

ARTILLERY

VIVA LA VULVA

Group Show at REN Gallery

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Gallery goer admiring Calendar Girls by Tanya Ragir

Coinciding on International Women's Day and Women's History Month, the opening for "Viva La Vulva" had a seamless approach to welcoming dialogue on the topic of empowering sexual health. Founded by Dr. Cara Quant, Panika Kodali, Jeremy Quant and curated by REN Gallery owner, Renee Warren, this adept group of individuals brought together an engaging audience to showcase artists' robust work. Recognizing the many struggles women face from the male-dominated medical community in diagnosing female sexuality and health—the show embodied the much needed education and healing of this issue.

Sounding heavy, presented by artists Leslie Reed, Lili Bernard, Joanna Cassidy, Edvarda Braanaas, Tanya Ragir, Karen Petty, Aurélia Bizouard and Amanda Sage honored physiological processes women experience, the mythological narratives that capture histories and the inevitability of physical and emotional decay. We were greeted with the feminine spirit at the gallery entrance by Bernard with her live painting, *Ochun as My Bisabuela Clemencia Falls to Her Death*, portraying indigenous Afro-Cuban folklore of the deity Oshun.

Braanaas tapped themes of chastity and strength emblematic of Joan of Arc. All works addressed the underlying perceptions and symbols that are thrust upon women *to just deal with* as young children well into old age. Limitations of what roles women play in the home was represented by white fabric worn by Cassidy's subject in *The Haunting* made its point.

Ragir represented the female anatomy throughout all stages of life including that of actor and singer, Georgina Leahy with her bronze sculptures. Ragir translated the duality of delicacy and strength with her subjects. Bizouard displayed erotic dalliances in her shadow-cascaded photography leaving more to the imagination and secrets waiting to be unfolded from inner thriving beauty.

With an intermittent pause, the crowd was able to experience more girl-gazing of Reed's outside performance of photo-projected photography breathing light and vibrant intimacy. Petty's work heightened the cycles of menstruation. Bar proceeds went to the nonprofit organization, The Model Behavior—designated for aiding homeless shelters with basic essentials such as feminine products. The event helped expand the education of female sexual health with this watershed moment merging the medical and art community into one.