



microscope gallery

1329 Willoughby Avenue
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Marni Kotak

“Dancing in the Oval Office”

October 18 - November 24, 2019

Opening Friday October 18, 6-9pm



Image courtesy of Marni Kotak and Microscope Gallery

Microscope is very pleased to present “Dancing in the Oval Office”, Marni Kotak’s fifth solo exhibition at the gallery, featuring works in performance, installation, video and painting made in response to the 2016 election and current presidency.

The title piece is a performance and installation that finds Kotak dancing continuously each day of the exhibit within a recreation and personal reinterpretation of the White House Oval Office. As is a custom in her family, Kotak uses dance in this work as a way to transform her daily anxieties into a cathartic and liberating act. In this way, Kotak seeks to reclaim her right to joy as an individual and an American, standing in opposition to those who abuse power, or use fear and other authoritarian methods. She encourages as many people as possible to join in and dance with her daily in the gallery.

Within Kotak’s Oval Office, elements such as the executive desk, sofas, armchairs, and a carpet with the presidential seal each mimic those of the actual office, but have been altered to suggest a more open, inclusive, and peaceful society. Although eight flags hang in the current Oval Office, Kotak has chosen the historical norm of two, offering her own hand-sewn versions of the American and Presidential flags and featuring materials culled from her own life as an artist and mother. The office is situated on a gold, oval dance floor surrounded by sheer curtains of the twelve colors of the spectrum, and lit by rotating disco ball lights. Music is from a selection of cassette mix-tapes from the artist’s youth and digital playlists selected by her son Ajax, among others.

“Since I was a baby dance has been a central part of my personal and family life. ... And as an adult I have found that when life feels overwhelming, sometimes the only thing to do is dance. I have been so personally bothered by the current presidency and corruption over the past three years, and feeling like I have to do something about it, so dancing came to mind. A saying in my family has always been: ‘The purpose of the game is not to win; the purpose of the game is to learn how to dance.’” — MK

Other works on view on the walls surrounding the installation include a new series of thirty-six acrylic on wood panel paintings. Each features multi-colored text — often re-written over, overlapped, or erased — extracted from her diary entries from each month of the past three years. Additionally, a series of ink and oil pastel drawings and writings on actual \$1 bills, framed in gold memorabilia cases, push the political undertones of the exhibition further and remind us of the values of people's lives over those of convention and commerce.

Marni Kotak: "Dancing in the Oval Office" opens on October 18th and runs through November 24th, 2019, with an opening reception on Friday October 18th, 6-9pm.

Gallery Hours: Thursday through Monday 1-6pm, and by appointment. For additional information and high res images please contact the gallery at inquiries@microscopegallery.com or by telephone at 347.925.1433.

Marni Kotak is a multimedia and performance artist presenting everyday life being lived. She has received international attention for her durational performances and exhibitions, most notably "The Birth of Baby X" (2011) in which she gave birth to her son as a live performance and "Mad Meds" (2014) during which the artist slowly withdrew from psychiatric medications prescribed for postpartum depression. In "Treehouse" (2017), Kotak — who had just experienced a devastating fire in her home — created a refuge for herself and others to pause from the overwhelming aspects of life. Kotak's works have also appeared at the Santiago Museum of Contemporary Art, Santiago, Chile, Artists Space, Exit Art, Momenta Art, English Kills Gallery, Grace Exhibition Space, among others. She has performed extensively in the US and abroad.

Kotak's work appears in *The Art of Feminisim: Images that shaped the Fight for Equality, 1957-2017* by Helena Rickett (Chronicle Books, 2018) and *Blackwells Companions to Contemporary Art: A Companion to Feminist Art*, released September 2019 among other publications. Her exhibitions have been featured in *ArtFCity*, *Artforum*, *Blouin Artinfo*, *Art Pulse*, *The Huffington Post*, *Hyperallergic*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Studio International*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, *Time Magazine*, *Washington Post*, among many others. She has also appeared on Good Morning America (ABC), CBC Radio, NPR, and other broadcasts. Grants include Franklin Furnace Fund Award and the Brooklyn Arts Council among others. Marni Kotak received a BA from Bard College and an MFA from Brooklyn College.