



NOW ART LA  
106 1/2 Judge Aiso #314  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
www.nowartla.org

## *MEDIA ALERT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

December 12, 2017

Noa Yekutieli: *The Other Side*

**December 15 through January 7, 2018**

First United Methodist Church

1020 S. Flower Street, Los Angeles, CA 90015

Curated by Now Art LA

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*The Other Side (detail), 2017, Manual paper-cutting (photo: Studio Now Yekutieli)*

Los Angeles - NOW Art LA is delighted to announce **The Other Side**, an immersive alternative nativity scene commissioned by First United Methodist Church of Los Angeles that will be realized by locally based multidisciplinary artist, Noa Yekutieli. This nativity project will examine the ways the story of the Virgin Mary has been typically told and how women in similar situations continue to be treated. This responsive installation recites Mary's narrative through the lives of two present day women visually depicted in the piece. The women embody a situation parallel to Mary's struggle against the stigma and challenges of a homeless, pregnant and unwed woman.

This time sensitive collaborative project was commissioned by the First United Methodist Church and Reverend Mandy McDow who says; "UMC understands our mission to be radically committed to the marginalized and disempowered, we desire to use our public space to demonstrate our beliefs." The church carries the same legacy today, by continually expanding a welcome to all, as exemplified by Sunday services which are held in the same parking lot as the installation.

Noa Yekutieli's large-scale immersive installation will gradually shift in appearance as it traces the birth of Jesus Christ over a twenty-four day period, opening on December 15 at 6 pm and culminating on January 7, 2018. Installation will take place at the corner of Olympic and Flower streets on a multi-use site that operates as a parking lot during the week. This space which is all that remains of the church's past physical property, will prompt the public to grapple with the relevance of this biblical scene within a contemporary context. Within the work, Noa Yekutieli will present an interactive diorama that supports laser cut plexiglass panels forming a stunning display of nativity characters. These reflective silhouettes will enable viewers to be reflected and become participants in the work. Noa comments: "As an artist I wish to create an alternative visual 'territory' in which we can reflect things in a different context and see our potential to empathize with the 'other' in order to cross bridges of understanding. In the creation of this piece I encountered two young strong women (Darla and Ashanti) who are currently pregnant and without a home. They were incorporated into the piece in order to portray them as the figures of Mary and her cousin Elizabeth. Telling their story mirrors them to the biblical narrative in order to raise questions, and draw lines of similarities between Darla as Mary and Ashanti as Elizabeth."

Denise Anderman, board chair of Now Art LA recently described **The Other Side**; "There has never been a better time than now to examine and consider the nativity from Mary's perspective. From a community and cultural point of view, it is as relevant today as two thousand years ago."



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### **ABOUT NOA YEKUTELI**

Noa Yekutieli is an Israeli-American contemporary narrative artist who works in manual paper-cutting technique and creates site specific installations. In her work she refers to human aspects of complex social situations and raises questions in the place of the memory in the way political, social and personal narratives are created and evolve.

<http://www.noayekutieli.com>

### **ABOUT FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Los Angeles First United Methodist Church is the oldest Protestant church in the city. Founded in 1853 in the El Dorado Saloon, and in its early decades worked with abolitionists to ensure the freedom of all people. First United Methodist Church is responsible for helping to found the University of Southern California (whose first mascot was the Fighting Methodists!), Goodwill Industries, and the Methodist Hospital in Arcadia. The mission and ministry of First UMC has always been to serve the community, and bring justice and equality to all. For most of the 20th century, we were located on 8th and Hope Street, celebrating one of the largest congregations on the west coast.

Today, First United Methodist Church exists in a completely different form. After the population of Downtown Los Angeles moved away from the city's center, the congregation decided to sell their building to the Gas Company, and purchase a new property - an office building - on the corner of Flower and Olympic. When the building became too burdensome to update, First Church razed the building, sold off part of the property, and worked to create 1010 Development Corporation, which builds affordable housing. Two buildings were created to house seniors and families, and the parking lot is all that remains of the church's physical property. This is a church whose priority has always been for the community, rather than institutional maintenance. This is a church who has worked diligently for social justice and equality.

<http://www.citybeautifula.org>

### **ABOUT NOW ART LA**

NOW Art LA is an award-winning arts organization that facilitates large scale public art projects in Los Angeles and around the world. The agency is comprised of local women curators, producers and artists unified in their aim to enrich public space through the development and production of culturally attuned, diverse and aesthetically stimulating art projects that transform the social, physical and artistic landscape of Los Angeles. NOW Art is a public arts organization that facilitates creative exchanges, cultural production, and collaborations with urban influencers and artists. NOW Art LA is focused on the creation, and curation of site specific artworks that revitalize both physical and social landscapes and engage the public's imagination.

<http://nowartla.org>

Now Art is proud to be a partner alongside the First United Methodist Church. We celebrate the realization of this project with our partners who without their support, this landmark project would not have been possible.

For more information or to schedule an interview please contact [info@nowartla.org](mailto:info@nowartla.org) or [mandy@citybeautifula.org](mailto:mandy@citybeautifula.org)