

San Antonio Express-News (MYSAs.com)

April 24, 2014 | Updated: April 25, 2014 10:09am

IN PRINT (front page of Culturitas) – Sunday, April 27, 2014

Exhibit showcases Linda Pace's world class art collection



Daniel J. Martinez's marble sculptures stand guard outside the Linda Pace Foundation's new SPACE gallery.

By Steve Bennett

SAN ANTONIO — Former Artpace director and current Linda Pace Foundation board member Kathryn Kanjo was preaching to a small choir of art aficionados at a panel discussion pegged to the opening of SPACE. That's the name of the foundation's new 2,000-square-foot gallery off of South Flores in CHRISpark, the urban oasis dedicated to the late artist, collector and philanthropist's son.

“Linda not only had beauty and brains, she had this tough undercurrent,” Kanjo said. “She liked the visually seductive, but also wanted challenging content.”

The inaugural show at SPACE, which will be open to the public from noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, is called “PACE GEMS.”

On view through Sept. 13, it features 35 pieces from the foundation's world-class collection of more than 500 works of contemporary art, many acquired by Pace herself before her death from breast cancer in 2007.

Curated by former director Maura Reilly, the show reflects the foundation's — and its founder's — dedication to beauty, brains and the adrenalin rush of challenge.

“It's a highlight show,” said Kanjo, who is now chief curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. “It's not themed, so you can really experience each piece on its own.”

And it's an exhilarating, enlightening experience.

Works by international art stars such as Andres Serrano, Marilyn Minter, Donald Moffett, Martha Rosler, Wangechi Mutu, Forrest Bess, Laura Aguilar, Yayoi Kusama and Antony Gormley have been liberated from a storage facility up Camp Street and are now publicly accessible.

Future exhibitions include a solo show by former San Antonian Alejandro Díaz in October, and SPACE will host artist talks, including Dario Robleto June 14 and Teresita Fernandez Sept. 6.



Marilyn Minter's photograph "Runs" is featured in "PACE GEMS."

Much of the "PACE GEMS" work is politically barbed and socially controversial, such as Serrano's "Klanswoman"; Glenn Ligon's dark, oil-and-coal-dust text painting "Stranger in the Village #11"; Donald Moffett's "Landscape #5"; and Daniel Joseph Martinez's marble, martial sculpture standing guard at the front entrance with the mouthful of a title: "A Meditation on the Possibility of Romantic Love or Where You Goin' With That Gun In Your Hand, Bobby Seale and Huey Newton Discuss the Relationships Between Expressionism and Social Reality Present in Hitler's Paintings."

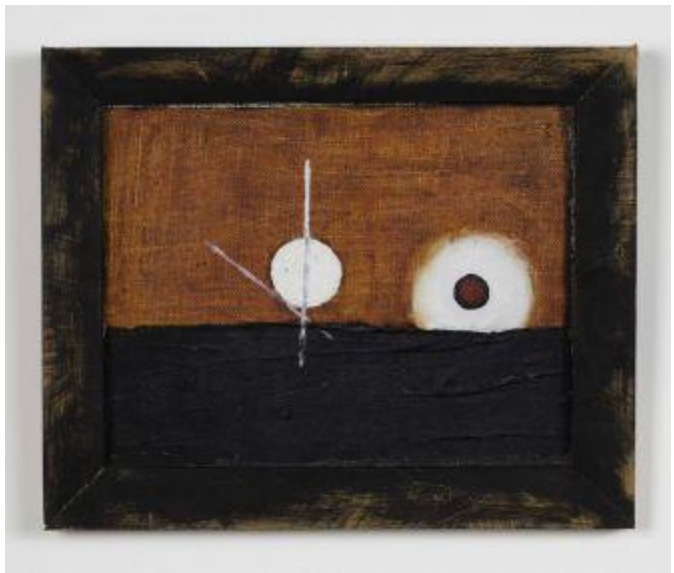
"Not only do we bring our skills as artists to the work, we bring our concerns as citizens," Moffett said during the panel discussion.

Designed by Southtown architect Jim Poteet, the gallery — a century-old barnlike building that was formerly the foundation's offices and, at one time, Linda Pace's art studio — is a bright, pristine space with exposed rafters and a polished concrete floor. It brings out the best in the art works by not calling attention to itself.

The centerpiece of "PACE GEMS" is a large, soft-sculptural work by Los Angeles artist Andrea Bowers that is the foundation's latest acquisition.

Constructed of chipped wood chunks suspended from green climbing ropes, "Memorial to Arcadia Woodlands Clear-Cut, 2013" is a "monument" to a suburban forest bulldozed by government workers — and to the tree sitters, including Bowers, who tried unsuccessfully to save it.

"I wanted to memorialize these trees that were destroyed," the artist said.



Forrest Bess' 1947 "Two Suns" is the oldest work in the "PACE GEMS" exhibit at SPACE gallery.

Many of the artists in the Pace Foundation collection, such as Annette Messager, participated in the artist residency program at Artpace, Pace's downtown "art laboratory," or exhibited, like Bowers, in the Hudson (Show)Room there.

"PACE GEMS" therefore can be seen not only as a tribute to the driving force behind the collection — the late Linda Pace — but also as a summation of what has been accomplished since Pace founded Artpace as a creative incubator in 1993.

"Showcasing Linda's collection is one component of the foundation's mission," Kanjo said, "and this new gallery space gives us a better opportunity to do that."

sbennett@express-news.net