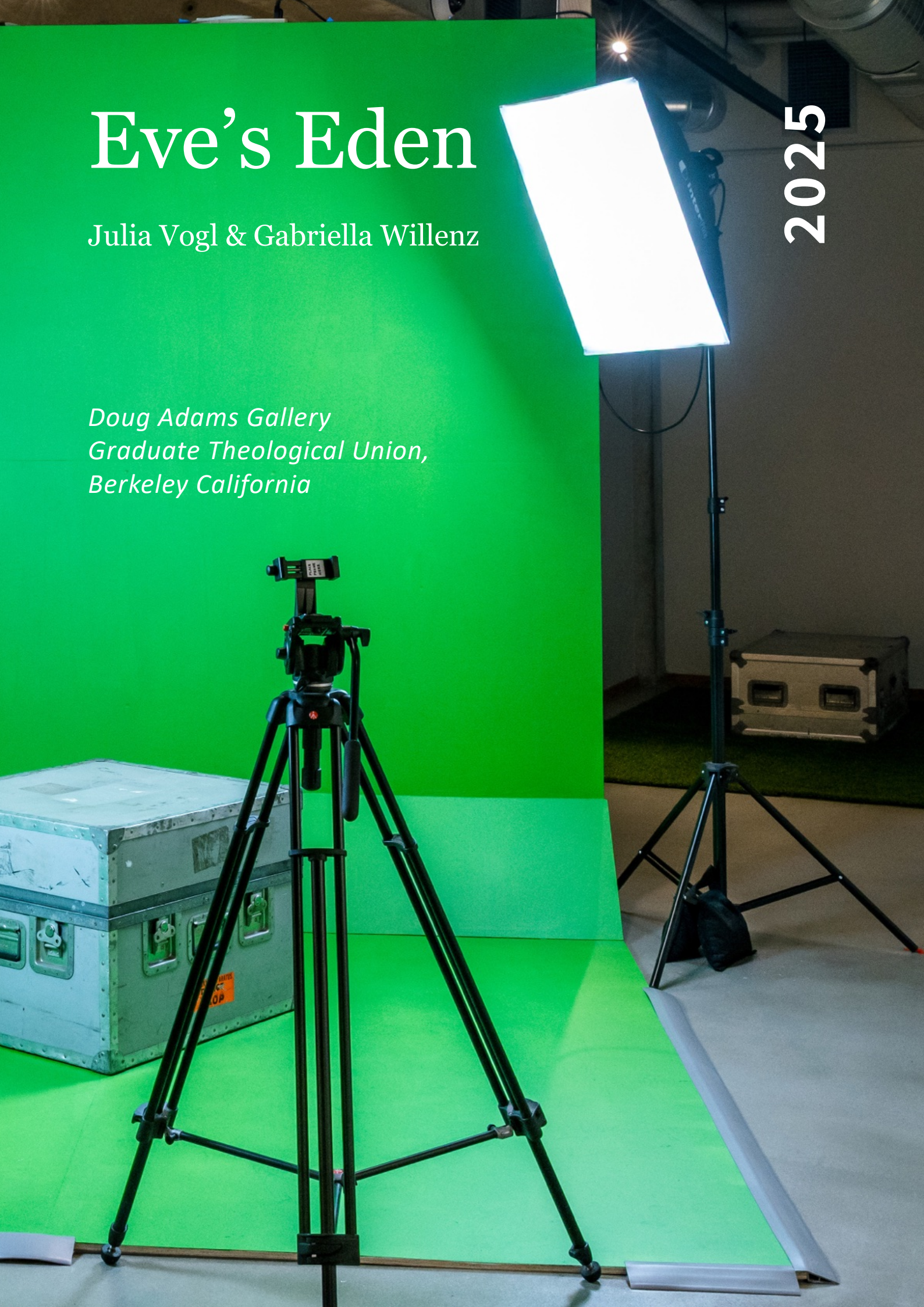


# Eve's Eden

Julia Vogl & Gabriella Willenz

2025

*Doug Adams Gallery  
Graduate Theological Union,  
Berkeley California*







Through the ages, Eve's action – eating the fruit and sharing it with Adam -- has reverberated through art, literature, philosophy, and politics, often serving to create and reinforce the patriarchal ideas that dominate Western monotheistic culture to this day. The participatory installation **Eve's Eden**, which includes sound work, photography, sculpture, and film, brings visitors behind the scenes into the production of myth itself. The installation is designed as

a film production studio - a place that fabricates fictional storytelling and takes part in shaping our collective consciousness. The mechanism of production also offers the possibility of re-writing and designing the narrative.

**Installation photos by Nina Menconi**





## Patterns Of Patriarchy

*Collage of referential images printed on vinyl sticker, 42"x 83", 2025*

This kaleidoscopic pattern is made from historic and contemporary cultural references to the myth including:

**Adam, Lilith, and Eve**, Notre Dame (1210-1220)

**The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden**, Masaccio (1425)

**Adam and Eve**, Albrecht Dürer (1504)

**Adam and Eve**, Sistine Chapel, Michaelangelo (1508–1512)

**Eve, the Serpent, and Death**, Hans Baldung (1525)

**Seductive, Forbidden Fruit Cocktail Menu**, The Bloomsbury Club (1936)

**Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs**, Walt Disney (1937)

**Eve incurs God's displeasure**, Marc Chagall (1960)

**Nathan or Adam & Eve**, Beryl Cook (1987)

**National Lampoon's Adam and Eve**, Jeff Kanew (2005)

The vinyl covers the gallery's glass entrance creating a portal in its center. The pattern marks the starting point in the process of deconstruction: mapping the ideological manifestations while commenting on their mesmerizing power. Cutting through one enters the gallery.



# Stories Matter

‘Storytelling is not a luxury to humanity; it’s almost as necessary as bread,’ said Margaret Atwood.

Stories matter. They run in our blood, beat in our hearts. We usher our children into sleep with the soothing presence of a narrative, while Scheherazade, fabled character of Arabian Nights, nightly told stories to evade death. We are wired for stories. They, in turn, define us.

Eve and Adam’s biblical mythology is central to the three Abrahamic faiths. The ‘Fall of Eve’ has justified centuries of patriarchal control, not least the binding marriage vows conflating a spouse with property, ‘man and wife’. Today, Eve’s story continues to frame definitions of femininity. However, rather than view it a story, many assume The Fall of Eve to be history, anchored in fact. Yet the word itself is revealing. Whose story? His-Story.

Language, for all its seductive power, both reflects and shapes power structures. The etymology of the word myth is derived from the Greek word mythos: ‘word, speech, message’. In the 5th century BCE, mythology acquired the additional meaning, ‘entertaining, if not necessarily trustworthy, tale’. A myth as iconic, as widely disseminated, as that of Eve and Adam deserves scrutiny: who is telling the narrative? Who is being silenced? How has it evolved?

The popular -albeit patriarchal- narrative frames Eve as the original woman and perpetrator of the original sin. This biased version skews unapologetically towards Eve as adjunct to Adam, created from him. Enticed by a serpent into sampling the forbidden fruit, Eve is presented as tempting (manipulating) Adam into doing the same. Each exited from Eden, Eve and her descendants are damningly condemned to childbirth. This version represents the ultimate mythological stitch-up, supporting and perpetuating dominion over women through the centuries. Today, Eve is woven into culture, her contradictory composite of innocence and danger selling, as screen writer Anita Diamont posits in the film *Eve’s Eden*, everything from ‘vodka, perfume, vaginal douche’.

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Vogl and Willenz’s foreground Eve’s curiosity, courage and vulnerability, while interrogating the creation of story-making.

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However, if a story can be misinterpreted, it can be reinterpreted. Vogl and Willenz’s interactive installation asks, ‘which lens do you choose to look through to view this narrative, where do you want to expend your energy?’ rather than focus on patriarchy’s dominion, or the present-day ways in which Eve’s narrative is an excuse for harm. For example, according to the Bangladesh National Women’s Lawyer’s Association most girls in Bangladesh have

been publicly sexually assaulted in a deleterious practise called ‘Eve-baiting’. Vogl and Willenz’s foreground Eve’s curiosity, courage and vulnerability, while interrogating the creation of story-making.

Gesturing to storytelling’s shapeshifting nature, the parameters of their own storytelling adapted as the post-Covid world has shifted. The ‘genesis’ of the visual exhibition emerged from a radio play deconstructing the story of Eve – visual exhibitions at that time having closed around the world.

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Valium induces a soporific effect, diametrically opposite to the jolt-inducing fruit of knowledge.

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Contemporary expectations on femininity are often crazy-making, frequently contradictory. In many societies, to be described as ‘hungry for knowledge’ is high praise. To be proactive, to develop a ‘growth mentality’, is similarly encouraged. Inactivity, its corollary, is associated with depression, with being ‘stuck in a rut’ (as Vogl and Willenze imply would have occurred in Eden). And yet, Eve’s actions are viewed as a sin. Intriguingly, ‘mother’s little helper’, a canny phrase coined in the Sixties by The Rolling Stones, refers to the prescribing of Valium to female patients -usually by male doctors – to quell frustrations at marriage and motherhood. If taken regularly, Valium induces a soporific effect, diametrically opposite to the jolt-inducing fruit of knowledge.

*Eve’s Eden* opens with *Patterns of Patriarchy* (2025) a kaleidoscopic array of Eves placed on the exhibition’s double doors in vinyl sticker. Eve’s form is borrowed from artworks by Albrecht Dürer, Michelangelo, Walt Disney’s Snow White and more, the collected schema of Eves representing both an acknowledgement of and breaking-through of patriarchy, of entering a space for new meaning and alternate possibilities to occur.

Yet significant change requires leaning into vulnerability. An audio work titled *What I’m hearing Is...* (2025) explores the significance of vulnerability, the role of therapy in culture, and gender roles within relationships. Recorded for the original radio play, Willenz and Vogl commissioned a real-life, inter-faith couple’s therapist to hold an improvised session with ‘Eve’ and ‘Adam’. In the installation, visitors listen to the therapist on headphones, with Eve’s and Adam’s answers silenced. The absence of their voices signifies a repositioning, instead placing the listener at the centre of the experience, reflecting on their own experiences of gender roles within relationships. In its concerns, the work resonates with high-profile practitioners Esther Perel and Orna Guralnik, who make their practice visible to the public. In *It’s Just a Projection* (2025) visitors are invited to ‘role-play’ Eve and Adam or ‘play’



themselves, using an original script made by Vogl and Willenz during the Covid pandemic. With the source text manifesting into three-dimensional people, the work posits that Eve and Adam were multi-faceted – human, essentially – more than reductive tropes. Before a green screen, props are available, including a pair of binoculars, a martini glass and shaker, a sleeping bag, a nature guide, a plastic butterfly and fake apple. Cinema is the greatest storyteller of our time, reflecting or perpetuating prevailing ideologies. The work references a film production studio, site of fantasy and projection (only Eve and Adam know what Eden looks like). Supporting the work, *13 Across* (2025), a lightbox spelling ‘EDEN’ titled stands in as ‘recording in session’, referencing the ubiquitous presence of the word in crosswords and more generally.

The eponymously titled *Eve’s Eden*, an 11-minute film, scripted by writer Anita Diamant, directed by Vogl and Willenz, runs on a loop. Breaking the fourth wall with a Brechtian tone, addressing the camera directly, Eve (played by award-winning Palestinian Israeli actress Mira Awad) reconstructs events from her perspective. Scenes are frequently split into three screens, indicating multiple versions or viewpoints. Presented in three iterations,

Eve appears outside, in an Eden-esque setting as ‘mother earth’; as printmaker, creating in the studio, roller in hand, and before a green screen, perhaps as talk-show host, the screen’s presence (once again) foregrounding storytelling’s constructed nature within television and cinema. How does Eve narrate her own story? Eve speaks for Adam’s role, the serpent’s role. She speaks, crucially, for herself.

*‘There was a wall between everything we knew and everything there is to know – that, that was the real temptation. To discover what could happen next. So I ate the fruit. I did not lie, nor twist his palm. No, Adam took the berries, he rolled them in his palm, he smelled them and he chose, just as I had chosen, and he ate.’*

Eve has been wrongly framed, misunderstood. She chose, Adam chose. Meanwhile, Jewish tradition indicates that, rather than it being an apple it was forbidden fruit. Here Diamant’s writing presents is as a pomegranate. In Jewish lore, the pomegranate’s seeds represent the 613 mitzvot (good deeds) to be kept. Eaten at Rosh Hashanah, the new year, in Jewish Sephardic communities the pomegranate represents blessings and good deeds (in yet other traditions, in Hinduism, Persian culture and ancient Greek mythology, the pomegranate symbolises fecundity, multiplicity, propagation). The work *It Wasn’t An Apple* (2025) presents 350 hand-printed pomegranates arranged like a serpent on the wall. On the backs of these pomegranates, visitors are invited to share moments in which they too have been misunderstood, creating a collective memory. An act of propagation connecting us to Eve, Eve to us.

Exploring the constructed nature of mythology, while reworking a mythology for feminist causes, Vogl and Willenz connect to feminist Greek mythology (re)writers. The audio work *Greek Chorus Calling* (2025) references this connection. Undermining hegemonic storytelling, visitors may press 12 dial buttons on a 1980s telephone and listen through the receiver to hear voice clips of people sharing their own connection to hearing the myth of Eve and Adam.

By seeking alternate interpretations including from a Talmudic text, Vogl and Willenz are working within the tradition of ‘drash’ partners. Drash derives from the Hebrew word *lidrosh*, meaning ‘to seek’ or ‘inquire’ (aligning with Eve’s seeking of knowledge). Shared among religions, passed down through centuries, Eve’s story exists. It’s alive, out there, in the ether.

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Making space for new meaning among old words (and worlds),  
Vogl and Willenz present Eve and Adam as rounded, recognisable  
human beings.

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Making space for new meaning among old words (and worlds), Vogl and Willenz present Eve and Adam as rounded, recognisable human beings. They invite us to meet an Eve who was wrongly framed, misunderstood. An Eve who was neither innocent nor temptress, but fallible, vulnerable, defining her own destiny. Who ended one existence to begin another. Who requires celebration, rather than castigation. When autonomy is present in our lives, we feel purposeful. Vibrant. We harvest our own, sweet fruits. Stories are our shared DNA, our cultural currency. And, as Eve proves, they matter.

**Rebecca Swirsky** is a London-based writer of fiction and criticism. Commissions include The Economist, FT, The World of Interiors and Frieze.







Greek Chorus Calling

1984 telephone and 12 sound clips, duration varied (2025)

Custom electronics by Mark Glusker, Maria Mortati, Scott Minneman, Hridae Walia.

Audiences are invited to pick up the receiver, press a dial button, and listen to any of the 12 sound clips, relating to different aspects of the biblical story. These statements were compiled from interviews the artists held with a diverse group of 25 people. Such as the chorus device used in Greek Tragedies, this non-hierarchical community of testimonies undermines the hegemonic story-telling.



1 14sec	2 41 sec	3 33sec
4 45 sec	5 48 sec	6 23 sec
7 39 sec	8 18 sec	9 28 sec
* 51 sec	0 16 sec	# 7 sec

3

33sec

“We've got it all wrong. It's actually a story of a very intelligent, powerful and strong, the foremother of bad-ass women, who transgresses the boundaries and seeks knowledge. Adam thought of living in blissful innocence and ignorance, a very infantile existence, petting the animals, and eating grains and it is boring, very boring. Who wants to stay in a kindergarten-like garden? The awakening needs to happen, eating the fruit was the correct choice. They did not eat an apple. It was a pomegranate or another fruit to be debated.”

4

45 sec

“Eve makes an assessment with the information she has, she had to really pause and think like, "What is the situation? Why is this happening?" Realizing that the tree is good for eating , It wasn't poisonous that you become wiser from it, and that the serpent is saying the truth about the tree, she ate it. She is the first woman using her critical thinking skills. she was able to discern God's plan for mankind, And in transgressing her role, she sets an example for all the women who come after to transgress those roles too.”





### 13 Across

*Lightbox with inkjet acrylic panels, (11"x4"x3"), 2025*

A lit-up sign that resembles the "On Air" production signs, and references the almost daily crossword clues that harken back to this place and this story.





### What I'm Hearing Is...

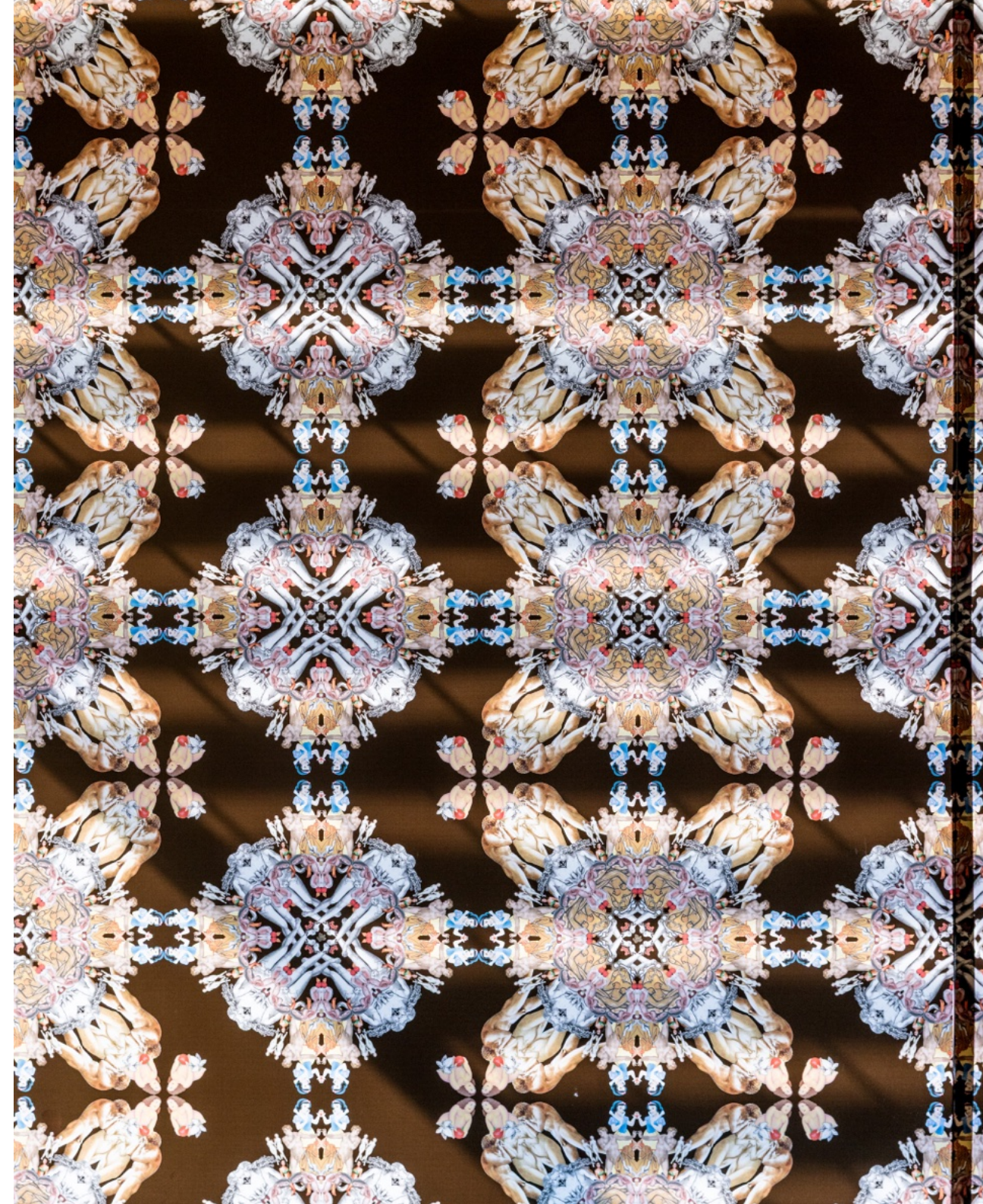
*Audio piece 7min., loop, inkjet print with lightbox, 27"x20"*

Sitting in the director's chair and listening through headphones one encounters Dr. Marion Usher, a relationship therapist with a career spanning 40+ years. She meets Eve and Adam for a couple's session, but the audience hears only her side - her questions and advice. In this iteration, Eve and Adam are in their 40s dealing with relationship hardship connected to gender dynamics and roles.





In the lightbox (a form of a photograph that alludes to film, capturing an extended present) a therapist sits in the shadows with the light shining on the empty couch. Audiences are invited to envision themselves in the empty seat and consider gender implications in their personal life.



A second variation of Patterns of Patriarchy 77"x76"+18"x38" (two of each) is installed on the large gallery windows. The semi-transparent vinyl evokes the aesthetics of stained glass often used in the Church; implicating organized religion's part in reinforcing patriarchal interpretations of the myth.













## It's Just A Projection (2025)

*Greenscreen, screenplay "GEN Z GENESIS", shelving, props, lighting, 8'x8'x8'*

"GEN Z GENESIS" is a short play that re-interprets the story of the 'fall of mankind' as a modern-day romantic coming-of-age story (with scenes set in a botanical garden a bar and an orchard). In a botanical garden, teenage Eve and Adam negotiate what is "real," pre-determination, and personal agency. In the "Pardisco bar", Eve meets a mentor that helps her gain the courage to take action. In Sue's Orchard Eve and Adam confront parental authority and in the epilogue, they learn to live with the consequences of their choices.

A fully formed greenscreen stage is constructed in the center of the gallery. Visitors can choose a scene from the "Gen Z Genesis" scripts and matching props and act it out. The greenscreen serves as an open-ended environment onto which specificities are projected but not constant. Audiences are invited to activate the space with their bodies and their interpretation.





## Eve's Eden (2025)

*HD video, 11:30 min., loop*

[Eve's Eden film](#)

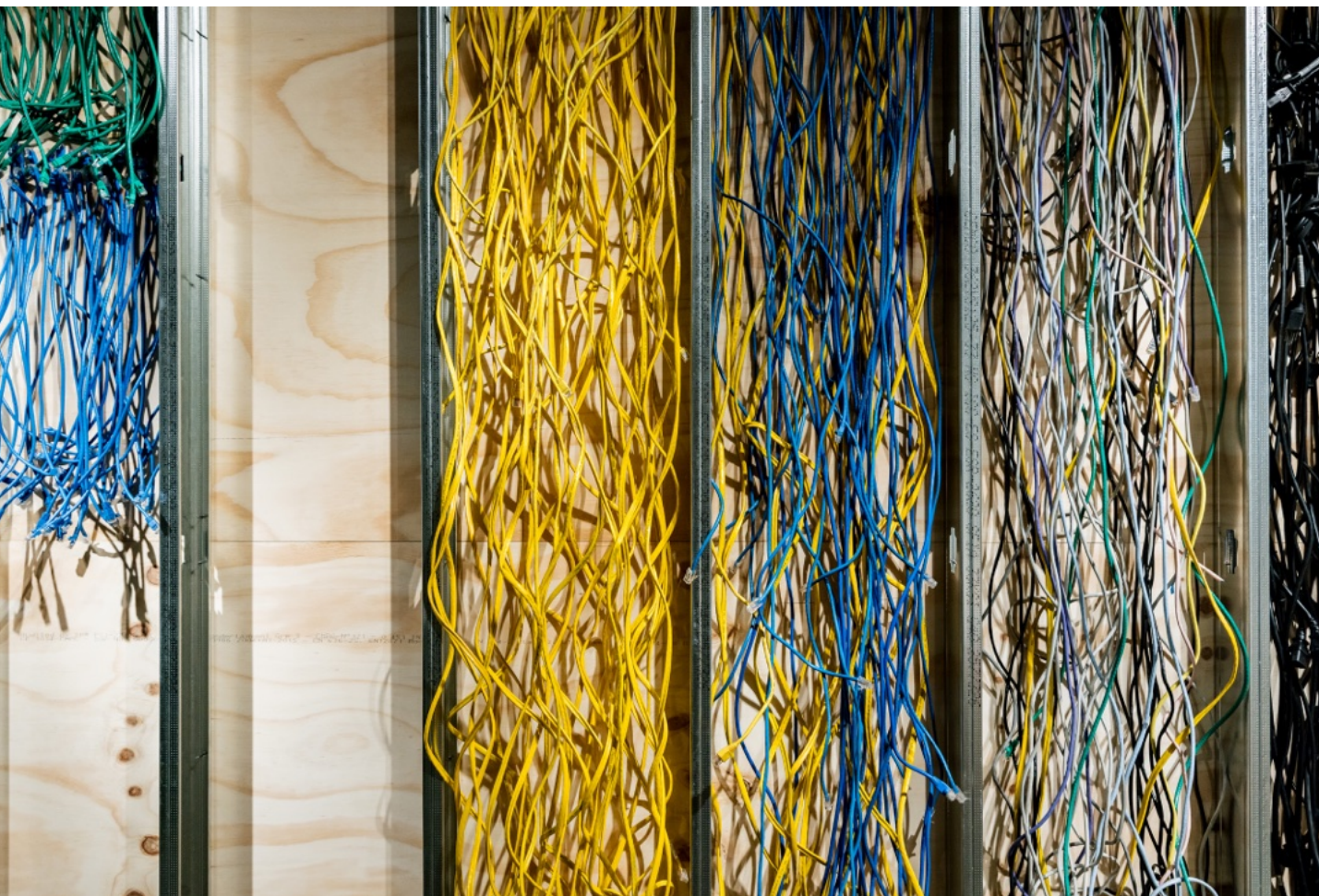
In this monologue, Eve, the first woman, shares her side of the notorious Eden story uninterrupted. Taking place simultaneously in three locations (in the woods, a talk show greenscreen and a printer's studio), Eve challenges age-old stereotypes and pushes us to reconsider our own assumptions and critically explore this fundamental story that lies at

the root of patriarchy. Screenplay by Anita Diamant, author of the international bestseller *The Red Tent* (1997) and featuring award-winning Palestinian-Israeli actress-musician and activist Mira Awad.









## Powering the Myth

*Ethernet and power cords, 96"x96", 2025*

The back of the green screen is coated with a myriad of multicolored hanging cables. They simultaneously evoke a jungle overflowing with serpents, as well as an IT room, powering behind the scenes of a large operation.

Wherever there is a myth being told, there is a motive behind it, a power promoting an agenda. Here, the cables are unplugged and cut loose, unplugging the patriarchal connections, and giving way for a new source to power this myth.



## The Unforbidden Fruit (2025)

*A barrel with a variety of fruits (donated monthly by the Berkeley Student Co-op- Ranging from apples, oranges to kiwis)*

Just before exiting the gallery one finds a barrel of fruit. Counter to the biblical command, audiences are invited to take and then bite into a fruit, an invitation to critically think and probe into the production of knowledge and encourage curiosity.

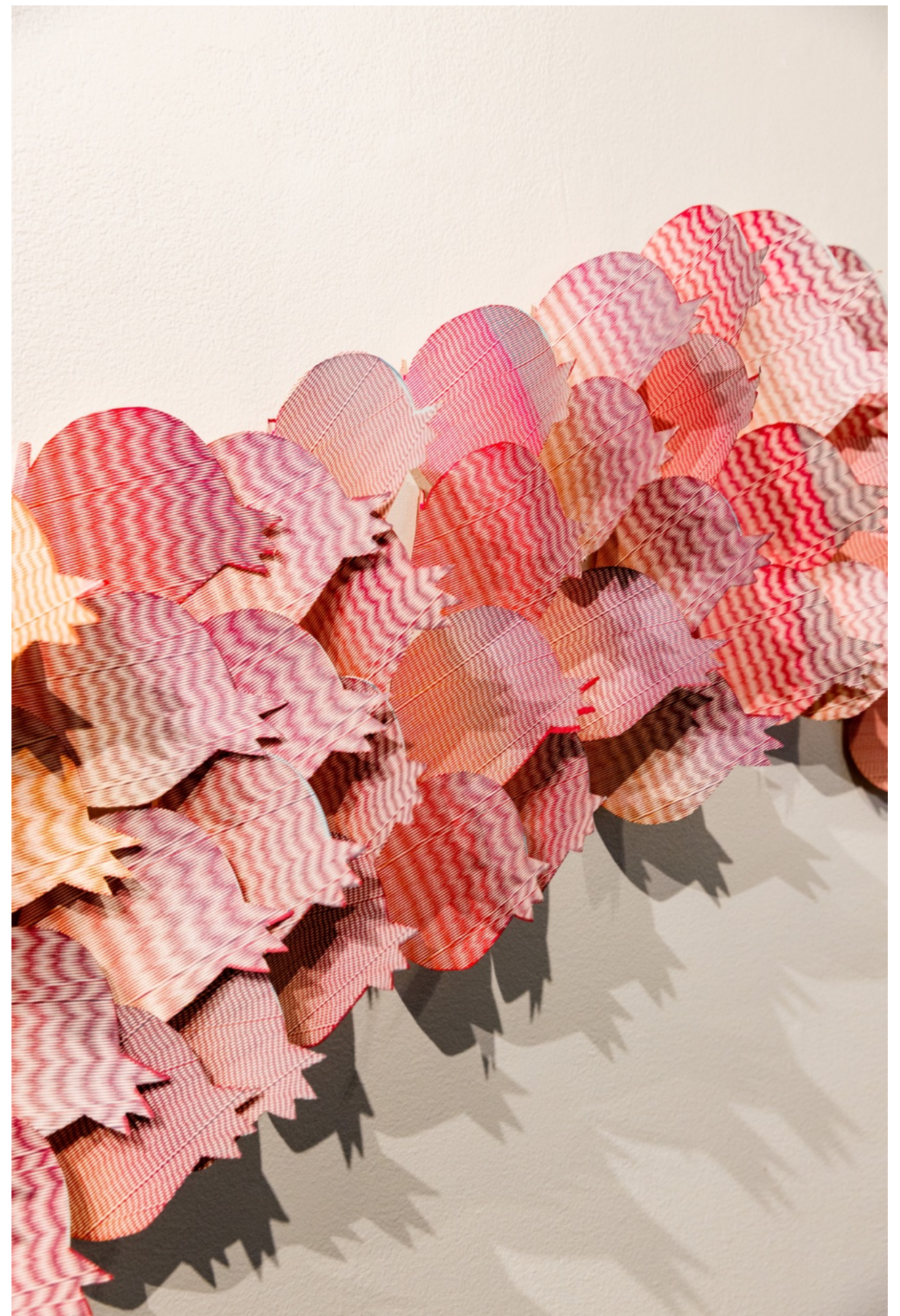




## It Wasn't An Apple Julia Vogl

*Screenprint on paper, 350 units (6" x 5") on 30' x 10' wall, 2025*

This large-scale serpent-like shape is compiled of 350 hand-printed pomegranates. The popular reading that it was an apple, is just a mistake. But Eve being blamed for a wide array of human suffering is a dangerous misunderstanding. Here a participatory work asks viewers: When were you misunderstood or falsely blamed? On the back of one of the pomegranate scales, visitors were invited to write in a word, phrase or sentence to share their story - or the feeling they had when correcting the error.





## Gabriella Willenz

[www.gabriellawillenz.com](http://www.gabriellawillenz.com)

Willenz's research-based and action-led projects combine photography, video, and installation and explore the fraught formations of otherness, nationalist ideologies, and militarism, among the rest. Her artworks critically interrogate how knowledge is constructed, delving into the mechanisms of how we get to know and relate to the world around us.

Willenz holds an MFA from the University of California, Berkeley (2019), and a BA from the Marc Rich Honors Program in the Humanities and the Arts, Tel Aviv University (2015, Dean's honors). She has exhibited internationally in venues including the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archives; The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, Berkeley; Heaven Gallery, Chicago; Root Division, SF; Doug Adams Gallery at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley; The Bar David Museum of Art and Judaica, Kibbutz Baram; The Gallery for Israeli Art at the Tivon Memorial Center, Kiryat Tivon; The Wilfrid Israel Museum, Kibbutz Hazorea; The Givat Haviva Art Gallery; and The Joint Jewish-Arab Gallery, Kibbutz Cabri, among others.

Willenz was artist-in-residence at The Lincoln Center Theater, NYC; Ox-Bow School of Art, Michigan; Atelier Shemi, Kibbutz Cabri; and Vermont Studio Center. She was a fellow at the Art and Research Center at UC Berkeley and received grants from Asylum Arts; The Center for Arts and Religion at GTU, Berkeley; Jewish Arts Collaborative, Boston; Tel Aviv's Art Department and Mifal HaPais. She won the Eisner Prize for Photography and the WORD prize from the American Jewish University, LA. In 2022 Willenz was a Creative Capitol Award finalist.

## Julia Vogl

[www.juliavogl.com](http://www.juliavogl.com)

Vogl is American & British with an international practice centred around storytelling through printmaking and public art. She describes her community engagement works as social sculptures, where individuals share data about themselves that are collectively reflected in colourful, large-scale installations. Her work primarily focuses on what things do we, as humans, share and what makes us distinct. All her works aim to represent the individual that participates as well as the collective, as beautiful installations that foster a greater conversation. Her works have engaged themes of home, death, protest values, economics and feminism.

She received a BA in politics and art from Oberlin College and has an MFA from University College London, Slade School of Art. She has been commissioned by Tate, ITV, Facebook, Hull 2017 City of Culture, Jewish Arts Collaborative in Boston Common, Reher Center for Immigrant Culture and History, and recently the Greater London Authority and the Royal Borough of Kingston in London. Received Grants from Brooklyn Arts Council (2009), National Endowment for the Arts, (2015), Wellcome Trust (2019), Asylum Arts, Arts Council England (2012/2013/2017).

She was the winner of the Aesthetica Art prize in 2011, she has given a Ted X and had her work recognised by American for the Arts Public Art in Review for 2012, 2016, and 2019. Vogl is currently teaching and continuing her research as a full-time permanent Lecturer in BA Fine Art at Winchester School of Art, Southampton University, UK.



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13 EDEN

