

# artspace

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## PRESS RELEASE

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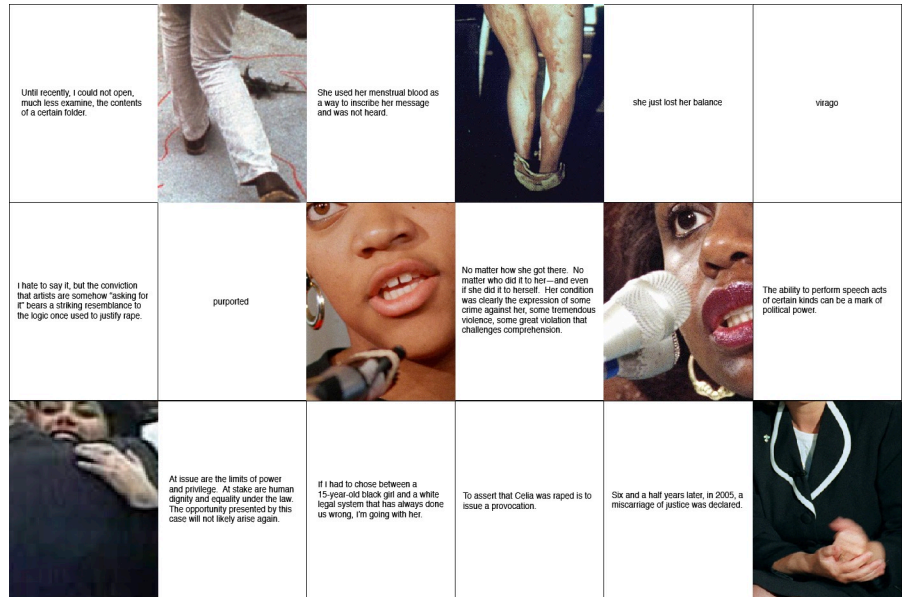
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**Aliza Shvarts: Off Scene**  
May 11- June 30, 2018

Location  
Artspace, 50 Orange St., New Haven, CT

### Related Events

Opening Reception with Roundtable Discussion: Friday, May 18, 5-8pm



**New Haven CT** — Artspace is pleased to present this solo exhibition of works by Aliza Shvarts that span the past ten years of the artist's performance-based practice, ranging from previously censored materials to new site-specific work. Shvarts first came to national attention in 2008 as a student at Yale University for her undergraduate work *Untitled [Senior Thesis]*, which consisted of a yearlong performance of self-induced miscarriages. Declared a fiction by the university and banned from public exhibition, this unfinished work marks areas of inquiry she continues to explore: how the body means and matters, how the subject consents and dissents.

Shvarts explores everyday acts of biological and social maintenance as well as visual and linguistic generation. She uses an expanded notion of performance, usually mediated by video, text, installation, and digital media, to frame the often imperceptible historical, legal, and social forces that circumscribe our real-life capacities to act. Her work asks what becomes possible when one's speech is silenced, one's acts interdicted, or one's body deemed a "fiction." What aesthetic potentials lie at the margins of legibility? What creative agencies, representational strategies, and critical collectivities gather off-scene?

The title of the exhibition references the artists' investment in performance, one that shifts our attention from the center to the social, historical, and material surround. At once linguistic and bodily, the "off scene" refers to the circulation of gossip, rumor, viral text, and other extra-canonical forms of knowing, as well as the body's capacity to disrupt—that is, the capacity to be excessive, overly expressive or *ob-scene*.

## Events

In parallel with this exhibition, Shvarts will offer a workshop as part of the [Silence Breakers](#) exhibition at the Ely Center of Contemporary Art that considers the personal and political uses of the banner in the internet age. The workshop will invite participants to exchange of stories in which the internet left them vulnerable to public shaming, and how these individual experiences of shame can galvanize a collective demand. This workshop will take place on **Sunday, March 18 from 1-3pm**. Online [registration](#) is required. (*Location: The John Slade Ely House, 51 Trumbull Street, New Haven, CT*)

**Friday, May 18 at 5:30pm**, before the Opening Reception, Shvarts will host a Roundtable Discussion at Artspace with Robert Post (Sterling Professor of Law, Yale Law School), which will consider free speech, reproductive rights, and the aesthetic, legal, and ideological frameworks that choreograph the body's capacity to produce meaning. This event is free and open to the public. (*Location: Artspace, 50 Orange St., New Haven, CT*)

**Saturday, June 30 at 4pm**, Shvarts will host a reading at Artspace by fiction writer Valerie Werder from *Notable Fictions*, a performative/durational digital editing project that critically examines terms of legibility and notability in a public sphere. Werder's textual performance, which coincides with the duration of this exhibition, explores the relationships between the writing of fiction and the writing of history. This event is free and open to the public. (*Location: Artspace, 50 Orange St., New Haven, CT*)

Image: *Cite/Site* (detail), 2018, 72 18inx24in posters

Mary Kelly, *Imaging Desire* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998) xv; Suzanne Lacy, *Three Weeks in May* (1977); Gayatri Spivak, "If Only," *The Scholar & Feminist Online*, 4:2 (Spring 2006); Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Rape Scene)* (1973); Carl Andre in interview with Calvin Tompkins, "The Materialist: Carl Andre's Eminent Obscurity," *The New Yorker* (December 5, 2011); Andrea Fraser, "In Conversation: Andrea Fraser," *The Brooklyn Rail*, 1 October 2004; Tawana Brawley, 1988; Patricia J. Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991) 169-70; Anita Hill, 1991; Rae Langton, "Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 22:4 (Autumn, 1993) 299; Monica Lewinsky, 1997; "Text of [Paula] Jones Appeal," *The Washington Post*, 31 July 1998; Greg Howard, "Al Sharpton, Reconsidered," *The New York Times*, 9 March 2018; Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) 83; Breda O'Brien, "Miscarriage of Justice: Paul McCabe and Nora Wall," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 95:380 (Winter 2006): 355-364; Patsy Ramsey, 1997.