



Viva Ruiz

ProAbortion Shakira: A Thank God For Abortion Introspective

February 3 - March 10, 2019

Opening reception and performance, Sunday, February 3, 7-9pm
Sundays, TGFA TV talk show prayer hour (full schedule below)

“This work is a futuristic piece, a vision of a time when the ‘Thank God for abortion’ statement would be banal. We are not there now, but we are intentionally calling that closer with this effort. It’s a multimedia extravaganza, a celebration of our autonomy. Our work is to normalize abortion, which is just health care. Our mission ends when everyone has access to legal, safe, and free abortions.”

—Viva Ruiz in *Artforum*, June 2018

From February 3 - March 10, 2019, PARTICIPANT INC is pleased to present *ProAbortion Shakira: A Thank God For Abortion Introspective* by Viva Ruiz. The exhibition brings together collected and new works under the banner of the Thank God For Abortion (TGFA) project, including sculpture, costumes, photography, video, writings, and assorted propaganda alongside a program of performances and talks. TGFA first took form as practical protest gear, including riot shields, flags, and t-shirts, adorned with the dove logo in reference to familiar typography and public imagery. These items demand not just to be seen but to be used, providing both safety and agitation. Most recently, in June of 2018 the Thank God For Abortion “Joyful Noise” float catalyzed the New York City Pride Parade, taking on a mode of mass access and action.

Finding a stage in the streets and in nightclubs, TGFA brings abortion and spirituality into proximity. Activating a femme pop frequency, ProAbortion Shakira works with glamour and performance as easily absorbed forms to disseminate complicated messaging, combining references to Latin pop music, telenovelas, and talk shows. Introducing the project, Ruiz says, “‘THANK GOD FOR ABORTION’ felt like a very natural thing for me to say. Here’s where I’m coming from: God loves me, and blesses the two abortions I had, and celebrates my rights, my autonomy, and my sovereignty.”

Three gold TGFA Icons inhabit the space as holy figures, functioning as embodiments of abortion. Venerated and used as an aid to devotion, they invoke sanctity and protection. Each Icon is dressed in a TGFA Party Look, previously worn in the world and infused with the energy of many conversations and actions. Each TGFA Party Look is its own attraction, offering an insertion point for this ongoing conversation. A neon Holy Spirit graces the exhibition space as a literal blessing. Like the window

of a bodega, the neon underlines a common, shared, urban space. The exhibition also includes video footage and photographs of the “Joyful Noise” Pride Parade float, as well as various posters and postcards for further circulation. During the 5-week exhibition, a TGFA TV talk show prayer hour will be programmed on Sundays against a backdrop of the TGFA messaging.

TGFA TV talk show Sunday prayer hour schedule:

Feb 10, 6pm, *REPRO RIGHTS ARE IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS* with activist Alejandra Pablos

Feb 24, 6pm, *ABORTION RIGHTS ARE GLBTQI+ RIGHTS ARE BLACK/POC RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS* with Javier Nunez Cespedes (Planned Parenthood) and Lanai Daniels (New York Abortion Access Fund)

March 3, 6pm, *TEAM TGFA PARADE FLOAT RECON* roundtable with Michael Love Michael, Merryll Spence, Max Colby, and more...

March 10, 6pm, *TGFA Loves SYA* with Shout Your Abortion co-founder Amelia Bonow

VIVA RUIZ is the daughter of Ecuadorian immigrants and a community and nightlife educated advocate and artist. Ruiz's original telenovelas have been shown at festivals and art spaces such as Mix NYC, Outfest LA, Deitch Projects, MoMA PS1, and Futura, Prague. As a musician Ruiz has collaborated with artists including Desi Santiago, Gavin Rayna Russom, The Carry Nation, Lauren Flax, and BEARCAT. Ruiz worked for many years as a dancer in nightclubs and also as a support among others for Debbie Harry and Danzig. She was a core member of hedonist guerrilla dance group The Dazzle Dancers. As an actor and performance artist Ruiz has collaborated with forces like THE BIG ART GROUP and Bruce La Bruce, most recently starring in Michelle Handelman's film and live performance piece *Hustlers & Empires* (SF MoMA 2018). Viva is a part of the Caribbean/POC/queer centered collective RAGGA NYC with performances including at the New Museum and BRIC. TGFA the entity programmed sex ed and practical spirituality workshops as an invited curator for the New Museum's *Scamming the Patriarchy* event aimed at NYC youth. #thankgodforabortion

Image: Viva Ruiz, *A Joyful Noise: Thank God For Abortion Pride Parade Float*.
Photo: Elliot Luscombe



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WMA PARTICIPANT INC is W.A.G.E. Certified;  and a member of Coop Fund.

PARTICIPANT INC is located at 253 East Houston Street, between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets on the LES, ground floor. Subway: F to Second Avenue, Allen Street exit; or JMZ to Essex/Delancey. The gallery is accessible for wheelchair users. Our restroom is gender neutral. We welcome service animals.

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