

MEDIA RELEASE

Molly Gochman's April 19th Panel at Deborah Colton Gallery

Artist, Molly Gochman continues to help inspire forward momentum on topics that are relevant to today with a panel discussion from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 19, at Deborah Colton Gallery, 2445 North Boulevard, in Houston.

Panel members include the Texas Organizing Project's Ginny Goldman and Michelle Tremillo, who both serve as executive directors. The Texas Organizing Project promotes social and economic equality for low to moderate income Texans through community and electoral organizing. Also on the panel are Joe Carlos Madden, Head of Policy at Commissioner Ellis' office, and Marianela Acuña Arreaza, Executive Director of Fey Y Justicia Worker Center, a safe space for low-wage workers to learn about their rights in the workplace and to organize to improve conditions on the job.

Event attendees will learn more about what has been done over the past several months to build a more equitable Houston, along with what plans there are for the future.

The panel will be held in conjunction with Gochman's exhibit *Drenched* at Deborah Colton Gallery, which is an examination of life in Houston after Hurricane Harvey. The work also explores life in India after extreme flooding. By looking at both environments, the artist is able to show the myriad ways water works to build, destroy, connect, devour and grow.

Drenched combines three series by Gochman – "Before," "Waterfalls Wept" and "Surrogates." Together, these works seek to explore, in the context of both Houston and India, the myriad ways water works to build, destroy, connect, devour and grow.

"Before," is an examination of life in Houston after Hurricane Harvey and in India after extreme flooding. Harvey was the costliest tropical cyclone on record, inflicting nearly \$200 billion in damage all over Houston. The resulting floods inundated hundreds of thousands of homes, displaced more than 30,000 people and resulted in 100 deaths.

As a result of heavy monsoon rains that led to flooding in South Asia, more than 1,200 people died across India, Bangladesh and Nepal. In addition, more than 40 million people were immediately affected by the devastation, and 1.8 million children were left out of school. The numbers continued to grow with time.

The images Gochman created for "Before" are memorials to the emotional loss caused by flooding. The artist combined images of flood-damaged personal items and parts of homes that became piles of trash with images of fabric, and transferred them onto aluminum.

"All of the images I saw of flooded towns and cities in India depicted brown water – the same color as the water in Houston, Port Arthur, Galveston and Rockport," Gochman said. "The fabric you see reminds me of the colors of India, these disasters and of water."

Molly Gochman is an interdisciplinary conceptual artist and activist based in New York. She founded Red Sand Project in 2014, and the organization's installations and events have taken place around the U.S. and across the globe.

The exhibit will run through the FotoFest 2018 Biennial, ending on Sunday, April 22.

Molly Gochman is an award-winning activist and artist who aims to bring together the collective experiences of many people for greater understanding. She is also the founder of the Stardust Fund, a philanthropic initiative dedicated to increasing the participation and power of excluded people. She is also the founder of Stardust Equity, a mission-driven investment fund responsibly deploying capital, specifically through a gender lens. In 2014, Molly Gochman created Red Sand Project, an international activist artwork that raises awareness of the vulnerabilities that lead to exploitation. The project has engaged in action over 1.5 million people of diverse backgrounds – and it's continuing to grow daily. She has served on the board of the Texas Civil Rights Project, is a board member of The Freedom Fund and was recently named one of New York's New Abolitionists by the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition. A native Texan, Gochman earned a B.F.A. in sculpture from Guilford College.

Deborah Colton Gallery is founded on being an innovative showcase for ongoing presentation and promotion of strong historical and visionary contemporary artists world-wide, whose diverse practices include painting, works on paper, sculpture, video, photography, performance and conceptual future media installations. The gallery aspires to provide a forum through connecting Texas, national and international artists to create awareness for positive change.