Medusa Remembers
Zini Lardieri

April 22–May 21, 2023
Opening reception: Saturday, April 22, from 6–8pm
Before and After… performance with Kay Turner: May 6, from 3–6pm

GALLERY I

Zini Lardieri, *Maffey: Medusa Eruption*, 2023, digital print with silkscreen, 17 x 22 inches.

A.I.R. Gallery is pleased to announce *Medusa Remembers*, an exhibition of photo sculptures and collages by New York Member Zini Lardieri, an activist and mixed media artist. This is the artist's first solo exhibition at A.I.R.

Medusa Remembers is born from Lardieri's anger about the encroaching controls over women's bodies by a state that does not support those bodies medically, financially, physically, or emotionally. Embracing Medusa as a symbol of female rage and power, the show's photographs resonate with inherited stories about female, queer, and othered bodies and the power they hold. Lardieri weaves together concepts of memory, birth, death, and doubling to tell a story that celebrates the hidden, unknown, and often disparaged blood mysteries of menstruation, lactation, and menopause.

The show is anchored by *Going Through Old Boxes*, a bulletin-board style collage of images created during the past thirty-five years. Many of these photographs draw on the legacy of surrealism, abstracting images of human bodies in unusual and unsettling ways. Others hew to conventional portraiture, with a feminist twist. Lardieri's new series, *Apotropaic Totems*, synthesizes her interest in portraiture and surrealism through collage. Using photos of friends and family as a starting point, Lardieri splices together images from her personal history to evoke mythological attributes.

A Wall of Witches is a cumulative portrait project that grew out of a 2017 performance by Kay Turner at A.I.R. Gallery, titled *Before and After, What the Witch's Nose Knows that Andy Warhol's Nose Doesn't Know*. The performance exposed the abject, negative history of the witch's nose as a male fabrication and fantasy, then used communal ritual to reverse its effects. Lardieri's "Before" portraits capture participants in their natural state, while the "After" images portray them wearing nose prostheses, as they embrace the power of the Witch. In a new version of the performance on May 6, Turner and Lardieri invite women to the *Wall of Witches* for another round of before and after portraits, smell tests, and nose testimonies.

In *Wrestling with it*, Lardieri and former A.I.R. Fellow Zazu Swistel create portraits of each other that investigate an intergenerational call and response. *The Egg and the Breast* meditates on the social marginality of menopausal women by juxtaposing a close-up shot of Lardieri's mother's breast with a macro image of a calcified egg. Intermingling symbols of birth and death, or eros and jouissance, *Medusa Remembers* rewrites cultural anxieties and mythic stereotypes about women's bodies. We hear Medusa laugh at the absurdity of the patriarchy.

Zini Lardieri is an artist working in photography, performance, and installation. She is a feminist and political activist who photographs the world around her. Lardieri's work is often collaborative and frequently stems from her desire to record the particulars of interpersonal relationships. She is an artist member of A.I.R. Gallery in New York City and divides her time between New York and Santa Monica. She has an MA from NYU/ICP and was a participant in the Whitney Museum Independent Studio Program.

A.I.R. Gallery is wheelchair accessible via ramp. There are accessible toilets in the venue. There is comfortable seating with backs. Free tap water is available. The venue is nearest to the F train at York St (0.2 miles) and the A train at High St (0.5 miles). The nearest wheelchair accessible trains is the B, Q, R at Dekalb Av (1.1 miles) and the 2, 3 at Borough Hall (0.8 miles). The roads immediately surrounding the gallery are cobblestone. The nearest accessible parking garage (for an hourly fee) is two blocks away at 100 Jay St. No ID necessary for entry. Please contact info@airgallery.org for more information.