



The Fabric Workshop and Museum

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Suzanne Bocanegra: Poorly Watched Girls **Friday, October 5, 2018 – Thursday, February 17, 2019**



Philadelphia, PA, September 13, 2018 — The Fabric Workshop and Museum is pleased to present ***Suzanne Bocanegra: Poorly Watched Girls***, on view **October 6, 2018 through February 17, 2019**. The Opening Reception is Friday, October 5, 2018 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

In *Poorly Watched Girls*, Suzanne Bocanegra explores the ways that our popular entertainments theatricalize women in trouble – spiritual trouble, emotional trouble, and romantic trouble. Inspired by a film, an opera, and a ballet, Bocanegra, whose work involves large-scale installation and performance, draws on the breadth of her experience to create a multidisciplinary exhibition. Blending elements from performing and visual arts—textile, collage, performance, staging, video, and music—she blurs the boundary between the “black box” of the theater and the “white box” of the museum.

“Observing the development of Suzanne Bocanegra’s practice for almost two decades, it is a great pleasure to now present three new but interconnected works resulting from her artist residency at FWM,” says Executive Director Susan Lubowsky Talbott. “The theme of girls’ mistreatment is timely, but not new, and Bocanegra draws inspiration from a repertoire of historic ballet, opera and film in her interpretation of it.”

In *Poorly Watched Girls*, Bocanegra's largest exhibition to date, she will stage installations using FWM's three floors of galleries. The exhibition opens with a short video—***Lemonade, Roses, Satchel***—featuring singer **Shara Nova** (of **My Brightest Diamond**) in an original composition with lyrics that were actually spoken by Bocanegra's grandmother as she struggled with dementia. The video, taken from Bocanegra's highly acclaimed 2017 artist lecture, *Farmhouse/Whorehouse*, serves as an introduction to Bocanegra's practice of creatively blurring the lines between the performing and visual arts. *Farmhouse/Whorehouse* is one in a series of autobiographical artist/lectures featuring such actors as Lili Taylor and Frances McDormand.

The centerpiece of Bocanegra's residency is ***Valley***, an immersive video experience based on the wardrobe test for Judy Garland's short-lived involvement in the 1967 cult film, *Valley of the Dolls*. Fired from the film mere days into production, Garland memorably angered filmmakers by taking the wardrobe with her. Later, wearing the outfits in subsequent concert performances brought a longlasting notoriety to the iconic late-1960s costumes and the screentest itself. Bocanegra has recreated the original wardrobe test using eight notable women, each wearing replicas of the wardrobe as collaboratively re-created by the artist and FWM studio staff. Performers include poet **Anne Carson**, choreographer and dancer **Deborah Hay**, artist **Joan Jonas**, singer **Alicia Hall Moran**, author and actor **Tanya Selvaratnam**, actor **Kate Valk**, artist **Carrie Mae Weems**, and ballerina **Wendy Whelan**.

Dialogue of the Carmelites references Francis Poulenc's 1956 opera based on the true story of nuns in the French Revolution who were forced to remove their habits and wear secular clothing on the way to being guillotined. The installation's visual focus takes its inspiration from the 1950s-era Guide to Catholic Sisterhoods in the United States, and it will also incorporate a new piece of music composed specifically for this exhibition by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Lang, performed by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and singer Caroline Shaw. The music is recorded and produced by Jody Elff. In ***La Fille***, Bocanegra will utilize dramatic theatrical sets, costumes, and collage to capture the essence of the 1789 Jean Dauberval ballet, *La Fille mal gardée* (literal translation, *The Poorly Guarded Girl*), a comic portrayal of young love in a romanticized setting of pastoral life.

A robust schedule of public programs accompanies the exhibition, including gallery walk-throughs; workshops for adults, teenagers, and families; a collaboration with Lightbox Film Center, and a highly-anticipated live presentation of Bocanegra's artist lecture *Farmhouse/Whorehouse*, starring **Lili Taylor**. A full list of programs is available [online](#).

About the Artist

Suzanne Bocanegra, b. 1957 in Houston, Texas, lives and works in New York City. A recipient of the Rome Prize, she has received grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Tiffany Foundation, the Joan Mitchell Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York Foundation for the Arts. Her recent work involves large-scale performance and installation, frequently translating two-dimensional information, images and ideas from the past into three-dimensional staging, movement, and music. Bocanegra's work has been presented in the United States and abroad in such venues as Site Santa Fe; the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum in Saratoga Springs; the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles; and the Serpentine Gallery and the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. Her theatrical, video and film work has been presented at the Museum of Modern Art in New York; EMPAC; the Ace Theater

in Los Angeles; Marfa Live Arts; the Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music; the Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College; the Fusebox Festival in Austin, TX; CounterCurrent Festival in Houston, TX; and Abrons Art Center Playhouse, Danspace Project and the Chocolate Factory Theater, all in New York, among others. In the theater world she is a frequent collaborator with Big Dance Theater; 7 Daughters of Eve Theater & Performance Co.; and Pam Tanowitz Dance.

Suzanne Bocanegra was selected as Artist-in-Residence by The Fabric Workshop and Museum's Artist Advisory Committee—a distinguished group of artists, curators, and scholars—in consultation with Executive Director Susan Lubowsky Talbott. Bocanegra's residency allowed her to experiment on a grand scale, while also presenting her work to a new audience at a pivotal point in the artist's career.

Support for *Suzanne Bocanegra: Poorly Watched Girls* is provided by the Coby Foundation, Ltd., the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Joy of Giving Something, Inc., the National Endowment for the Arts, and Maja Paumgarten and John Parker.

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About the Fabric Workshop and Museum

The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art museum devoted both to the creation and presentation of innovative works of art. Its Artist-in-Residence program – the creative nucleus of FWM – provides artists at all stages of their careers the opportunity to collaborate with FWM as they experiment with new materials and new media, taking their work in fresh and often unexpected directions. From its inception, FWM served as an education center, broadening access to art and advancing art as a catalyst for innovation and social connection. Through its highly-regarded education programs, such as the Apprentice Training Program and Onsite Studio, which integrates free art-making activities into the regular classroom curriculum of Philadelphia area public schools, FWM brings the spirit of artistic investigation to area youth. FWM's collection, archive, and publications preserve and document the course of artistic production from inspiration to realization. Residencies with over 300 artists during the past 41 years have helped generate a permanent collection of more than 5,000 objects – completed works, material research and experimental prototypes – chronicling FWM's history of collaborating with some of the most esteemed artists of our time.

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