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## Art and Reproductive Rights in the Wake of *Dobbs v. Jackson*

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With its recent decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the US Supreme Court created a present and future in which millions of women across the country lose safe and affordable access to abortion services. Within twenty-four hours of the decision's announcement, American artists, including Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger, and Marilyn Minter, responded with protest art in the digital sphere, on their social media feeds, and, in Holzer's case, as an NFT.

In the years and months that led up to this historic moment, many museums and art departments, in which women account for the majority of the workforce (albeit not at a leadership level), have begun to unionize. These labor movements have raised an awareness of the contradiction between the labor practices of art-world institutions and the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion that are driving many other institutional changes, including increased visibility for feminist artists in museum collections and university course offerings.

*Panorama's* nature as an open-access digital platform allows us to respond nimbly to current events. As such, we asked contributors to this Colloquium to reflect on art that grapples with the dangers posed and the sacrifices necessitated by reproductive biology. The following essays engage with issues surrounding reproductive rights, including abortion, motherhood, child loss, and other traumas, while also questioning the ways in which art institutions have been complicit in supporting systems that undermine the visibility of reproductive labor and trauma and neglect the needs of caregivers, thus contributing to the national culture in which *Dobbs v. Jackson* is possible.

The contributions in this Colloquium highlight recent artistic and curatorial interventions that take on new meaning today. Artist Patricia Cronin looks back on a series of her work, *Aphrodite Reimagined*, created in response to the Tampa Museum of Art's fragment of an antique life-size sculpture of Aphrodite. Cronin conceived the series during the "rampant misogyny of the Trump administration," and she discusses how *Dobbs v. Jackson* has heightened her long-standing commitment to making space for the female body and its



Fig. 1. National Woman's Party Silent Sentinels at the White House gate, 1917. Courtesy National Woman's Party

necessary relationship to democracy. Curators Karen Irvine and Kristin Taylor reflect on the renewed resonance of their 2021 exhibition *Reproductive: Health, Fertility, Agency*, which showcased the work of eight artists for whom reproductive health is a vital theme.

In their respective essays, Kéla Jackson and Frederica Simmons offer insight into the work of two Black women artists, Clarissa Sligh and Bessie Harvey, who have also grappled with reproductive trauma. Simmons presents several of Harvey's works as records of how Black maternal rights have been unequally and catastrophically dictated by systems of white supremacy, which is now upheld by a majority-white Supreme Court. In her discussion of Sligh, Jackson sheds light on the artist's mnemonic recovery of birth trauma through the often-marginalized form of the photo book. The section's final contributor, Michelle Millar, a vocal advocate for arts workers' rights, reproductive rights, and their intersections, concludes with an account of *Designing Motherhood: Things That Make and Break Our Births*, an exhibition she cocurated that opened just thirteen days before the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision and that will travel nationally. Millar Fisher concludes with a call to action for all those working in the cultural sector and beyond to advocate for and develop systems that recognize and support care work in all the many forms that it can take.

These varied contributions respond to the lack of visibility and space for reproductive rights in our field—a lack that, as Simmons points out, may be more surprising to some than to others, due to the different forms of privilege that structure our greater society. We invite readers to further amplify and diversify the ways that reproductive rights are present in US art histories and institutions by responding with their own experiences and with accounts of artists for whom these issues are paramount through our Talk Back section.

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