

# “Do the Right Thing” *(dis)comfort women*

*Sex Slaves of the Japanese Imperial Army*

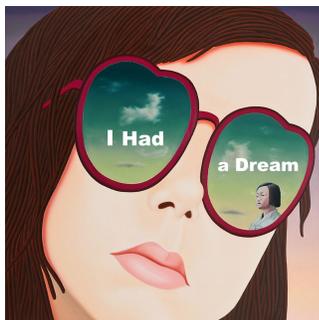
@ReflectSpace

July 20 - September 3, 2017

Downtown Central Library  
Glendale, CA

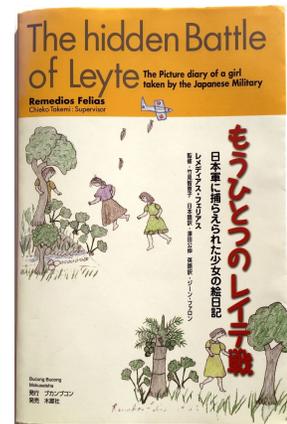
Glendale--ReflectSpace at Downtown Central presents **Do the Right Thing: *(dis)comfort women***, an exhibition reflecting on the silence and dialogue by and about the women who were forced to become sex slaves by the Japanese Imperial Army before and during World War II. The exhibition presents the work of 12 international documentarians and artists and runs from July 20 to September 3, 2017. Opening reception is on Friday July 21, from 6-9 pm.

Before and during World War II, over 200,000 women from South Korea, Taiwan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and East Timor were coerced or forcibly transported to so-called “comfort stations” across Japanese occupied territories and repeatedly raped, tortured and brutalized for months and years. Most women were under the age of 20, some as young as 12. Many women were murdered or committed suicide during their enslavement.



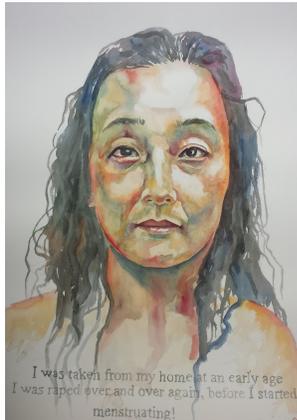
And the horrors of their experience did not end with the end of the war. Many women were severely traumatized and never married or were unable to have children as a result of the torture they suffered. Many did not return home and those who did were branded as “Japanese leftovers” and were often derided and ostracized. Humiliated and ashamed, comfort women survivors remained silent for nearly six decades: in isolation, shame, mental and physical ill-health, and often in extreme poverty. Breaking the silence about their experiences was a courageous task. The first public pronouncement by a survivor came in 1991, nearly 50 years later.

The term “comfort women” is a Japanese euphemism coined by the military to soften the scope and viciousness of their system of slavery. The *(dis)comfort women* exhibit turns this term on its head and develops alternative narratives of the experience by survivors as well as artists. The exhibit includes drawings, watercolor, paintings, sculpture and audio-visual material drawn from a wide range of North American and international artists, professional as well as amateur. *(dis)comfort women* will show the



work of Remedios Felias, a former sex slave who late in life drew a graphic picture diary of her harrowing experience, as well as giant public art banners by NY-based artist Chang-Jin Lee.

The artists' work invites reflection and dialogue but also creates tension: between the inability to speak about personal trauma and the deep human urge to tell. Artists explore this silence and simultaneously break it. *(dis)comfort women* is held taut in this tension and is a vociferous presence urging the acknowledgment of the horrors, lifelong indignity and shame suffered by the comfort women.



Artists in *(dis)comfort women*: [Steve Cavallo](#), Yoon Jung Choi, Shon Jeung Eun, Remedios Felias, Arian Kang, [Chang-Jin Lee](#), [Melly Lym](#), Hong Sun Myeong, Kim Siha, Gim Deok Yeoung, Shin Chang Yong and Seo Soo-Young.

*Do the right thing: (dis)comfort women* at ReflectSpace opens on July 20 and continues through September 3, 2017. Opening reception will be held on Friday July 21, at 6 pm. Co-curated by Monica Hye Yeon Jun, Ara and Anahid Oshagan.

ReflectSpace is a new exhibition space inside Downtown Central Library designed to explore and reflect on major human atrocities, genocides and civil rights violations. Immersive in conception, ReflectSpace is a hybrid space that is both experiential and informative, employing art, technology and interactive media to reflect on the past and present of Glendale's communal fabric and interrogate current-day global human rights issues.

ReflectSpace @ Downtown Central  
222 E. Harvard St.  
Glendale CA, 91202  
Mon-Thurs, 9 am - 10 pm  
Fri, Sat, 9 am - 6 pm  
Sun, 12 pm - 6 pm  
818-548-2021



Image credits: Choi Yun Jung, Remedios Felias, Steve Cavallo