



Jayne County
Paranoia Paradise
Curated by Michael Fox
February 4 – March 11, 2018
Opening Reception, Sunday, February 4, 7–9pm

I think that my art serves as a way of putting out the fuse before it becomes a ballistic bomb of some sort. Some people are at odds with the world and they become serial killers, and others become artists. -Jayne County

From February 4 – March 11, 2018, PARTICIPANT INC is honored to present **Jayne County, *Paranoia Paradise***, the first retrospective exhibition of County's visual artwork, curated by Michael Fox. Although County's artistic output began in experimental theater in the late 1960s-early '70s, including work with Theater of the Ridiculous and in Andy Warhol's *Pork*, she is perhaps most well-known as a rock singer and performer. This exhibition takes its title from one of County's songs, *Paranoia Paradise*, which she famously performed as the character of "Lounge Lizard" in Derek Jarman's 1978 film, *Jubilee*. Selections of her earliest known paintings and works on paper made in the early '80s while living in Berlin will be exhibited alongside works made up until the present, with approximately eighty pieces on view from County's studio as well as several private collections. A presentation of related ephemeral materials from County's archive, as well as photographs by Bob Gruen, Lee Black Childers, and Michael Fox will accompany the exhibition and further illuminate her legendary contributions to music, film, performance, as well her role as forebear and gender pioneer as the first openly transgender rock performer.

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County's body of visual artwork does not fit neatly into any one category. She is a self-developed artist whose work serves as an emotional release. Her fantasies, rage, and notions of beauty erupt in works on paper and canvas with varying degrees of transparency and complexity. Her intentions are sometimes laser-focused, as is the case with her 'rage art,' in which she illustrates her thoughts and feelings on political figures. Her abstract works are without specific figurative or popular culture reference, yet seem to express a similar violent energy or whirlwind of volatile emotion. Much of County's work offers a glimpse into her fantasies, which are populated by creatures from other worlds and times; and her obsessions, manifested in repeated motifs such as trees bearing multiple penises and vaginas.

Jayne County (also known as Wayne County and V. Wayne Rogers) was born in 1947 in Dallas, Georgia. She moved to New York City in 1968 and was a regular at the Stonewall Inn and an active participant in the Stonewall Riots. In 1969, she began her career working with playwright Jackie Curtis and also with John Vaccaro and Tony Ingrassia of Theater of the Ridiculous. Andy Warhol cast County in his theatrical production of *Pork*, and, after the New York run, the play moved to London. While there, County met David Bowie and was signed to his MainMan record label. County is best known as the vocalist in her bands Queen Elizabeth (1972), Wayne County and the Backstreet Boys (1974), and Wayne County and the Electric Chairs (1977). She was also the house DJ at Max's Kansas City. In 1978, County appeared in Derek Jarman's film, *Jubilee*, in which she performed her song, *Paranoia Paradise*. County has released many records on several record labels. Her autobiography, *Man Enough to Be a Woman*, was released in 1995, and, in 1997, she was immortalized in *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored History of Punk*, Chapter 29: *Fun with Dick and Jayne*. County's career spans five decades, and she has lived and worked in New York, London, Berlin, and, currently, lives in Georgia. County's work has always protested the societal norms by which she has never been constrained.

Michael Fox has known and worked closely with County for over twenty years. Jayne County, *Paranoia Paradise*, is the first exhibition project curated by Fox. His photographs of County have been published in BUTT Magazine (Issue 25, December 2008). He is presently a sergeant with the New York City Police Department.

Image: Courtesy of the artist



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PARTICIPANT INC is located at 253 East Houston Street, between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets on the LES, ground floor, wheelchair accessible. Subway: F to Second Avenue, Allen Street exit; or JMZ to Essex/Delancey. participantinc.org