



**THE
WORLD'S
FUTURES**

la Biennale di Venezia
56th International Art Exhibition
All the World's Futures



la Biennale di Venezia

**56. Esposizione
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d'Arte**

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Patricia Cronin: *Shrine for Girls, Venice*

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Websites
www.shrineforgirls.org
<http://curatorialprojects.brooklynrail.org/>

Exhibitor
Patricia Cronin

Although the United Nations unanimously approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, over half of the world's population—women and girls—continue to be among the most vulnerable members of our global society. Often facing violence, repression, and enforced ignorance, this young female populace is subjected to a horrifying existence on earth.

Inside the exquisite sixteenth-century church of San Gallo, *Shrine for Girls, Venice* is a shrine in their honor. Hundreds of girls' clothes, traditional and humble, gathered from around the world and arranged on three stone altars, act as relics of these young martyrs. Commemorating their spirit, this dramatic site-specific installation is a meditation on the incalculable loss of unrealized potential and hopelessness in the face of unfathomable human cruelty, juxtaposed against the obligation and mission we have, as global citizens, to combat this prejudice.

The central altar exhibits brightly colored saris worn by girls in India, three of whom were recently gang raped, murdered, and left hanging from trees. The left altar displays hijabs representing the 276 schoolgirls kidnapped last year by Boko Haram in Nigeria. And the right altar presents a pile of aprons and uniforms symbolizing those worn by girls at the Magdalene Asylums and Laundries, forced labor institutions for young women without options in Europe and America, as recently as 1996.

Shrines, part of every major religion's practice, provide a space for contemplation, petition, and rituals of remembrance. In the church of San Gallo, long deconsecrated, dramatically illuminated mounds of humble clothing are elevated to the status of art to bring awareness to this urgent crisis, while providing a space to reflect and, hopefully, inspire viewers into action. A framed photograph of each of these three tragic events will accompany the installation, which hopes to propose a new and reflective dialogue between gender, memory, and justice.

Patricia Cronin



Patricia Cronin, *Saris*, 2015. Saris and wood,
172 x 162 x 89 cm. Photo Doug Schwab