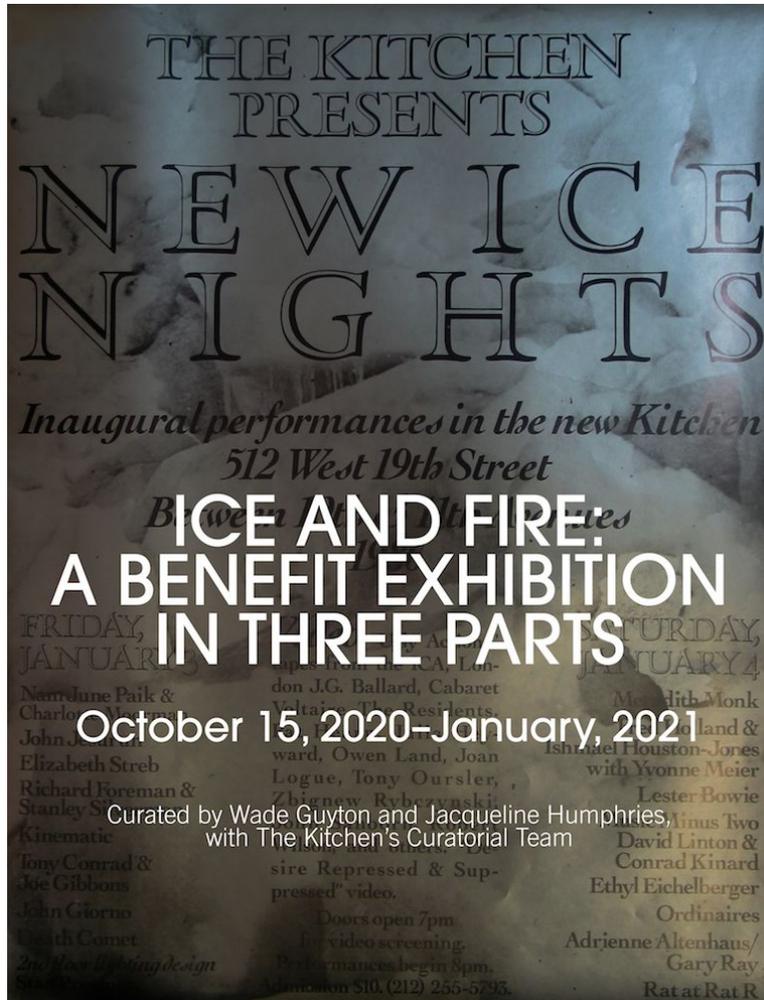


The Kitchen

Ice and Fire: A Benefit Exhibition in Three Parts
October 15, 2020–January 2021



Participating artists: Ai Weiwei, Ei Arakawa, Cory Arcangel, John Armleder, Ed Atkins, Tauba Auerbach, Robert Bordo, Carol Bove, Cecily Brown, Abraham Cruzvillegas, Roe Ethridge, Sam Falls, Cy Gavin, Peter Fischli, Nan Goldin, Mark Grotjahn, Wade Guyton, Peter Halley, Mary Heilmann, Rachel Harrison, Charline von Heyl, Jacqueline Humphries, Alex Israel, Michael Krebber, Barbara Kruger, Simone Leigh, Ralph Lemon, Zoe Leonard, Klara Lidén, Robert Longo, Robert Mapplethorpe, Rodney McMillian, Senga Nengudi, Ken Okiishi, Tony Oursler, Virginia Overton, Laura Owens, Mai-Thu Perret, Stephen Prina, Matthew Ritchie, Ed Ruscha, Taryn Simon, Haim Steinbach, Emily Sundblad, Wolfgang Tillmans, Rosemarie Trockel, Danh Võ, Mary Weatherford, T. J. Wilcox, Christopher Williams, Jordan Wolfson, Christopher Wool

***Ice and Fire* will be viewable online through an exhibition website launching on October 22:
www.512w19.thekitchen.org**

In January 1986, The Kitchen moved from Soho to 512 West 19th Street and presented an inaugural event called *New Ice Nights*, described as “two evenings of performance and media: a fire sale to accelerate the current thaw.” Three and a half decades later, The Kitchen is pleased to announce *Ice and Fire*, a benefit exhibition featuring artworks by artists from throughout the organization’s community in New York and beyond. Organized by artists and Kitchen board members Wade Guyton and Jacqueline Humphries with The Kitchen’s curatorial team, the exhibition will be installed on all floors of the organization’s three-story building on 19th Street in Chelsea. Funds raised through this benefit will go toward a planned renovation of these spaces on the occasion of The Kitchen’s 50th anniversary, ensuring that the organization will remain a platform for artists in the historic and beloved building it has called home since 1986.

The Kitchen’s 19th Street space has been closed to the public since March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and will remain closed in preparation for the renovation project, which will begin in 2021. Given the current state of the building, and in line with The Kitchen’s commitment to experimental program formats, *Ice and Fire* will take speculative shape as an exhibition that is available for viewing largely through reproductions seen online and in a forthcoming exhibition catalogue. A dynamic online viewing room (512w19.thekitchen.org) will present images of the included artworks and installation views alongside newly created artworks by artists including Roe Ethridge, Tony Oursler, and others who will document the exhibition in photographs and videos. These commissioned works will allow viewers to see the exhibition through the artists’ lenses as they respond to the artworks on display and their relationships to the spaces around them. Capturing this unique, transitional moment in The Kitchen’s history, the images will make normally unseen spaces of the institution viewable to the public (in some cases for the first time) and will record the building in its current state, before renovation begins.

Ice and Fire includes more than forty artists who have enduring relationships with The Kitchen, featuring many who first exhibited or performed soon after the organization’s founding in 1971—including Nan Goldin, Barbara Kruger, Robert Longo, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Senga Nengudi—as well as others who contributed to the program within the past decade, such as Cory Arcangel, Ed Atkins, Abraham Cruzvillegas, Sam Falls, Simone Leigh, Zoe Leonard, and Danh Võ. The exhibition will unfold in three parts between October 2020 and January 2021, with additional works rotating into the spaces. The Kitchen is grateful to the gallery and foundation partners for their longstanding generosity to The Kitchen, and for their continuing commitment to artists. The Exclusive Print Partner for the exhibition is Absolut Art. Over the course of the exhibition, Absolut Art will produce three benefit prints to raise funds for The Kitchen’s renovations, the first of which will be made by Lawrence Weiner. This partnership underscores the commitment that Absolut Art and The Kitchen share to making a diverse range of artworks accessible to a broad public.

The exhibition engages directly with the physical features and historical traces within The Kitchen’s building. The structure at 512 West 19th Street was constructed as an ice house during the 1920s, and in later decades became a film production studio and, in the 1970s and after, a functioning studio for artists such as Robert Whitman. Over this time and through these various uses, the building was transformed from a cavernous empty volume to a multi-floor structure populated by large and small spaces—which themselves have been continually re-adapted over the years to serve new purposes, from theater and dressing room to gallery and offices. Mirroring The Kitchen’s

multi-faceted programs, curators and artists have designated the spaces to serve shifting functions as TV studio, theater, gallery, lecture hall, concert venue, club, poetry stage, conference room, activist meeting place, dance theater, media lab, choreography studio, and so much more. In fact, the makeshift cubicles of The Kitchen's current administrative offices on the third floor are located today in what was initially a theater, and on the west wall of that space you can still see the outline of a window where ships used to load ice into the building.

Calling attention to this mercurial history, *Ice and Fire* will be installed throughout these areas, repurposing them anew to display artwork and administrative fixtures in immediate juxtaposition. Pieces by artists will be situated amid the technical and administrative equipment—such as theater lights and patch cords, photocopier and printers, and office and packaging supplies—that make possible the presentation of art while typically remaining hidden from public view. This approach to the installation makes palpable the different experiences—and living legacy—embedded in this singular building that is adored by artists for both its grandeur and its idiosyncrasies. At the same time, the exhibition's configuration underscores how artists and staff alike have continuously navigated the obstacles presented by these converted rooms. While making tangible The Kitchen's cherished cultural history in these spaces, the seemingly provisional nature of the installation also makes clear how precarious the institution's future is in this building—and demonstrates that repairs to the spaces are sorely needed to enable artists to create the kinds of work they want to make today. The transformation of the surrounding Chelsea neighborhood amplifies the urgency of this project for The Kitchen, with new construction threatening to crowd out one of the city's oldest non-profit arts organizations.

While the curators conceived the mediated, digital exhibition format of *Ice and Fire* in response to the context of the current pandemic, the physical unreachability also points up both The Kitchen's risk of disappearance and its legacy of being hidden in plain sight: renowned among artists and institutions, yet impossible to define.

As curators Guyton and Humphries observe:

For being so influential, [The Kitchen] interestingly remains an unknown in the established art world, and strangely unknowable among those who know it best. In a way, its power even comes from how it is unknowable. Unspoiled, unpopularized, mysterious, weird. But if you know, you know.

It serves and embraces many micro-audiences rather than phantasmagoric mass audiences that many even younger institutions chase after. It is nimble and gets there before anyone else, and also probably goes where no one else would.

The Kitchen's Executive Director and Chief Curator Tim Griffin adds:

Time and again, artists who work at The Kitchen say how they can feel history inside the walls, and how the building speaks to them and changes their work. Rare among arts organizations, it is a space still full of shadows.

We're deeply indebted to all the incredibly generous artists who have contributed to this benefit exhibition in order to ensure a next generation of artists and audiences will come to know this place.

Ice and Fire is curated and organized by artists (and Kitchen board members) Wade Guyton and Jacqueline Humphries with The Kitchen's curatorial team of Tim Griffin, Elizabeth Wiet, Matthew Lyons, Lumi Tan, and Alison Burstein.

APRIL 24, 1974

DEAR FELLOW ARTISTS,

IT'S RECENTLY COME TO OUR ATTENTION THAT THE KITCHEN AT 59 WOOSTER STREET IS HAVING DIFFICULTY RAISING \$3,000 IN AMORTIZED RENT. THEY MUST RAISE THIS SUM BY MAY 31, 1974.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, FEEL THAT THE KITCHEN HAS PROVIDED A UNIQUE SERVICE TO ARTISTS LIVING AND WORKING IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA OF NYC. IT IS THE ONLY PUBLIC FACILITY IN THIS AREA DEVOTED TO SHOWING EXPERIMENTAL WORKS BY ARTISTS INVOLVED IN THE AREAS OF MUSIC AND VIDEO (AND RELATED PERFORMANCES). FURTHERMORE, IT IS ONE OF THE FEW PLACES IN NYC WHERE THESE TYPES OF WORKS MAY BE SEEN. THE LOSS OF THE KITCHEN WOULD SERIOUSLY UNDERMINE THE EFFORTS OF ARTISTS WORKING IN THESE AREAS TO SHARE THEIR WORK WITH THE PUBLIC.

WE URGE THOSE WHO ARE IN A FINANCIAL POSITION TO CONSIDER THE KITCHEN'S PLIGHT, TO RENDER ^{IT} ~~THEM~~ ASSISTANCE.

NAME	ADDRESS
JOHN FISCHER	83 LEONARD ST NY - NY - 10013
DAVIDSON GIGLIOTTI	MAPLE BEL PAIN LANESVILLE N.Y. 12450
Beryl Korb	57 Fifth Ave NYC NY 10003
W. Phillips	415 Lafayette St. NYC. NY 10003
Howard K. ...	107 E 4th St NY NY 10009
Joseph ...	197 E 4th St. NYC NY 10009
Armin ...	122 Spring St. NYC NY 10012

About The Kitchen in Anticipation of its 50th Anniversary:

In the nearly fifty years since its founding in 1971 by video artists Steina and Woody Vasulka, The Kitchen has served an essential function in providing a community and context for kinds of artmaking and discourse that could be housed nowhere else. From its original focus on video art to its groundbreaking embrace of interdisciplinarity, The Kitchen has strived to offer what Steina Vasulka called "a home for the homeless" in art. Following this mandate, The Kitchen became a

place for artists whose groundbreaking work demands an alternative institutional context whose very shape can answer directly to the desires and needs of an emerging artistic community.

The Kitchen took its name from its initial location in the former kitchen of the Mercer Arts Center at 240 Mercer Street. After operating in that space from 1971–1973, the organization moved to its own loft on the corner of Wooster and Broome Streets from 1973–1985. Noise complaints were common during the time in this Soho loft, and ultimately these neighborhood issues and other factors prompted The Kitchen to relocate to its three-story Chelsea space in January 1986.

In its early years, The Kitchen solidified its reputation as a place renowned for its firsts in art, music, and performance. To name just a few early examples: the first concert by Talking Heads in 1975; the first performance of Philip Glass and Robert Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach* in 1976; Robert Mapplethorpe's first exhibition, titled *Pictures*, in 1977; Sherrie Levine's first solo exhibition and the legendary downtown concert series *New Music, New York* in 1979; the first presentation of Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills*, Julius Eastman's landmark *Crazy N****r*, and Laurie Anderson's *United States Part II* in 1980; the pivotal exhibition *Pictures and Promises* organized by Barbara Kruger in 1981; and Nam June Paik's *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* and Adrian Piper's *Funk Lessons* in 1984, among so many other key moments for artists and for New York's cultural landscape.

And this is only a fraction of those artists who have made groundbreaking work inside The Kitchen's walls in both Soho and Chelsea. The 19th Street building has been the site of numerous seminal events such as the first concert by Antony and the Johnsons in 1997 and, more recently, game-changing exhibitions and performances by artists like Chantal Akerman, Gretchen Bender (whose *Total Recall* first showed here in 1987), Meriem Bennani, Simone Leigh (whose first solo exhibition was at The Kitchen in 2012), Ralph Lemon, Rodney McMillian, Moor Mother (Camae Ayewa), Virginia Overton, Sondra Perry, Tyshawn Sorey, Danh Võ, and Anicka Yi. Additionally, The Kitchen has hosted in Chelsea a range of impactful group exhibitions such as *Besides, With, Against, and Yet: Abstraction and The Ready-Made Gesture* (2009), *From Minimalism into Algorithm* (2016), and our collaboration with The Racial Imaginary Institute, titled *On Whiteness* (2018). Among the other artists who have presented work across the decades at The Kitchen are (in no particular order) Steve Reich, Greg Tate, Arto Lindsay, Anthony Braxton, Arthur Russell, Beastie Boys, Brian Eno, Cecil Taylor, Charlemagne Palestine, Claudia Rankine, Dan Graham, Bill T. Jones, Debbie Harry, John Cale, Jazzy Jeff, Eliane Radigue, Jeff Koons, Fab Five Freddy, George Lewis, John Cage, Karen Finley, Keith Haring, Keith Sonnier, Kerry James Marshall, Kiki Smith, La Monte Young, Darius James, Laurie Spiegel, Lucinda Childs, Maryanne Amacher, Morton Subotnick, Muhal Richard Abrams, Wadada Leo Smith, Okwui Okpokwasili, Glenn Branca, Fred Moten, Richard Serra, Robert Ashley, Robert Gober, Rock Steady Crew, Sonic Youth, Steve Paxton, The Raincoats, Tony Conrad, Vijay Iyer, Urban Bush Women, Yuka C. Honda, Zeena Parkins, Jack Goldstein, and Vernon Reid.

Just as artists have shaped The Kitchen's programmatic directions over the past five decades, their abiding sense of community and collective investment in the institution have been central to its longevity. Echoing a fundraising petition (shown above) that artists initiated in 1974 to raise money to cover rent expenses, *Ice and Fire* is made possible by the generosity of valued members of The

Kitchen's extended network who are committed to improving 512 West 19th Street in order to solidify the institution's ability to support its artists and audiences well into its next fifty years.

The Kitchen's planned renovation will make significant improvements to the building without altering its historic character. Rather than expanding the institution's footprint, this project will make fundamental improvements to the building's infrastructure—from the lobby and stairwells to the elevator and dressing room—while also creating a new residency space for artists and small-scale gatherings and a new third-floor gallery. As important to this project is The Kitchen's ongoing investment in the Chelsea community. Since The Kitchen arrived on West 19th Street as one of the first art institutions in a neighborhood that was, at the time, primarily industrial, the area has evolved dramatically, becoming a concentrated hub for commercial art galleries, nonprofit art spaces, and theaters alike. In recent years, as Chelsea has continued to transform, many organizations have been priced out by skyrocketing rents and the prioritization of new construction. Yet throughout, The Kitchen has remained in its location, persistently upholding within the neighborhood the experimental, artist-centric spirit that defines the institution and that motivated the institution's staff and board to make the unexpected choice in 1986 to relocate to this very space in order to foster new opportunities for artistic production. The planned renovation ensures that The Kitchen will be able to function effectively within its building for decades to come, even as the landscape around it changes.

Exhibition Sponsors and Credits

Gallery and Foundation Partners: 303 Gallery, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, Bortolami Gallery, James Cohan, Sadie Coles HQ, Paula Cooper Gallery, Massimo De Carlo, Thomas Erben Gallery, Gagosian, Gladstone Gallery, Marian Goodman Gallery, Greene Naftali, Hauser & Wirth, kurimanzutto, Simon Lee Gallery, Lévy Gorvy, Lisson Gallery, The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Metro Pictures, Carolina Nitsch, Friedrich Petzel, Reena Spaulings Fine Art, Sprüth Magers, David Zwirner

Framing Sponsors: Minagawa Art Lines and City Frame

Exclusive Print Partner: Absolut Art

About Absolut Art:

Founded with the mission of making art accessible and affordable, Absolut Art is a tightly curated, global art gallery that sells limited edition prints that ship within 48-hours. Absolut Art collaborates with all levels of artists and prioritizes diversity. The direct-to-consumer model focuses attention on creating a quality experience for collectors and artists alike, offering exclusive collections co-curated by the likes of Wu-Tang Clan and New York's Metrograph movie theater, and charitable partnerships with leading artists such as Kehinde Wiley. Currently home to prints by Mona Chalabi, Tiff Massey, Hank Willis Thomas, Shantell Martin, Jayson Musson, and more, the platform is an extension of Absolut's thirty year history of working with artists like Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, and Louise Bourgeois. For more information, please visit www.absolutart.com.

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