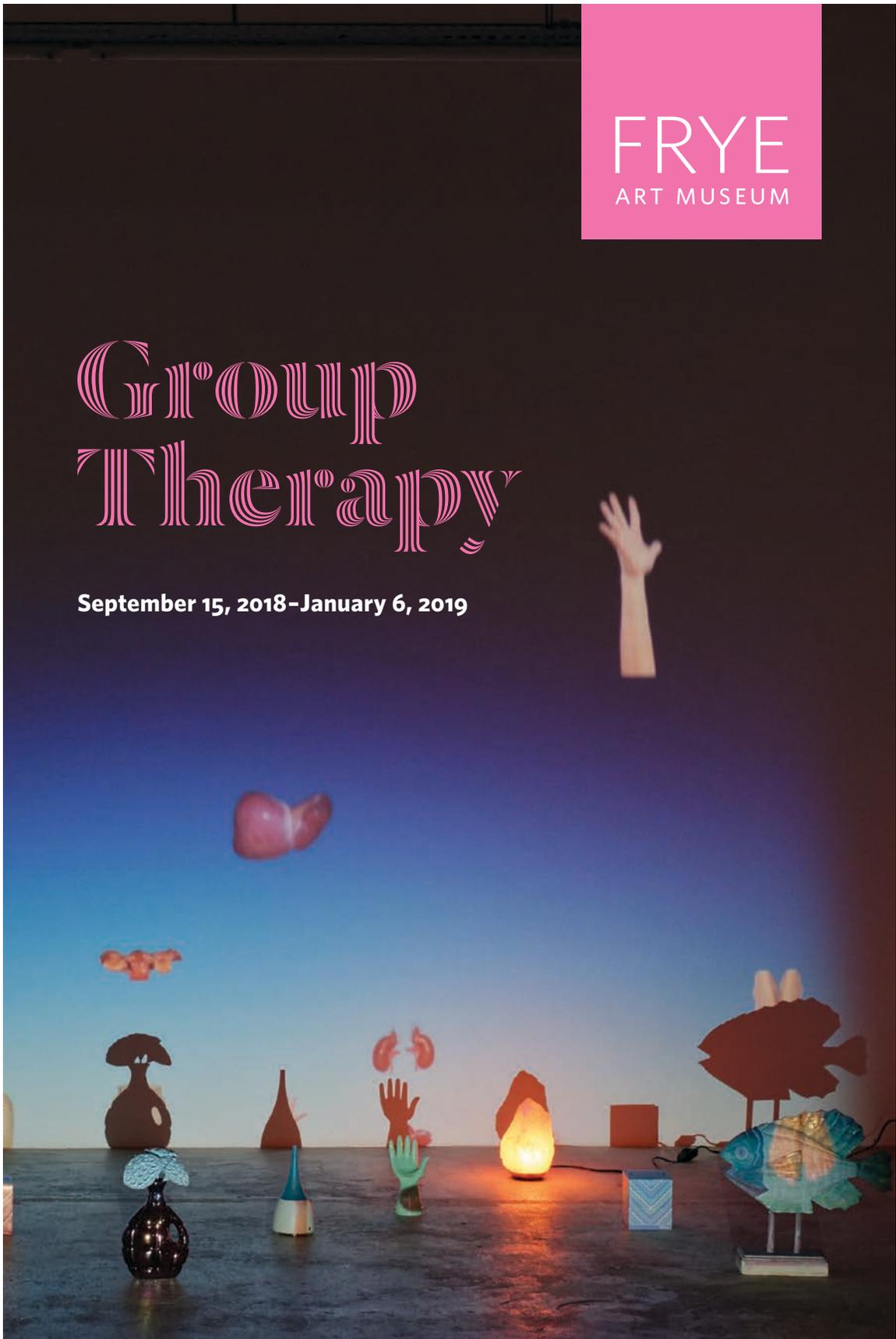


FRYE  
ART MUSEUM

# Group Therapy

September 15, 2018–January 6, 2019



## Exhibition Related Programs

---



### **Fortune House** **Tarot & Palm Readings by Cindy Mochizuki**

Friday, September 14, 7:30-9:30 pm  
Saturday, September 15, 11 am-5 pm  
Sunday, September 16, 11 am-5 pm  
Saturday, October 20, 11 am-5 pm  
Sunday, October 21, 11 am-5 pm  
Friday, November 9, 11 am-5 pm  
Saturday, November 10, 11 am-5 pm  
Sunday, November 11, 11 am-5 pm  
Frye Galleries  
*30 minute first-come-first-served sessions*



### **The Museum of Hypothetical Lifetimes** **Facilitated activations**

Friday, September 14, 7:30-9:30 pm  
Duration of exhibition:  
Tuesdays 2-5 pm  
Thursdays 4-7 pm  
Saturdays / Sundays 12-3 pm  
Frye Galleries  
*30 minute first-come-first-served sessions;  
dates and times subject to change*



### **Consciousness, Fungi and Journeys within Architectures of the Mind** **Artist Talk with Marcos Lutyens and Special Guests**

September 15, 2-3:30 pm  
Frye Auditorium



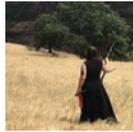
### **You say I for me (Selene)** **Reading, Sound Bath, and Guided Meditation by Lauryn Youden** **with Bri Luna, The Hoodwitch**

September 16, 1-2:30 pm  
Art Studio + Frye Galleries  
*Limited capacity; advanced registration required*



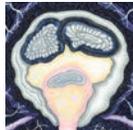
### **What my art-work can't do** **Artist Talk with Kandis Williams**

September 16, 3-4:30 pm  
Frye Auditorium



**Runic Galdr: Singing Magic Into Form  
Workshops with Ylva Mara**

October 6, 1-2:30 pm (open to all)  
October 6, 3-4:30 pm (for Queer/Trans/Non-Binary identifying folx)  
Art Studio + Frye Galleries  
*Limited capacity; advanced registration required*



**How Do We Create Balance In Times of Anxiety  
Two-Part Discussion with Ann Leda Shapiro, Negarra A. Kudumu,  
and Special Guests**

Thursday, October 25, 7-8:30 pm  
Saturday, November 17, 2-3:30 pm  
Frye Auditorium



**The Task  
Screening and Conversation with Leigh Ledare**

October 27, 1-4 pm  
Frye Auditorium



**Conversations with your "self"  
Workshop with Wynne Greenwood**

November 4, 1-4 pm  
Art Studio  
*Limited capacity; advanced registration required*



**Political Therapy  
Workshops with Liz Magic Laser and Valerie Bell**

November 10, 5-6:30 pm  
November 11, 5-6:30 pm  
Frye Galleries  
*Limited capacity; advanced registration required*



**The Way of the Visionary  
Workshops with Kat Larson**

December 1, 12-4 pm  
December 8, 12-4 pm  
December 15, 12-4 pm  
Art Studio  
*Limited capacity; advanced registration required*

For the most up-to-date program information please visit [fryemuseum.org](http://fryemuseum.org)

## The Museum Will See You Now

Amanda Donnan, Curator, Frye Art Museum

---

With a church on one side and three hospitals on the other, the Frye Art Museum is embedded in an archipelago of institutions devoted to care of one kind or another. Like many art museums worldwide, the Frye has in recent years absorbed some of the functions of its neighbors, augmenting its traditional cultural offerings with mind-body programs such as weekly Mindfulness Meditation and yoga classes. This can be seen as a natural extension of its role within the community, as a space for exercising perceptual, intellectual, and emotional capacities, but it is also a reflection of the ways cultural institutions have expanded in order to remain relevant and responded to the pressure to demonstrate measurable social benefit.

To that end, in 2011 the British Arts Impact Fund undertook a twelve-month study, which showed that people “who visit cultural institutions and are most in contact with art are 60% more likely to feel healthier” than those who do not and are not.<sup>1</sup> However it reached these conclusions, the fact that there was need for a study to prove art’s value is telling, as are the terms in which that value, or rather *efficacy*, is communicated. If art and art museums were once thought of as intrinsically “good,” edifying social instruments of moral redemption, as cultural critic Dave Hickey lamented in a prescient vocabulary (“What if art were considered bad for us?—more like cocaine that gives us pleasure while intensifying our desires, and less like penicillin that promises to cure us all?”<sup>2</sup>), it seems they must now prove themselves against the index of individuals’ feelings of physio-psycho-spiritual health. Visiting an art museum is now a self-optimizing activity.

*Group Therapy* reflects on and exaggerates this trend, convening contemporary artworks in a range of media that comment on and/or adapt strategies of alternative medicine, psychotherapy, and the wellness industry. The exhibition centers on interactive and immersive therapeutic experiences and serves as a platform for public programs led by artist-practitioners, amplifying the museum’s expanded social role. By so doing, the exhibition both analyzes and participates in a broader zeitgeist of popularized psychology, self-care, and natural healing—marked by an explosion of interest in everything from personality type tests, self-improvement podcasts, meditation retreats, spa treatments, and juice cleanses to crystals, astrology, Reiki, and ayahuasca ceremonies—that has evolved out of and in response to a century-long shift away from traditional, communal belief forms toward a neoliberal ethos centered on personal growth and self-expression.

The twelve artists presented in *Group Therapy* respond to this current state of affairs in a variety of ways. Some look critically at the intersection of consumerism and wellness practices or examine the ways in which popular culture operates as a repository for psychological projections of desire, fear, and bias. Others pursue democratized, relational models of care within the experimental context afforded by art, raising questions about ethics, trust, and expertise, as well as the traditionally passive role of the spectator. Several engage psychological theories and alternative treatment methods to perform research in interpersonal and social dynamics or to seek the fringes of individual ego consciousness and avenues of escape from its limitations.

The exhibition loosely traces an arc from neurosis to release, beginning with works that diagnose social pathologies such as racism, sexism, and political tribalism that affect individual health and in turn fuel the ongoing growth of the wellness and self-help industries. Opening the show, collages from **Kandis Williams's** *Disfiguring Traditions* (2016) series at first glance appear to be large Rorschach inkblots but upon closer inspection are seen to be collages created from repetitively xeroxed images of hands. The hands were extracted from now-iconic historical photographs of prominent 1960s Civil Rights activists but are deployed—in a form that suggests a projective test for racial prejudice—to reflect on contemporary issues around policing and discriminatory reactions to gestures like reaching for one's wallet. In a neighboring room, another group of Williams's collages draws correlations between contemporary representations of women (including pop stars Fiona Apple and Britney Spears) and historical images such as nineteenth-century photographs of "hysterical" female asylum patients contorting themselves, on command, into postures seen as physical manifestations of madness. The works suggest a recurring societal call for the staging of women—especially the unstable or "crazy" woman—for public consumption and male domination.

**Liz Magic Laser's** padded-room video installation *Primal Speech* (2016) also examines the performance of trauma, focusing on the need to publicly purge distressing emotions generated by the 2016 US presidential election and the United Kingdom's Brexit referendum. For the video, she worked with Certified Professional Life Coach Valerie Bell to treat a group of actor-participants with opposing convictions about recent political events using techniques of Primal Therapy (a radical 1970s approach based on abreaction, or the cathartic reexperiencing of a traumatic event), encouraging them to revisit and conflate formative personal experiences with their partisan frustrations. Clips of these actors reenacting their experiences are intercut with therapeutic questions directed to the viewer, who is invited to exorcise their own feelings by using the punching pillows available in the space. **Leigh Ledare's** feature-length film *The Task* (2017) similarly implicates viewers in a group psychology scenario, introducing them—via their surrogate, the camera—as witnesses and collaborators in a convening based on the Tavistock method, in which participants and trained facilitators form a self-analyzing social "ecosystem." The presence of the artist and his crew introduces an aspect of self-awareness to the assembly and unsettles its established power dynamics, complicating the group's examination of individual authority and identity in relation to factors such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

An interest in the more diffuse, "soft" mechanisms of power behind the wellness trend—in which individuals are, under neoliberal capitalism, compelled to participate in anxiety-fueled narcissism and self-surveillance—informs **Maryam Jafri's** sculptures *Depression* and *Anxiety* (2017). The works are composed of mass-produced objects—including silicone body parts sourced from Chinese fetish suppliers, acupuncture needles, cupping equipment, and stock photos, all joined to rough plywood constructions—and present a picture of the contemporary individual as a fragmented "body of parts" seeking reintegration through popularized Eastern healing practices. **Shana Moulton's** nearby installation of videos and sculptural pieces takes up this thread with a humorous twist, centering on a naive hypochondriac named Cynthia who compulsively consumes faddish health and beauty products in a never-ending endeavor to overcome her isolation and anxiety and achieve self-fulfillment. Decorative objects in Cynthia's home take on spiritual significance in *My Life as an INFJ* (2015–16), becoming symbols of her Myers-Briggs personality type to be placed like canopic jars next to her wicker "sarcophagus." The sculpture *Woman peering through the wall to the cosmetic spheres* (2018) and video *Whispering Pines 10* (2017), meanwhile, portray Cynthia in transformative fantasies reminiscent of Charlotte

Perkins Gilman's feminist short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892), in which the shut-in protagonist imagines there are women creeping around in the wall and that she is one of them. In Moulton's take, Cynthia regains connection to the outside world by ascending a giant redwood tree through a hole in the wall of her home.

The desire and struggle to bridge the interior of the self and the exterior of the social realm also animate **Wynne Greenwood's** video installation *How we, I mean how I pray* (2011/18), which suggests the architecture of a women's spa—a space in which bathers are exposed to and vulnerable with others while having inwardly focused, self-care experiences. Visitors are invited to lounge together around video projections in the place of soaking pools on the floor; rather than reflecting the self as water would, these video pools present what the artist calls "loose prayers of noticing," capturing everyday encounters within the artist's studio and out on city streets. Medusa, the snake-haired monster of Greek mythology, and television character Pebbles Flintstone also make appearances, coming into dialogue to engage (and challenge) archetypes of feminine behavior and being. The notion of identification with mythological and popular characters—or the projective fantasies that inspire their creation—carries through to the next gallery, in **Pedro Reyes's** *Los Mutantes* (2012), which takes the form of a periodic table of anthropomorphic creatures invented by various cultures across time.

**Cindy Mochizuki's** participatory *Fortune House* (2014/18) further unfolds the ways in which symbolic figures help us understand ourselves, beginning with a personalized reading in which the sitter's destiny is interpreted through the archetypes of the tarot. Mochizuki offers the tarot readings in exchange for a monster story drawn from the participant's own memories or dreams, old myths, or thoughts about what might qualify as a monster in contemporary society; she then translates the story into an inkblot drawing, symbolically neutralizing the monster's negative power over the sitter and conflating divination practice with an image form associated with psychoanalysis. Associative psychoanalytic methods also inform Reyes's *Museum of Hypothetical Lifetimes* (2011), which formalizes Jungian sandplay therapy, wherein individuals create representations of their internal worlds by arranging small figures, of subconscious significance, in a tray of sand. In Reyes's version, participants work with a trained (but nonprofessional) facilitator to select from among hundreds of small objects and place them in a scale model of an imaginary museum with twenty-two galleries representative of "mother," "the classroom," "aging," and so on, creating a retrospective and prospective "exhibition" of their lives. The work is one of sixteen therapeutic activities that make up Reyes's *Sanatorium* project, a "temporary clinic" that aims to democratize and destigmatize therapy and to tap into the capacity of members of the general public to help one another.

Following this potentially intense experience of self-narration, visitors enter the final passage of the exhibition, which immerses them in sensory experiences and visualizations that plug into ancient forms of knowledge and deeper, interconnected consciousness. Two moving-image works by **Joachim Koester** inaugurate this section, exploring the terra incognita of the body and potential routes of access to the underlayers of the mind. *Tarantism* (2007) captures a contemporary interpretation of the tarantella, a spontaneous, convulsive medieval dance that was thought to cure victims of delirious symptoms caused by the bite of a tarantula. *Reptile brain or reptile body, it's your animal* (2012) engages the theories of Polish writer and theater director Jerzy Grotowski (1933–1999), who developed mind-body exercises inspired by Haitian rituals and yoga to help performers get in touch with the "reptilian" or primitive brain. In the next room, **Lauryn Youden's** *A place to retreat when I am sick (of you)* similarly revives esoteric

healing knowledge—especially marginalized traditions historically associated with women (i.e., witches)—while utilizing the contemporary neurological method of binaural sound therapy to calm the overstimulated modern mind. Intended as a communal space for meditation, Youden's piece takes the form of a site-specific, Zen-gardenlike circle of combed black sand dotted with selenite crystals and pots of blended herbs, surrounded by cushions with wireless headphones, and crowned with a mesmerizing reflective wind-spinner sculpture. For Youden, the creation of the installation is a ceremonial process that functions as a method of self-care and a means of offering relief to others.

The surrounding paintings on paper by **Ann Leda Shapiro**, an acupuncturist as well as an artist, reflect her deep knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine and interest in talismanic, ritual-based art practices such as Ethiopian healing scrolls and Cycladic goddess figurines. Several of her included works were created for particular bodywork clients, as visual invocations of healing that represent the restoration or “making whole” of the subject's fragmented mental, physical, and spiritual state. Another group of her paintings depicts encapsulated, hermaphroditic figures, symbolizing the artist's belief that we each contain all aspects of being and exist as microcosmic reflections of larger ecosystems and the universe. Utilizing hypnosis to reconnect participants to these universal affinities, **Marcos Lutyens's** sculptural audio installation *Library of Babel, a Symbiont Induction* (2018) focuses on mycelial colonies—complex underground masses of fungal filaments that form a communicative network and symbiotically share nutrients with neighboring plants—as models of mutuality and interrelation. The installation centers on a life-size spiral staircase, the stair treads of which are fruiting with reishi mushrooms, inside a mist-filled terrarium surrounded by comfortable seats. Spoken by the artist, the inductive audio track focuses on the staircase as an “architectural interface” by which to ascend and descend between hypnotic states and as a symbolic form connected to the notion of recursivity explored in Jorge Luis Borges's short story “The Library of Babel” (1941). Lutyens's project is motivated by a utopian desire to push aside what he has called “the bullying, obsessive-compulsive conscious mind” and open up new perceptual pathways that might be scalable from individual experience to the collective community.

Concluding in this way, following a through line of immersive group experiences, peer-to-peer participatory projects, and public workshops, *Group Therapy* reflects on the museum's capacity to go beyond moralizing and self-optimizing models of engagement and activate a sense of communal purpose. Museums are mirrors of culture past and present, not instruments of direct social change, but they do assemble temporary communities based in (shared) curiosity, which is the necessary precondition for caring.<sup>3</sup> The art institution's greatest strength might be its ability to help that community recognize itself as such by reflexively magnifying the role of the spectator.

1. “Yoga Is Booming in Museums: Between Art and Healthcare,” Art|Trove, April 24, 2018, <https://www.art-trope.com/art-news/yoga-booming-museums-art-healthcare/>.

2. Dave Hickey, “Frivolity and Uction,” in *Air Guitar* (Los Angeles: Art Issues Press, 1997), 203.

3. As described by Donna Haraway: “Caring means becoming subject to the unsettling obligation of curiosity, which requires knowing more at the end of the day than at the beginning.” Quoted by Caroline Carlsmith in Marcos Lutyens, *Memoirs of a Hypnotist: 100 Days* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2015), 158.

**Wynne Greenwood \ Maryam Jafri \ Joachim Koester \ Liz Magic Laser  
Leigh Ledare \ Marcos Lutyens \ Cindy Mochizuki \ Shana Moulton  
Pedro Reyes \ Ann Leda Shapiro \ Kandis Williams \ Lauryn Youden**

**Images: Cover:** Shana Moulton. *My Life as an INFJ*, 2015–16. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Crèvecoeur, Paris. © Aurélien Mole; **Poster:** Kandis Williams. *The Oratory Command: X Carmichael King Hampton* (detail), 2016. Courtesy of the artist and Night Gallery, Los Angeles. Photo: Mark Woods; **Program thumbnails:** (counterclockwise from top left) Cindy Mochizuki. *Fortune House* at Koganecho Bazaar, Yokohama, 2014. Photo: Paul Mundok; Pedro Reyes. *Sanatorium* at stillspotting nyc, Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2011. Courtesy of the artist; Marcos Lutyens. *Library of Babel, a Symbiont Induction*, 2018. Courtesy of the artist; Lauryn Youden. *You say I for me* performed at Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 2018. Photo: Ernst van Deursen; Kandis Williams. *Esophagus Pin-up* (detail), 2016. Courtesy of the artist and Night Gallery, Los Angeles; Kat Larson. *inner+vision II*, 2017. Courtesy of artist; Liz Magic Laser. *Primal Speech*, 2016. Photo: Ruth Clark. Courtesy of the artist, Various Small Fires, Los Angeles and Wilfried Lentz, Rotterdam; Wynne Greenwood. *How we, I mean how I pray* (still), 2011/18. Courtesy of the artist; Leigh Ledare. *The Task* (still), 2017. Courtesy of the artist and The Box Gallery, Los Angeles; Ann Leda Shapiro. *Healing Scroll 1 Split* (detail), 2012. Courtesy of the artist; Ylva Mara. Courtesy of Cunning Crow Apothecary.



*Group Therapy* is organized by the Frye Art Museum and curated by Amanda Donnan. Generous support is provided by ArtsFund, the Frye Foundation, the Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation, and Frye Art Museum members. Media sponsorship is provided by City Arts.

