer/Filmmaker

Grace Gardner, Curator, TILA Studios

Rev. Taryn Strauss, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta

Lauren J. Harris, Gallery Manager/Curator

Quianah Upton, Founder, Arbitrary Living

Talecia Tucker, Founder, Pretty Major Clothing Co./Artist

Jac Kuntz, Arts Journalist

Pamela Barba, Founder, Vamos Ladies

Participating Artists:

Jasmine Nicole

Maryam Moma

Ayanna Smith

Chakura Kineard

Hope Hilton

Sierra King

Neka King

Quianah Upton

Monica Ealey

Yun Bai

Victoria Allen

Felicia Julien

Lewinale Havette

Victoria Garcia

Jessica Caldas