

Soul Asylum
Weinberg/Newton Gallery
(formerly David Weinberg Photography)
ART EXHIBITION AT-A-GLANCE

EXHIBITION TITLE: *Soul Asylum*

EXHIBITION DATES: January 22 through March 26, 2016

OVERVIEW: *Soul Asylum* is a collection of artworks that give voice to the immigration justice movement in the Midwest and internationally. The movement's message materializes as painting, sculpture, performance, and installation. Focusing on detention and deportation as it affects citizens and noncitizens alike, the artists in *Soul Asylum* work to provide structure and language for communities kept silent by fear of losing their freedom. The exhibition aims to amplify grassroots' and national organizations' efforts to reform immigration policy in the US, and elevate the conversation to the front lines of civil rights discourse.

ARTISTS: Tania Bruguera, Díaz Lewis, Jenny Polak, and the Albany Park Theater Project

LOCATION & HOURS: Weinberg/Newton Gallery, (formerly David Weinberg Photography)
300 West Superior Street, Suite #203, Chicago, Illinois
Monday – Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm.

NON-PROFIT PARTNER: *Soul Asylum* is curated in partnership with Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org. Human Rights Watch defends the rights of people worldwide. They scrupulously investigate abuses, expose the facts widely, and pressure those with power to respect rights and secure justice. Human Rights Watch is an independent, international organization that works as part of a vibrant movement to uphold human dignity and advance the cause of human rights for all. All exhibition proceeds support Human Rights Watch and the artists.

**ABOUT WEINBERG/
NEWTON GALLERY:** The mission of Weinberg/Newton Gallery (formerly David Weinberg Photography) is to educate and inform the public on social justice issues. Through artwork and programming, the gallery provides an engaging environment for discourse on critical contemporary issues facing our communities. Connecting artists with social justice organizations, the gallery works to drive change and cultivate a culture of consciousness. www.d-weinberg.com

All Media Requests: Please contact Orly Telisman Public Relations at 312-375-1230 or orly@orlypr.com.

###

Soul Asylum

January 22 - March 26, 2016

For Immediate Release. January 5th, 2016 (Chicago, IL). Opening January 22, the newly renamed Weinberg/Newton Gallery (formerly David Weinberg Photography, d-weinberg.com) presents, *Soul Asylum*, an exhibition amplifying the immigration justice movement in the Midwestern US and internationally. The show is curated in collaboration with Human Rights Watch.

Featuring works by **Tania Bruguera, Jenny Polak, Díaz Lewis**, and the **Albany Park Theater Project**, *Soul Asylum* gives voice to the immigration justice movement through sound, painting, sculpture, performance, and installation. Each work is inspired by immigrant communities through their stories of struggle and celebrated victories. The artworks in *Soul Asylum* are participatory and invite the viewer to directly engage with gallery installations and ephemeral performances. With a focus on detention and deportation as it affects citizens and noncitizens alike, *Soul Asylum* artists work to provide structure and language for communities routinely kept silent by fear. The exhibition aims to advance the efforts of grassroots and national organizations to reform immigration policy in the US and to move the conversation to the front lines of civil rights discourse.

IN THE EXHIBITION

Tania Bruguera first presented the *Migrant Manifesto* in December 2011, at the United Nations Student Conference on Human Rights, and again on International Migrants Day at an Occupy Wall Street rally that same month. The manifesto was written as part of her project, *Immigrant Movement International*, an artist- initiated socio-political movement headquartered at the Queens Museum of Art in the multinational neighborhood of Corona, Queens, NY. The project partnered with immigrant communities and social service initiatives to question the meaning of global citizenship and to address the conditions of immigrants living in the US. In *Soul Asylum*, the manifesto urges that “Dignity has no nationality”. The text is a call to action, clearly and eloquently written, and is available online in 12 languages. Like the chorus of a political punk song, the text desires to be read aloud repeatedly. It is a determined declaration of respect towards migrant people.

Within view of the manifesto, Jenny Polak's *Podium for Citizens and Non-citizens* offers a unique platform for public speaking. Uniting the dichotomy of citizen status, one half is built with suburban house siding while the other half is composed of detention center fencing. Inspired by activists who successfully halted the construction of a for-profit detention center in Crete, Illinois, the podium commemorates this victory and is intended for use by these activists after the exhibition for future public engagements. Polak's practice imagines critical architecture for collaboration between community members of every status. Retrieving the spirit of a civil rights hymn, unison and resilience characterize Polak's vocal structure, all the while humming the potential that *We Shall Overcome*.

High-resolution images of artwork are available upon request.

Media Requests: Please contact Orly Telisman Public Relations at 312-375-1230 or orly@orlypr.com

To demonstrate its priority to enforce immigration law, the US Congress mandated that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) maintain a quota of 34,000 detained immigrants per day in its 250 facilities around the country. This “bed quota” inspired the collaborative Díaz Lewis’s contribution: an exhibition-long performance-based installation. In the installation, pillows will be created daily from clothing donated by undocumented individuals in the Chicagoland area. With cooperation from the Interfaith Committee for Detained Immigrants, Díaz Lewis will make tangible the human impact of the bed mandate. Each pillow is available for purchase, priced to reflect the amount of taxpayer money spent each day to detain one person. 100% of the proceeds for this project support the efforts of national and local immigration organizations. An ever-growing pile of pillows, the installation translates human experience in a bold and compelling way that statistics alone cannot. It is an impossible lullaby dedicated to the invisible workforce that surrounds us.

The Albany Park Theater Project (AFTP) is a multiethnic youth theater ensemble that designs and performs the theatrical production *Home/Land*. Interviews conducted by these youth in various locations—from Little Village in Chicago to Crete, Illinois—uncovered hundreds of stories and inspired their project. AFTP’s contribution to *Soul Asylum* is an audio document of these stories recited for the public by this youth ensemble. In addition, ensemble members will perform excerpts from *Home/Land* on select Friday evenings during *Soul Asylum*’s run. (Please see our calendar of events.)

NON-PROFIT PARTNER

Human Rights Watch is Weinberg/Newton Gallery’s nonprofit partner for the exhibition. HRW is a research and advocacy organization that works to promote respect for human rights through systematic investigation of human rights abuses worldwide. Like the artists in *Soul Asylum*, HRW has listened to these many voices with the intent to change the world in which we live. In over 90 countries, HRW joins the global call for dignity, respect, compassion, and political change by insisting those with power respect human rights and secure justice. In partnership with HRW, our exhibition and programming calendar seeks to further dialogue and bring about new ways of being heard. Together, the artists and our partnering organization ask *can you hear the sound of my voice? Can you hear me singing?*

ABOUT WEINBERG/NEWTON GALLERY

The mission of Weinberg/Newton Gallery (formerly known as David Weinberg Photography) is to educate and inform the public on social justice issues. Through artwork and programming, the gallery provides an engaging environment for discourse on critical contemporary issues facing our communities. Connecting artists with social justice organizations, the gallery works to drive change and cultivate a culture of consciousness. www.d-weinberg.com

High-resolution images of artwork are available upon request.

Media Requests: Please contact Orly Telisman Public Relations at 312-375-1230 or orly@orlypr.com

Soul Asylum Calendar of Events **January 22 – March 26, 2016**

All events will take place at Weinberg/Newton Gallery, 300 W. Superior #203, Chicago. Unless noted, all events are free and open to the public.

January 22, 5 to 8 pm - Opening Reception for *Soul Asylum*

Mondays, 1 to 4 p.m. & Saturdays 2 to 4 p.m.– *34,000 Pillows Workshop*

Join collaborative artists, Díaz Lewis, every Monday and Saturday throughout the duration of the exhibition for a pillow-sewing workshop in the back galleries. As an integral part of their performance-based installation, the artists work with the public to materialize the human impact of the US Congress imposed bed mandate for Immigration and Customs Enforcement through the construction of thousands of pillows made with clothing donated by undocumented immigrants. (please call to check times in advance)

February 4, noon to 1:30 p.m. – *From Aleppo to Chicago: Syrian Refugees and the Search for Peace*

Join Human Rights Watch's Refugee Program Director Bill Frelick, Chicago-area Syrian activist Suzanne Sahloul, and Illinois Coalition for Immigration and Refugee Rights' Executive Director Lawrence Benito as they discuss the humanitarian crisis facing Syrian refugees on multiple international and national front lines.

February 17, 5:30 to 7 p.m. – *Locked Up in the Land of the Free: Exposing US Detention Centers*

Join on-the-ground Human Rights Watch US Program Researcher Grace Meng and Chicago-area immigration activists and artists as they discuss their interdisciplinary work to document and reform harsh, outdated, and ineffective detention and deportation policies.

March 4, 6:30 to 8 p.m. – *BORDER LAND*

Albany Park Theater Project's "sublimely gifted" youth ensemble (*Chicago Sun-Times*) brings the gallery to life with site-responsive performances of real-life stories from Chicago's immigrant justice movement. Adapted especially for *Soul Asylum* from APTP's critically-acclaimed play *Home/Land*, this unique performance will tell stories of resilience in the face of the detention and deportation system.

March 5, 1 to 4 p.m. – *Amplify: Youth for Immigration Justice Open House*

All are welcome for an afternoon of intergenerational activism as we gather to amplify our voices and celebrate diverse strategies for change. The afternoon will highlight local immigration activist organizations and feature remarks from an on-the-ground Human Rights Watch researcher, as well as food, song, art, and performance.

March 22, noon to 1:30 p.m. – *Immigration Law Symposium*

Featuring Human Rights Watch US Program Director Alison Parker, a panel of immigration law specialists will consider implications of current immigration law. Presented in partnership with NextPoint Litigation Support Software and Service. CLE credit pending.

March 24, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. – *The Distance Traveled: an Albany Park Theater Project Fundraiser*

Discover "one of the true theatrical treasures of Chicago" (*Sun-Times*): Albany Park Theater Project's "sublimely gifted" youth ensemble animates the gallery with "Border Land," a performance installation inspired by real-life stories of resilience and resistance from

Soul Asylum Calendar of Events
January 22 – March 26, 2016

Chicago's immigrant justice movement, A cocktail reception follows to learn more about APTP's art, social justice and youth development work both on and off stage.
(RSVP information to be announced)

###

Soul Asylum

Artist Biographies

TANIA BRUGUERA

One of the leading political and performance artists of her generation, Bruguera researches ways in which Art can be applied to the everyday political life; focusing on the transformation of social affect into political effectiveness. Her long-term projects have been intensive interventions on the institutional structure of collective memory, education, and politics.

Recognized as one of the 100 Leading Global Thinkers by *Foreign Policy* magazine, she is a 2015 Herb Alpert Award winner, a Hugo Boss Prize finalist, a Yale University World Fellow, and is the first artist-in-residence in the New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA). In 2013, she was part of the team creating the first document on artistic freedom and cultural rights with the United Nation's Human Rights Council. Her survey show *Tania Bruguera: On the Political Imaginary* was selected best show at a University Gallery by The International Association of Art Critics. Her work was exhibited at Documenta 11, Venice Biennale, Tate Modern, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and Van Abbemuseum among others.

Bruguera continues working on the political rights of migrants through her long-term project Immigrant Movement International, and in May 2015 founded the Hannah Arendt International Institute for Activism, in Havana.

JENNY POLAK

Polak hails from England. Family stories of migration are behind her work. She has degrees in Architecture from Cambridge University, UK; in Art from St. Martins School of Art, London; and an MFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York. She also was a fellow at the Whitney Independent Study Program.

Polak works in a wide range of media in an idea-driven, activist, and site/community responsive practice, drawing on her background in architecture. Projects address immigrant detention and profiling, reframing relations between immigrants and citizens. Communities with which she has made art include Concerned Citizens of Crete; Our Lady of Guadalupe, Little Village, Chicago; immigrant detainees across the US; indigenous farmers in New Mexico; and Brooklyn ESOL learners. Polak followed the expanding detention industry from the 1990s and recently began to work with communities taking a stand against prison company profiteering disguised as neighborhood regeneration.

Polak has exhibited widely in the US and the UK, and created site-specific projects for numerous spaces. Her work has been discussed in books and publications including *The New York Times*, *The Newark Star-Ledger*, *The Guardian* (UK), *Brooklyn Rail*, *n-paradoxa*, and *Bad-At-Sports*, and has won support from New York Foundation for the Arts, the Graham Foundation for the Advanced Study of Visual Art, New York State Council on the Arts, and Franklin Furnace and residencies, including National Parks Service/Grand Canyon, Northwestern University, Newark Museum, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum.

Díaz Lewis

The artists Díaz Lewis work across the media of performance, photography, and video installation. The collaborative formed in October 2012, after the couple Alejandro Figueredo Díaz-Perera and Cara Megan Lewis met at the 11th Havana Biennial, Cuba. In the following year, Díaz and Lewis worked together across the divide, Diaz in Havana and Lewis in Chicago. Their photo book, *SMS: Simultaneous Moments of Silence* documents a year apart moving simultaneously through life in their distinct positions. *SMS* chronicles the impotence of human desire and the inability to be together; documented *SMS* messages reference the changes in travel regulations between the US and Cuba in 2012 and 2013. Their collaborative series of photos and subsequent related performance artworks ask the question "Can intimate and private actions catalyze or at least trace collective and political change?" A series of performances and video installations realized between 2014 - 2015 addressed the complexities of communication and the deconstruction of iconic symbols, simultaneously investigating how the political relationships and cultural distinctions between their two countries manifest on a micro or personal level. In the selection of topics such as rhetoric, immigration, and property rights, they are able to dissect relevant themes from two very distinct and often opposing angles.

ALBANY PARK THEATER PROJECT

APTP is a multi-ethnic, youth theater ensemble that inspires people to envision a more just and beautiful world. Hailed as "a world-class theater company" by the *Chicago Tribune* and as "a creative universe that simply has no equal" by the *Chicago Sun-Times*, APTP has devised and premiered 20 original plays based on the life experiences of people whose stories might otherwise go untold: immigrants, working-class Americans, and urban teens. In addition to its home theater in the Albany Park neighborhood on Chicago's northwest side, APTP also appears regularly at Goodman Theatre, where its recent performances have included *Feast* (2015), *God's Work* (2014), and *Home/Land* (2013). APTP is currently collaborating with New York-based Third Rail Projects to create *Learning Curve*, a site-specific, immersive performance that places audiences inside the walls of a Chicago public school and in the shoes of its students. *Learning Curve* will have its world premiere in Summer 2016, in a co-production with the Goodman. APTP is equally renowned for creating a space where teenagers embark on purposeful lives as adventurous dreamers and accomplished achievers. APTP nurtures its teen ensemble members with mentoring, tutoring, and a comprehensive college counseling program. Through these programs, APTP teens have achieved a 500% higher college graduation rate than the average for Chicago public school students. Among its many awards, APTP is the proud recipient of the Goodman's August Wilson Award, honoring its outstanding record of inclusion within the theater and across Chicago; National Immigrant Justice Center's Midwest Human Rights Award, for using the arts to advocate for the human rights of all people; and the Coming Up Taller Award, the nation's highest honor for arts organizations that nurture the creativity of young people. Visit APTP online at www.aptpchicago.org.

###

Soul Asylum

January 22 – March 26, 2016

Tania Bruguera

Díaz Lewis

Jenny Polak

Albany Park Theater Project

As a performer's presence becomes known, a room responds with quiet.

Open air over live microphone, breath through the voice box produces the vibrations of song.

A frequency emanating from the chest rattles the innards of an audience.

A room full of bodies exchanging vibrations audible and inaudible.

What incites an object to *resound*, to sing?

Inspired by the many powerful stories told from immigrant communities, the sculptures, performances, installation and paintings in the exhibition *Soul Asylum* provoke participation. The works charge the gallery with the latent vibrations and powerful implications of the human voice. Here storytelling as a practice of communicating facts produce within an audience embodied emotional responses to real, lived experiences. We are called to action and held accountable for what is learned. Stories like choral voices singing show us a vision of a better future. By engaging us in the biographies of immigrant justice community activists through themes of staging, documentation, narrative, commemoration and participation, the artworks are an invitation to join the chorus and sing these songs of resistance.

The works themselves are either participatory or products made from social action. Jenny Polak's *Podium for Citizens and Non-citizens* is human scale with megaphones attached to each side for volume amplification. Gallery visitors are invited to stand upon the podium and speak from the unique perspectives of protected citizens and restricted non-citizens. The collaborative Díaz Lewis construct a performance-based installation in the back galleries where they work to materialize the human impact of ICE's bed quota, a required average of 34,000 people detained every day. Díaz Lewis and workshop participants (on select days in the gallery) will sew together hundreds if not thousands of pillows, filling up the space with the pillows made with donated clothing, bedding and towels from undocumented immigrants drawing a connection to the fabric of their lives. Tania Bruguera presents the *Migrant Movement Manifesto*, a proclamation of respect towards migrants written as a part of her long term project *Immigrant Movement International*, an artist initiated socio-political movement joining multinational communities. The Albany Park Theater Project collaboratively designed and performed the theatrical production *Home/Land* in 2012 after many months of conducting ethnographic research with immigrant communities all over the Chicagoland area. Interviews conducted by their trained youth uncovered hundreds of stories that inspired their performance.

For the exhibition, APTP designs an audio document of these stories embodied by the youths through the recitation of their words.

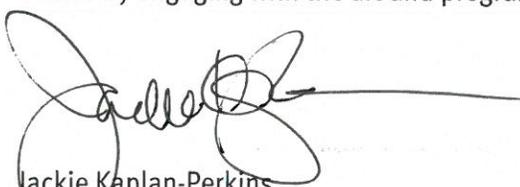
Human Rights Watch is a reporting agency that collects data around human rights violations and uses the information to influence policy reform. Like the artists in *Soul Asylum*, HRW has listened to these many voices with the intent to change the world we live in. Together, the artists and our partnering organization ask *can you hear the sound of my voice? Can you hear me singing?*

Human Rights Watch defends the rights of people worldwide. We do so by investigating abuses, exposing the facts widely, and pressuring those with power to respect rights and to secure justice.

Our researchers are on the ground in over 90 countries—building relationships with a network of local activists and community leaders to objectively determine the facts through rigorous investigation, witness accounts, forensic documentation, and meticulous fact checking. We use our findings to present specific recommendations, to strategically advocate with governments, rebel groups, corporations, international institutions and policymakers to end abuse and bring offenders to justice.

Human Rights Watch works in the medium of words to effect change—in our interviewing of victims, our reports, and our advocacy. However, we often rely on the power of visual art to amplify our message, harnessing art’s compelling ability to record and communicate injustice in a manner unbound by language. To that end, both Human Rights Watch and the art in this exhibit, *Soul Asylum*, share a common goal: to document, witness and give voice to human beings unjustly entangled in the US immigration detention system, and beyond.

We are grateful for the unique opportunity to collaborate with the Weinberg Newton Gallery on this exhibition, and hope that visitors will deepen their understanding of immigration issues within the United States by engaging with the art and programming, and take action to protect human rights.



Jackie Kaplan-Perkins
Director, Chicago and Midwest Region

ABOUT US: WEINBERG/NEWTON GALLERY

David Weinberg Photography is proud to announce the gallery's new name: **Weinberg/Newton Gallery**.



The change reflects and acknowledges the influence of attorney and philanthropist Jerry Newton on the gallery's work, particularly in building relationships with partner nonprofit organizations. Newton actively has been involved with organizations including the ACLU of Illinois, Human Rights Watch, and Personal PAC for more than four decades. Together, David Weinberg and Jerry Newton have guided the Weinberg/Newton Family Foundation since 2009.

Weinberg/Newton Gallery is an exhibition space with a mission to educate and inform the public on social justice issues. Weinberg/Newton Gallery's artwork and programming provide an engaging environment for discourse on critical contemporary issues facing our communities. Connecting artists with social justice organizations, the gallery works to drive change and cultivate a culture of consciousness. All exhibition revenue supports the partner nonprofit organization and contributing artists.

Weinberg/Newton Gallery originally debuted in 2006 as David Weinberg Photography, a contemporary art gallery in Chicago's River North neighborhood. In 2011, the studio shifted to an artist-run space featuring Weinberg's own photographic work.

A Space for Artists and Issues

In addition to generating revenue for nonprofit organizations, these institutions also benefit from access to the gallery for fundraising events, outreach, and education.

Artists appreciate a space that embraces their commitment to social justice.

Weinberg/Newton Gallery is a place for engagement, building initiatives toward community and educational development through panel discussions, artist talks, educational events, and more.

Newton and Weinberg continue to maintain a steadfast commitment to social justice issues and the organizations that advocate on behalf of this work.

###

Media Requests: Please contact Orly Telisman Public Relations at 312-375-1230 or orly@orlypr.com