

LÉVY GORVY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LÉVY GORVY TO PRESENT SOLO EXHIBITION OF SENGA NENGUDI
AT THE ARMORY SHOW
MARCH 2 – 5, 2017
PIER 92, FOCUS, BOOTH F8
711 12th Avenue, New York, 10019**

Lévy Gorvy is pleased to participate in The Armory Show's Focus section with a solo presentation of Senga Nengudi, in collaboration with Thomas Erben Gallery. Each year Focus presents the vision of one curator, with emphasis on today's most meaningful and relevant practices. For the 2017 edition, *What Is To Be Done?*, Jarrett Gregory (Associate Curator, Los Angeles County Museum of Art) highlights twelve artists who tirelessly and critically engage social and political issues through diverse formal, material, and conceptual strategies.

Since the 1970s, Senga Nengudi has made powerful sculptures, photographs, and performances that engage bodily forms and actions, often in concert with found materials. Early in her career, Nengudi collaborated with a politically active group of artists in Los Angeles who were concerned with social justice and racial equality. In line with the feminist zeitgeist and a related desire to assert the political character of private spheres, Nengudi turned her practice toward the domestic after the birth of her son in 1974. Her signature *R.S.V.P.* sculptures (two of which are on view at Armory) utilize common objects associated with femininity—namely, used women's nylon stockings—and push them beyond immediate recognition while retaining their affective charge. Filling the nylons with sand and stretching, nailing, and/or tying them, Nengudi does not efface their identifiability. When encountering these abstract works of assemblage, one never quite forgets that they were made to hold a woman's legs.

As she was beginning the *R.S.V.P.* series, Nengudi melded performance, sculpture, and documentation. Nengudi's loose group of collaborators (called "Studio Z," and including David Hammons and Maren Hassenger) occasionally met to engage in spontaneous performative actions. At times they used Nengudi's sculptures as props for performance; documentation of such events precipitated Nengudi's black and white silver gelatin prints (three of which are on view at Armory). In these photographs an obscured body pulls, wears, and otherwise

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encounters the forms of Nengudi's sculptures—which are drawn taut to mimic a walking figure, draped ceremonially around a body, or pulled over the head as a mask. In each case, the sculpture is activated by its relation to the performing body. In another work featured in the Armory presentation, *Eggactly* (1996), a work on paper is sheathed in a plastic dry cleaning bag. The bag, usually a vessel for sterilized garments, in this case functions conceptually as a womb. The work puts forth a playful derivative of the *R.S.V.P.* sculptures (the dry cleaning bag operating as a container for clothes, as the nylons are a kind of container for bodies) while expanding the formal range of Nengudi's evocative practice.



SENGA NENGUDI was born in 1943 in Chicago, IL. She lives and works in Colorado Springs, CO.

The traveling retrospective *Senga Nengudi: Improvisational Gestures* will open at the Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans on March 16, following presentations at the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, and the University of Colorado Colorado Springs Gallery. Forthcoming venues for this exhibition include the Depaul Art Museum, Chicago, IL, and the USC Fisher Museum of Art, Los Angeles.

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Nengudi's work is included in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, among others.

This summer Nengudi will participate in the 57th Venice Biennale, *Viva Arte Viva*, curated by Christine Macel.

Nengudi is co-represented by Lévy Gorvy and Thomas Erben Gallery. Lévy Gorvy presented a solo exhibition of her work in 2015, accompanied by an illustrated publication featuring scholarly essays as well as Nengudi's poetry. Her most recent exhibition at Thomas Erben Gallery was *Performances 1976 – 81*, presented in 2013.

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Above

(L) Senga Nengudi

R.S.V.P. Fall 1976

1976/2017

Nylon mesh, sand, and pins

41 x 19 1/2 x 2 1/2 inches (104.1 x 49.5 x 6.4 cm)

Courtesy Lévy Gorvy

(C) Senga Nengudi

Performance with 'Inside/Outside'

1977

Silver gelatin print

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40 x 29 inches (101.6 x 73.7 cm)

Edition of 5

Photographer: Ken Peterson

Courtesy Lévy Gorvy

(R) Senga Nengudi

R.S.V.P. Reverie "Scribe"

2014

Nylon mesh, sand, and found metals

91 x 54 x 67 inches (231.14 x 137.16 x 170.18 cm)

Courtesy Lévy Gorvy

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