

**Patricia Cronin**  
***Shrine for Girls, Venice***

**Collateral Event of the 56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia**

**Chiesa di San Gallo**  
**Campo San Gallo, Venezia, Italy**

**Curated by Ludovico Pratesi**  
**Presented by The Brooklyn Rail Curatorial Projects**

**May 9 – November 22, 2015**  
**Official Opening: May 6, 7 & 8, 10am – 6pm**



Patricia Cronin, *Saris*, 2015, Photo: Doug Schwab

Although the United Nations passed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, women and girls around the world continue to be among the most vulnerable members of our global society. Often facing violence, repression, and enforced ignorance, this young female populace is subjected to a horrifying existence on earth.

Inside the exquisite sixteenth-century Church of San Gallo, where Bill Viola showed in 2007, New York-based conceptual artist Patricia Cronin has created a shrine in their honor. For over two decades, critically acclaimed artist Patricia Cronin has created compelling works, many with social justice themes focusing on gender. Here, she has gathered hundreds of girls' clothes from around the world and arranged them on three stone altars to act as relics of these young martyrs. Commemorating their spirit, this dramatic site-specific installation is a meditation on the incalculable loss of unrealized potential and hopelessness in the face of unfathomable human cruelty; juxtaposed against the obligation and mission we have as citizens of the world to combat this prejudice.

The central altar exhibits brightly colored saris worn by girls in India, three of who were recently gang raped, murdered and left to hang from trees. The left altar displays hijabs representing the 276 schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram in Nigeria. And the third altar presents a pile of aprons & uniforms

symbolizing those worn by girls at the Magdalene Asylums and Laundries, forced labor institutions for young women without options in Ireland, the United Kingdom and America as recently as 1996.

Shrines, part of every major religion's practice, provide a space for contemplation, petition and rituals of remembrance. In this exhibition, dramatically illuminated mounds of their clothing are elevated to the status of art to bring awareness to this urgent crisis, while providing a space to reflect and, hopefully, inspire viewers into action. One framed photograph of each of these three tragic events will accompany this installation, which hopes to propose a new and reflective dialogue between gender, memory and justice.

The installation is located at the Chiesa di San Gallo, a historic-site destination near the heart of Venetian culture and society, Piazza San Marco. Built in 1581 as an oratory for the Orseolo family hospice, it was enlarged to its present form in 1703. Long deconsecrated, this church – the smallest in the city of Venice, features elaborate stone altars, Corinthian columns, wood panel walls and a checkerboard-patterned marble floor.

## **Notes to Editors**

### **Patricia Cronin**

Cronin has presented one-person exhibitions at the Musei Capitolini's Centrale Montemartini Museo and the American Academy in Rome, Italy; and the Brooklyn Museum, Deitch Projects, Brent Sikkema, White Columns, and Woodlawn Cemetery, New York.

She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the prestigious Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome, Civitella Ranieri Fellowship, Anonymous Was A Woman Award, Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Grant, and two Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grants. Her works are in numerous collections including Kelvingrove Museum and Art Galleries, Glasgow, Deutsche Bank, New York, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC and the Perez Art Museum Miami. She has taught in the Graduate Art Programs at both Columbia University and Yale University and is currently Professor of Art at Brooklyn College of The City University of New York as well as a trustee of the American Academy in Rome.

### **Lucovico Pratesi**

Ludovico Pratesi is one of Italy's most respected Contemporary Art Curators and has organized numerous museum and gallery exhibitions. He is currently the artistic director of Fondazione Pescheria in Pasero, Vice President of Associazione Musei Arte Contemporanea Italiana, former President of AICA Italy, and Art Critic for La Repubblica newspaper.

### **The Brooklyn Rail**

Founded in October 2000 and currently published 10 times annually, *The Brooklyn Rail* is a 501(c)(3) organization that provides an independent forum for arts, culture, and politics throughout New York City and far beyond. The journal, in addition to featuring local reporting; criticism of music, dance, film, and theater; and original fiction and poetry, covers contemporary visual art in particular depth. The *Rail* further fulfills its mission through their newly launched initiative *Rail Curatorial Projects*, which gathers the work of artists that reflect the complexity and inventiveness of the artistic and cultural landscape. Patricia Cronin: *Shrine for Girls, Venice* is the fourth Rail Curatorial Project, and their international debut.

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