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n the marketplace of ideas that is the art world, it's particularly hard for art organizations to establish an original voice these days, given the many distractions and the competition among artists, critics, dealers and auction houses ying for the attention of the public.

That makes the achievements of the Art Production Fund (APF) all the more remarkable. From its inception in 2000, APF has spoken clearly and distinctly through dozens of public art projects (many in New York, but elsewhere, too) and a groundbreaking series of fundraising collaborations, notably its artist-designed bath towels. The tone and subject matter have consistently been thought-provoking, often playful and always artist-driven. But the organization has never tried to stamp a signature look or feel on what it produces, either.

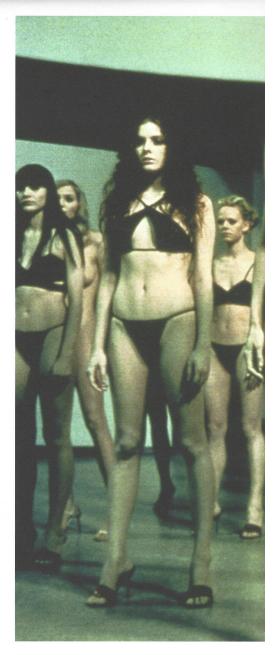
One of the reasons that public art in general has taken a quantum leap in quality and popularity in the past 15 years is APF's handiwork. Its many collaborators—and collaboration is at the very heart of what the organization does—include Chuck Close, Kehinde Wiley, Kiki Smith, Rob Pruitt, Vanessa Beecroft, Shirin Neshat, Yoko Ono and Ryan McGinley.

"When we thought of a niche that really hadn't been too explored, we saw this role as producer," says Yvonne Force Villareal, who founded APF with Doreen Remen. "We very generically named ourselves Art Production because it meant that every project we took on could have this very strong identity in and of itself. That's why it's successful."

APF, which is run by Villareal, Remen and Casey Fremont, does two things at once: scrambling to get public artworks made and installed, and raising money to support those efforts.

This summer, both halves of the mission will be front and center for New Yorkers. Swedish artist Hanna Liden's humorously bagel-themed project, *Everything*—a two-location sculptural installation—goes up in the Meatpacking District on July 21. Smart sponsorship has been key for APF, and one of its stalwart supporters, Kiehl's, is funding Liden's pieces. Over at Barney's New York, a limited edition set of housewares and accessories emblazoned with images from the work of legendary artist Alex Katz are on sale, with a quarter of the proceeds going to APF.

The organization has great cachet now, but it comes from





The organization helped put together 37 off-site projects at the Park Avenue Armory in a feat of logistics that impressed the most blasé art world denizens

the 1990s, Villareal, trained as an artist, was "Berlin Billboards" in the German capital and working as an art advisor, and Remen was a Laurie Simmons's "Pause" in Las Vegas, part of practicing architect. Both wanted to make a new an ongoing partnership with the hotel kind of contribution—to enable artists to work at Cosmopolitan. a large scale, and to have big audiences

started as an intern at age 16, but quickly outreach. And they all share turf frequently. became indispensable.

the work of the Minimalist Donald Judd, whose realize it," says Villareal. "And we also fight for the Chinati Foundation is nearby, commercialism, fashion (it was blessed by Miuccia Prada herself) to be as pure as possible with the artist's vision." and architecture, all while managing to hold its own as an elegant work of art.

another reputation-building benchmark. The we are so close," says Villareal. It's not lost on know how it comes together," she says of t organization helped put together 37 off-site them that the art world is not exactly bursting with juggling involved. "Sometimes it's really like

humble beginnings. Villareal and Remen met and logistics that impressed the most blasé art world touch with that—we don't call ourselves became close friends while attending the Rhode denizens. And just in the past year, APF has women-run organization, but that's what Island School of Design (RISD) in the 1980s. By overseen, among other things, Rirkrit Tiravanija's happen to be," she adds.

Working together as a well-oiled machine, the experience the pieces in a non-traditional context. three women split up responsibilities. The "Some people would accumulate money, detail-oriented Fremont is "the nuts-and-bolts girl, make a business plan and lay out the next three the hardliner," says Remen, who is herself or five years, but that's absolutely not what we focused on architecture and engineering because did," recalls Remen. "We kind of just put the sign of her background, as well as strategic thinking. on our door and started doing projects." Fremont Villareal tackles fundraising, communications and

Even when everyone's working in her A few projects put APF into the big leagues, wheelhouse, getting complicated art projects notably the now-permanent Prada Marfa installed is not easy. "We have to be extremely installation by the artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset moved by an idea because it takes so much just to make it something people would enjo in Marfa, Texas. The 2005 headline-maker serves passion to find the venue, secure the fabricators simultaneously as a meta in-joke that touches on and ultimately, raise the funds that it takes to but also accessible." project not to lose any of its integrity. We want it indispensable for getting art out into the wor

All of them have children, and all use the metaphor of family to describe what they are to acknowledges the mysterious X factor that The 2008 Whitney Biennial provided APF with one another. "It's almost a family run organization, projects at the Park Avenue Armory in a feat of organizations by trios of women. "We use a light miracle. No joke, a miracle."

There was never any chance they were go to be a dour, old-school nonprofit; substance w flair is baked into the APF cake, and Villareal cit none other than the ebullient and stylish Peg Guggenheim as a model, "We kind of broke an mold of what a non-profit is," she says, "We a women who love to be out in the world. We en wearing fashion and we love high design."

That attitude is blended with a true populis since the APF team could easily be doing its thi inside a museum, gallery or private collectic "We are really trying to make art available everybody," says Fremont, and the organizati has deftly surfed the high-low dividing line. "V would never want to sacrifice the quality of the ; Instead, they seek works that are "high-qual

Although not run by artists, APF As the many logistics and specifications Liden's "Everything" are being firmed up, Rem present in everything the trio does, "You do





Rirkrit Tiravanija's Berlin Billboards, 2015 Elmgreen & Dragset's Prada Marfa,