



*Altered
After*

Altered After



Altered After

CURATED BY CONRAD VENTUR

Darrel Ellis

fierce pussy

General Idea

Jerry the Marble Faun

Leslie Kaliades

Kang Seung Lee

Ronald Lockett

Jonathan Molina-Garcia

Cookie Mueller

Raúl de Nieves

Jason Simon

Manuel Solano

Gail Thacker

Julie Tolentino

XFR Collective

VISUAL AIDS, NEW YORK

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Jerry the Marble Faun, Vic, 2015. Limestone, 13 x 17 x 18 in.

Altered After is an exhibition
curated by Conrad Ventur for Visual AIDS at
Participant Inc, 253 East Houston Street, New York,
from July 10 to August 18, 2019.

Absolute Love is a performance program
curated by Camilo Godoy,
taking place at 7PM on July 21, 2019
at Participant Inc.

XFR WKND is a community digitization event
hosted by XFR Collective at Participant Inc
on July 27 and 28, 2019.

Record Time is a moving image program
curated by Carmel Curtis and Leeroy Kun Young Kang,
screening at 7:30PM on August 8, 2019
at Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave, New York.



Foreword

BY ESTHER MCGOWAN
Executive Director, Visual AIDS

As Visual AIDS has evolved along with the AIDS crisis and those affected by it, our work wrestles with the intersections of memory, materiality, legacy, activism, family, community and survival.

We are thrilled to present *Altered After*, an exhibition that touches on personal aspects of the AIDS crisis that are often hidden, and are therefore not considered in traditional scholarship and in the general public's understanding of who was and is affected. For many, the vocation of caregiving began in the 1980s or 1990s when a neighbor, sibling, child or lover was dying. But after the person's passing, that care continued, as family members and friends archived belongings, artwork, and ephemera, and found as many pathways as possible to keep memories alive. While much is known about the activism of organizations such as ACT UP, or the public work of institutions such as GMHC or Housing Works, there are many other layers of activism and care that happen at a personal level, on a daily basis, that have now continued for 30 or 40 years. More often than not, these devoted efforts go unnoticed by the world at large, but have profound effects on families and individuals. As medical interventions have changed the nature of AIDS, those living long-term with HIV contend with the legacies of those who passed away while also fighting for their own continued survival on a daily basis. These multi-faceted experiences are essential to understanding the intertwining layers of the crisis today.

Visual AIDS was founded in 1988 and was one of the first national initiatives to respond to the impact of the AIDS pandemic on the artistic community. Some of our earliest and most longstanding projects—Day Without Art, Night Without Light, the Archive Project, and the Red Ribbon—were created to underscore the profound losses of the AIDS crisis while also building community through activism, compassion and love. In his curatorial essay, Conrad Ventur refers to works in the exhibition as “love-infused.” I think this is a perfect description of the connection between all of the artists and collectives in *Altered After*, and pinpoints what is special about the mission and work of Visual AIDS. For us, there are no borders between what is historical, what is political, and what is personal.



Cookie Mueller, *Title unknown*, c. 1984. Clay, wooden box, amulets, hat pins, metal knives, ribbon, and fabric, 11 ¼ x 7 ¼ x 9 in.

Altered After BY CONRAD VENTUR

In 2016, I encountered the work of **Leslie Kaliades** (1961–1999) while doing a keyword search for “AIDS + artists” online. I was led to her 1997 video trilogy *What is Illness?*, *Altered After*, *The Journey*, which had been posted on the Internet Archive, a website where the organization **XFR Collective** uploads analog video materials that they have migrated to digital formats. That day I came across what would become a key phrase for my thinking about what artists make of their experiences and materials in response to HIV/AIDS—*Altered After*, which eventually became the title of this exhibition. It is important to note that I saw Leslie’s work because of XFR Collective’s commitment to preserve “at-risk audiovisual media—especially unseen, unheard, or marginalized works.” I later learned that Visual AIDS had facilitated the Kaliades transfer, having stored a VHS copy of the trilogy in their archive for decades. This solidified an idea I had for an exhibition proposal to Visual AIDS that would feature artists whose work responds to themes around HIV/AIDS such as salvation, care, affect, mentorship, legacy, and bequest through their particular use of time, process and material.

Over the next few years, *Altered After* came together as an exhibition of artworks that incorporate archives, archaeology, memory, salvaged objects, material migrations, inherited knowledge and bequests in response to HIV/AIDS. What comes after diagnosis? What artistic responses emerge and propagate in communities after trauma? “When Leslie had pneumonia,” her mother Dorothy Kaliades remembered, “she took pictures of breezes in trees, to represent breathing.” These respiring trees appear in her video *Altered After* (and on the cover of this book), an example of how Kaliades used her art both to treat and to express her illness. The artists in *Altered After* are all field guides reporting between worlds, through paint, movement, video and film, light and chemistry, plants, everyday materials, threads, stone, pebbles, and clay.

Bequests, shared knowledge and shared material connect artists across time and space. In 1989 a gift of material and the death of a close friend and fellow artist changed **Gail Thacker’s** life. That was the year Mark Morrisroe gave her a large trove of unexposed Polaroid 665 film, just prior to his death from AIDS-related complications. From that

point forward, Gail shifted from painting to working with instant film as a medium. Her Polaroid *Mark Summer of 1987* was made the day he told her he was HIV positive. **Ronald Lockett** (1965–1998) hailed from Bessemer, Alabama where, prior to his death from AIDS-related complications, he worked with industrial materials reclaimed from the farm of his relative and artist mentor, Thornton Dial—as exemplified in *Undiscovered* (1993). **Julie Tolentino's** art is a lived, ongoing process of embodiment, learning, and performance. Years ago she was gifted part of a cactus that originally belonged to Harvey Milk. Propagated over the years from pieces shared between friends in California, Julie brought me a piece of this cactus to display in the exhibition and to care for after. For ten years prior to his death from AIDS-related complications, **Darrel Ellis** (1958–1992) reworked, projected, distorted, painted, and re-photographed a trove of family photographs given to him by his mother. His father had been an avid photographer before his murder by police—two artists separated by tragedy; a father and son's work then combined. For these artists, stewarding material remnants and activating new meaning from them is a form of care and also a call to bring new engagement and life to what has been left behind.

Felix Partz (1945–1994) brought a fascination with the ziggurat back to Toronto with him after a journey to North Africa. For the next 25 years the ziggurat became a signature device throughout the work of **General Idea**, the collective he formed with Jorge Zontal (1944–1994) and AA Bronson. The ziggurat became a building block for their realized and hypothetical projects together. In 1984 they revisited a series of ziggurat paintings just before moving to New York, where their work became concerned entirely with AIDS. AA noted that Felix would draw ziggurats on a daily basis towards the end of his life. General Idea's shared iconography and mythology is traced in their mock-documentary of apocryphal archaeological findings, *Cornucopia* (1982).

Thirteen years before Kaliades made her trilogy, the writer and actress **Cookie Mueller** (1949–1989) also faced a life altered by illness. It was then, around 1984, that Mueller made two sculptures that would later be placed in her casket at her own wake—a small mummy, stuck with ornate swords, hatpins and amulets, in a wooden box; and a clay mask self-portrait with wide open prosthetic eyes. The clay has cracked with time, but the intensely blue eyes remain ageless and ever-open. Both were removed from her casket prior to burial and put in storage, not to be shown again until now.



Leslie Kaliades, still from *The Journey*, 1997. Video, black and white, sound, 15:07 min.

Some artists living with HIV continue to work around illness through the autobiographical. Mexico City-based artist **Manuel Solano** has painted from memory since an HIV-related infection left them blind in 2013. Solano uses smartphone apps, such as Be My Eyes, which connect the blind with sighted volunteers through live video calls, calling on a larger support system to help in the creation of their work. **Jerry the Marble Faun** has worked with stone since his Uncle Freddy taught him how to chisel cobblestones many decades ago. His mythical imagery harkens back to his memories of traveling in Egypt and Italy, exploring ruins and allowing history and autobiography to enter his work. The title of his sculpture *Vic* (2015) refers to his first sexual encounter. An avid gardener, who also learned horticulture from this same uncle, Jerry further integrates natural processes into his stone sculptures by leaving them to gather moss outside in his garden for months and years. Jerry also teaches sculpture, continuing the mentoring process that initiated his interest in working with stone and plants. Texas-based artist **Jonathan Molina-Garcia** was taught how to needlepoint by Allan, an older man he met online who is also living with HIV. As part of a larger series, Molina-Garcia then rendered in needlepoint a collage of Allan's photographs from Fire Island. Molina-Garcia's project is also an example of shared knowledge between artists and between generations.



Gail Thacker, *Chloe and Tiny*, 2005.
Polaroid type 665, 3 ¼ x 4 ¼ in.

With the passage of time, other artists look back at their own activism and take stock of their relations to care, teaching and transmission of knowledge. Formed by a collective of queer women in 1991, during a decade of increasing political mobilization around LGBT inequality, **fierce pussy** brought lesbian identity and visibility to the streets. In *Flag* (1992/2019), a poster created by the collective in 1992 is revisited to include unrealized proofs, “as an echo still reverberating in the present.”

Altered After looks at art making and communication across generations within the legacy of AIDS. The many facets of HIV/AIDS impact not just the art and lives of those who died in enormous numbers during the 1980s and 90s, and those who live with HIV today, but also HIV-negative artist allies whose work responds to shared histories of HIV/AIDS with thoughtful consideration. Korean-born, Los Angeles-based artist **Kang Seung Lee**, for example, created an installation from materials he gathered from Derek Jarman’s gardens at Dungeness in England, as well as from cruising sites such as Nam San and Tapgol Park in Korea, once frequented by poet and human rights activist Joon-Soo Oh. Kang’s projects bridge a divide left by artists who are gone.

In his 2013 work *Untitled (Video Against AIDS)*, artist **Jason Simon** salvaged a nearly lost educational video anthology from 1989 featuring artist responses to AIDS—migrating the six hours of footage from VHS into digital files, and recreating the original VHS packaging and accompanying didactic materials. Inspired by traditional craftsmanship of his native Mexico, **Raúl de Nieves'** sculptural process brings life to discarded objects and mundane, mass-market materials—the net results are love-infused works from the discarded spillover of American consumer society. His new piece *who would we be with out our memories* (2019), responds to a lineage of artists and queer people affected by HIV/AIDS.

As *Altered After* came together, I wanted to expand the conversation to incorporate additional perspectives through moving image, performance, and writing. Camilo Godoy curated *Absolute Love*, featuring performances by Oluwadamilare (Dare) Ayorinde, Joselia “Jo” Hughes, and Zachary Tye Richardson. Carmel Curtis and Leeroy Kun Young Kang co-curated *Record Time*, including moving image works by Colin Campbell, Gregg Bordowitz and Jean Carlomusto for GMHC, Barbara Hammer, Jim Hubbard, Nguyen Tan Hoang, Hayat Hyaat, and Tran T. Kim-Trang. Finally, with her essay *Affinity Arrangement*, Tara Hart thoughtfully considered the artists in the exhibition and the ethics of care from her perspective as an archivist. The connections and collaborations at work in this show have happily carried over into its planning, its public programming, and the design and realization of this book. I am immensely grateful to all of the artists, program curators, Jean Foos, Tara Hart, and everyone at Visual AIDS, as well as to Lia Gangitano and Participant Inc. This space—once queer sex club El Mirage—has for more than a decade been a vital and necessary space for artists in this city. I would also like to thank Photi Giovanis and Callicoon Fine Arts, Company Gallery, Daniel Cooney Fine Art, Mitchell-Innes & Nash, ONE AND J. Gallery, OSMOS, Peres Projects, and Jackie Klempay and SITUATIONS. Zackary Drucker, Allen Frame, David Evans Frantz, Michael Grant, Karl McCool and EAI, Max Mueller, Richard Turley, Jed Rapfogel and Anthology Film Archives, Lisa J. Rosen, Rafael Sánchez, Ronald and June Shelp, Ted O’Ryan Sheppard, and Louis Wiley Jr. have all contributed immensely to this process. Together, we have been a part of a creative ecology of ideas, an evolving conversation about the histories and possible futures of art making in response to HIV/AIDS.



Affinity Arrangement BY TARA HART

An affinity of hammers is an affinity that is acquired; we become attracted to those who chip away at the worlds that accommodate our bodies.

—Sara Ahmed¹

History lives with us—haunts us—in ways both conscious and unconscious. In this critical moment of inordinate disparity, in which many distorted versions of history prevail in guarded narratives, so much of what artists and activists struggled with during the imminent outbreak of HIV/AIDS remains strikingly palpable today. Obtaining access to evidence of those whose lives were prematurely lost is all the more urgent in this present moment. Researchers today (among them artists, archivists, scholars, and others) seek to interpret and repurpose activist tactics of refusal and opposition to dominant structures that uphold legacies of colonialism and white supremacy. Those enacting resistance today seek to distill how those before us were able to foster affinity and resistance under adversity. What were their processes? How did they fashion their own worlds in order to survive? How did they develop conviction in the face of grief? When history itself remains opaque and obscure, how can we encounter those whose lives have been constrained to the periphery and bring forward critical histories that run counter to dominant narratives?

Many of the artists whose work is included in *Altered After*—while varied in their approaches, methods, and desires—are fueled as much by a sense of responsibility as they are by the specter of absence. Their work, brought forth by dedicated historical research, reflects a shared wish to honor the lives and contributions of those who made living in this moment possible. In this text, I consider some of the works presented here alongside my own desire as an archivist to make sites for alliance possible. Archivists work to frame history as a process by placing it into context. We seek to preserve original order, or—if it cannot be preserved—to document the context and steps from which the material made it to where it currently resides. While knowing that

Opposite: *Video Against AIDS*, 1989. Curated by John Greyson and Bill Horrigan, produced by Kate Horsefield at the Video Data Bank. Installation view of Jason Simon, *Untitled (Video Against AIDS)*, 2013

each person that encounters the archive will produce a narrative that is part “truth” and part speculation, archivists aim to offer each newcomer as much context as is available.

I believe archivists need to consider multiple, competing needs and viewpoints when making decisions that affect the records in their care. One example of such an approach is Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor’s proposed model for archival practice that is “informed by feminist ethics, that centres on radical empathy and obligations of care.”² In critiquing the professional field of archival studies, the two scholars ask, “What if we began to see archivists not only as guardians of the authenticity of the records in their collections, but also as centerpieces in an ever-changing web of responsibility through which they are connected to the records’ creators, the records’ subjects, the records’ users, and larger communities?”³

Artist Kang Seung Lee seeks to provide access to multiple histories he has encountered in ways that show reverence and responsibility towards his subjects. In describing his work, Lee acknowledges the enduring paradigm of colonialism by which “official” histories foreground dominant figures, while queer and minoritarian subjects are often constrained to the periphery. In this publication he states, “My work places emphasis on marginalized individual experiences and personal histories that disturb the established structures and orders of the traditional archive, and challenges singular mainstream knowledge/history” (p. 30). The partial histories underscored in Seung Lee’s work offer useful points of reflection on those archival systems from which histories are produced, and offers up alternative archives, such as the flora of gardens that the artist draws from.

In *Untitled (Garden)*, 2018, on view in *Altered After*, Lee honors the legacy of filmmaker and activist Derek Jarman, who passed from AIDS-related causes in 1994. Highlighting Jarman’s lesser-known history as an avid gardener, Lee provides viewers with access to an arrangement of dried plants, pebbles, and other items collected from multiple visits to the garden Jarman designed and cared for at his former cottage near Dungeness Beach in Kent, England. The organic material in the work is undoubtedly ephemeral, yet there is an instilled sense of conservation in the delicate arrangement of objects atop of a piece of Sambe (a traditional Korean textile), carefully embroidered with 24-karat Nishijin gold thread. A corner of the Sambe includes an



Kang Seung Lee, detail of *Untitled (Garden)*, 2018. 24K Nishijin gold thread on Sambe, ceramic (California clay, soils from Derek Jarman's garden, Nam San, Tapgol Park), pebbles from Dungeness and Tapgol Park, metal parts and dried plants from Derek Jarman's garden, 116 x 73 x 8 in.

embroidered “key” that lists the botanical name of each item, thus recording its presence for posterity. The items from Jarman’s garden are intermingled with pebbles from Tapgol Park in South Korea, and ceramics made from clay infused with soils from Dungeness, England, and Tapgol Park and Nam San in South Korea. By placing these disparate archival objects in the common space of the Sambe, Lee presents histories that—while separated by place and cultural context—are intertwined by multiple affinities.

Untitled (Garden) was originally shown in Lee’s 2018 solo exhibition at ONE AND J. Gallery in Seoul, South Korea. In addition to sharing unique material from Jarman’s remote garden archive, the full exhibition was also dedicated to the legacy of Joon-soo Oh, a Korean gay rights activist who died from AIDS-related complications in the 1990s. In *Untitled (Joon-soo Oh’s letter)*, Lee reproduces a letter written by Oh in a large scale rendering, faithfully drawn by hand, framed, and displayed on a gallery wall. In the text of the letter, Oh writes, “I feel

always afraid of being forgotten. I am afraid of vanishing from people's memory. Still, they will continue living their lives, as if nothing had happened. I cannot stand it. I hate it."⁴ Honoring this evidence of Oh's fear of erasure, Lee demonstrates an approach to history that is imbued with intimacy and devotion to the artist's legacy. Works such as this offer new ways to inherit the residue of the past. By intermingling materials from each of these prolific figures—who shared similar commitments, but did not know one another—in an arrangement, Lee highlights how these dual histories are intertwined in a web of affinity and commonality across past and present.

Artist Jason Simon grapples with the complexity of accessing evidence of the past by examining existing institutional methods of preservation and access. His 2013 work *Untitled (Video Against AIDS)* arose in response to the artist's inability to find a full set of original copies of the 1989 video compilation *Video Against AIDS*, which was originally published to contend with the rampant circulation of misinformation about the AIDS crisis in mainstream media coverage. The compilation of videos by artists and activists was "designed to get AIDS tapes by independent producers out to the AIDS community in a contextualized format as inexpensively as possible."⁵ The program notes that accompany the tapes provide pedagogical strategies for hosting screenings and facilitating discussion across a variety of settings, from classrooms, to art galleries, to community centers. The tapes included videos such as Barbara Hammer's *Snow Job: The Media Hysteria of AIDS* (1986), Isaac Julien's *This is Not an AIDS Advertisement* (1987), and Amber Hollibaugh's *The Second Epidemic* (1989).

Upon discovering that the video compilation was unavailable in the collections of his local libraries, Simon was confronted with the imperative to preserve and provide access to a document that was urgently at risk of being lost to history. In Simon's piece, which was first shown in his solo exhibition at Callicoon Fine Arts in 2013, a facsimile of the three VHS tapes and the accompanying program notes are displayed inside a glass case adjacent to a CRT monitor that screens the videos on a loop. By transforming the original tapes into a fine art object, Simon considers what it means to bring videos that were originally distributed via non-profit circuits such as academic libraries into the space of a commercial art gallery. In doing so, he asks how we might develop new modes of access today when the precarious medium of VHS is already past its shelf life and many

libraries lack the resources that would allow them to preserve and provide access to works on video and other obsolete formats.

Simon's 2013 exhibition at Callicoon investigated the legacy of artist video distribution in a pre-digital world and examined how modes of distribution have shifted over time. Describing barriers to access today, Simon states that, "if a student or a teacher needs to see a video that is only available from the artist or their gallery, it's anybody's guess as to how that plays out. Schools cannot afford to buy works from galleries the way they used to be able to."⁶ By investigating the legacy of how this unique economy supported experimental and avant-garde work that sought to educate and disseminate strategies for organization and resistance, Simon highlights how access to these crucial histories is dependent on who has the resources to prioritize, preserve, and provide access to them. Today, fewer libraries and non-profits have the means to purchase avant-garde works for educational purposes. Many have shifted to a streaming model, one that many artists aligned with radical politics have not yet penetrated outside of those working with such organizations as Video Data Bank and Electronic Arts InterMix. Interested in continuing the legacy of art that "presumed a politics," Simon asks, "How can those of us who teach bring such work into the classroom in high quality formats that provide fair remuneration to artists and distributors?"⁷ When schools today recommend that teachers source their educational material from Amazon and Netflix, students will have greater difficulty accessing work that receives support through alternative means.⁸ In this new paradigm, what are the implications for critical pedagogy? What cultural histories will become inaccessible to those in the future?

Another project in *Altered After* attempts to address the continued marginalization of video by offering artists "low-cost digitization services and fostering a community of support for archiving and access through education, research, and cultural engagement."⁹ XFR Collective is a roaming platform that provides professional transfer services on-site at arts and community spaces throughout New York City. The group developed out of *XFR STN*, a 2013 exhibition organized and hosted by the New Museum education department in conjunction with artist Alan Moore. Collective members, many of whom have studied at New York University's Moving Image Preservation Program, offer professional services to artists and organizations that would otherwise be inaccessible due to the high costs associated with reformatting and storing digital



XFR Collective at MIX Queer Experimental Film Festival, 2015

material for preservation. In many ways, XFR Collective's ethos extends the politically aligned spirit of artist-centered video distribution models of the 1980s and 1990s. XFR Collective circumvents commercial streaming services such as YouTube and Amazon, by collaborating with the Internet Archive, a non-profit online library, to digitally preserve and provide free online access to the moving images they digitize.

As scholars Caswell and Cifor suggest, a model of archival practice based on “carefully negotiated” radical empathy is “in contrast to the dominant Western mode of archival practice, in which archivists solely consider the legal rights of records creators.”¹⁰ We might consider the practices of artists such as Lee, Simon and XFR Collective—which bring together and honor divergent histories and produce alternative distribution models

to proliferate organizing and resistance—as contemporaneous with recent approaches in archiving that seek to center multiple relationships of affinity, care, and responsibility. Honoring the continued urgency of engaging with the past, these artists employ critical new strategies to impart their legacies—and those of their forebears—to future generations with dedication and possibility. As José Esteban Muñoz writes, “Attempts to touch a queer or trans history despite the various obstacles to making any connections... can never be about attempting to master or fuse.” Instead, he proposes to, “let the mysteries between us not function as barriers to realizing one’s commonness but instead to know them as the allure that permits us to realize that one is not starting anything but instead fortunate enough to be a participant in something vaster, something common.”¹¹

1 Sarah Ahmed, “Affinity of Hammers,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 3, nos. 1–2 (May 2016): 22–54.

2 Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor, “From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives,” *Archivaria* 81 (2016): 23–43. <https://muse.jhu.edu/> (accessed June 3, 2019).

3 *Ibid.*

4 Jin Kwon, *Garden: Kang Seung Lee*. (Seoul: ONE AND J. Gallery, 2018).

5 John Greyson and Bill Horrigan, *Video against AIDS*. Toronto, Ontario: V Tape, 1989.

6 Jason Simon and Jacob King, “Before and After UbuWeb: A conversation about artists’ film and video distribution.” Rhizome. 19 January 2014. <http://rhizome.org/editorial/2014/feb/20/and-after-ubuweb-distributing-artists-film-and-vid>.

7 Cynthia Chris and Jason Simon, “Surveying Videoscapes: The Politics of Distribution in Tiered Visual Economies,” *Art Journal* 74, no. 4 (2015): 5–20, DOI: 10.1080/00043249.2015.1154910.

8 *Ibid.*

9 XFR Collective. <https://xfrcollective.wordpress.com/>.

10 *Ibid.*

11 José Esteban Muñoz, “The Brown Commons: The Sense of Wildness,” Talk, JNT Dialogue 2015: The Queer Commons, Eastern Michigan University, March 25th, 2015.





Artists in the Exhibition

Darrel Ellis (1958–1992)

I use images of my family because they affect me so strongly. The world that my father photographed was one that I didn't know because I wasn't born yet. Growing up after my father's death, I have a distance and detachment from that reality. I have no idea about those photos, what those people are. I know who they are, but I don't know that lifestyle that they lived, and the attitudes that they think or reflect, because I grew up in the South Bronx in the 60s, 70s, and 80s. I don't know any life from the 40s and 50s, with their picnics and their beautiful clothes and everything is so nice and perfect and wholesome. I don't know that world.

I take one negative, one image, one straight photograph of my father's and I put it through all these different changes. It can be a metaphor for the idea of generations, the photos are regenerated—from one you get many. And that's like a family, that works as a metaphor for the family. When I look at pictures of my mother and my sister and my grandparents in the past, I see that life changed them so much. When I look at those photographs sometimes, all I see are holes. They reflect that search for wholeness and completeness, but it doesn't exist. The photos tell the truth. This strong juxtaposition of this ideal Black family life, with all these disjunctions and holes—that's why I use my father's work, because that's the raw material that I need in order to talk about the fact that it's gone, that it doesn't exist anymore.

—*As told to David Hirsh, Visual AIDS
Archive Project co-founder, at Darrel Ellis'
Brooklyn apartment, 1991*



Darrel Ellis, *Untitled (from Thomas Ellis photo of child's birthday party)*, c. 1990.
Gelatin silver print, 25 x 29 in.



Darrel Ellis, *Self-portrait after photograph by Robert Mapplethorpe*, c. 1989.
Painting on canvas, 60 x 42 in.

ALLEN FRAME ON DARREL ELLIS:

Peter Hujar and Robert Mapplethorpe photographed him the same weekend and both gave him prints. Darrel made paintings based on the photographs, and showed his paintings and the photographs together. I thought it was really interesting. His self-portrait from the Mapplethorpe photo was included in “Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing,” curated by Nan Goldin at Artists Space. It was one of the publicity images for the show and was reproduced huge in *The New Yorker*.

He was not open about having AIDS until he had to stop working because of it. I stayed closed to him until he died. And when he died several of his friends got together with his family and told them that it was important to keep everything together. I offered to house it, which I’ve been doing ever since.

—*As told to Conrad Ventur, at Darrel Ellis exhibition at OSMOS, 50 East 1st Street, New York, March 2019*

I struggle to resist the frozen images of myself taken by Robert Mapplethorpe and Peter Hujar. They haunt me.

—*Darrel Ellis quoted in “Witnesses Against Our Vanishing” catalog, 1989*

fierce pussy

Our original flag poster from 1992 (second from the top) was produced in response to government and public neglect and inaction around HIV/AIDS. The text is derived from the post-WWII Martin Niemoller poem about Germany under the Third Reich. We wheatpasted this poster on the streets of NYC in 1992; however, it was never circulated widely. While going through our archive last year, we considered re-visiting the poster—to re-edit the text for the current moment. In the end we decided not to change the text, but to incorporate the original flag poster alongside the unrealized proofs as an echo still reverberating in the present. The successive generations of flag images now stacked one atop the next are raw materials produced in the process of making the 1992 poster that, in this new configuration, offer up different densities and varying proximities to our present crisis.

Opposite: fierce pussy, *Flag*, 1992/2019. Five photocopies on paper, 95 x 24 in.



When they came for the Indians
you didn't speak up because you weren't an injun.

When they lynched the niggers
you didn't speak up because you were white.

When they arrested the Suffragettes
you didn't speak up because you weren't a woman.

When they bashed the queers
you didn't speak up because you were straight.

Then they came for you
and there was no one left to fight back.



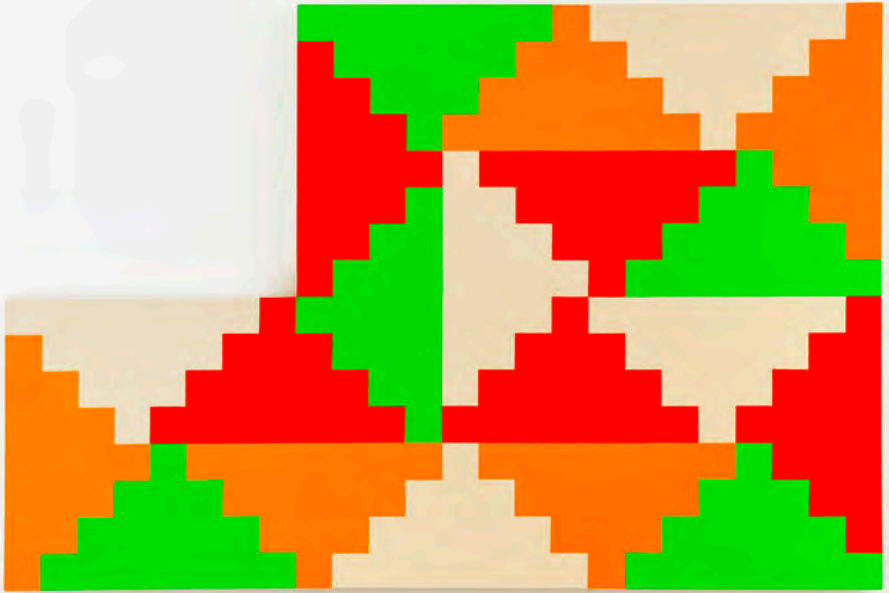
General Idea

AA BRONSON ON GENERAL IDEA:

...I have promised to write about the ziggurats, from the time when they entered our lives in the late sixties, in the first days of what later became General Idea, to those days frozen in time in 1994, when Felix sat hunched over a little desk, drawing ziggurats on a daily basis as his death loomed up about him. The story of the ziggurat is the story of General Idea.

Felix painted the earliest ziggurat paintings in Winnipeg, Canada, before he moved to Toronto in the summer of 1969. He had returned from a no doubt druggy trip to North Africa with his friend Steve, and brought with him the ziggurat. Whether it was the stepped structures of Mesopotamia and Egypt or the woven intricacies of tribal carpets is unclear; but the pattern had established itself in his mind. Felix was wrestling with painting at the time, doing his best to escape it. With the early ziggurat paintings he sidestepped many of the conventions of painting: no ground (no gesso), no mixing of paints (straight from the can), no fancy artists paint (sign painter's paint and house paint), no foreground or background, no subject, no object. The dayglo paint was a sure signal of the period: LSD. The brain reduced to dancing cellular structure where positive and negative space each erase the other.

Over the next 25 years the leitmotif of the ziggurat was woven into our daily lives. The elaborate semi-fictional reality that we created for ourselves over time was replete with ziggurats, structured by ziggurats, but also decorated with ziggurats. Our *1984 Miss General Idea Pageant* was a platform presented on a platform of ziggurats; the *1984 Miss General Idea Pavilion*, our own private (but very public) museum, was framed by ziggurats. Not only was the Pavilion built of ziggurats, but the floor plan of the Pavilion was structured of interlocking ziggurats to form 1,984 seats; the upholstery on those seats, and the carpet on the floor, were all decorated in the same ziggurat pattern. We invented costumes for the semi-fictional participants—the infamous *Venetian Blind Gowns*—in the form of ziggurated costumes, which functioned also as architectural studies for the Pavilion. So the ziggurat was a kind of fractal, existing at every scale.



**General Idea, 1968 *General Idea Shaped Ziggurat Painting #1*, 1986.
Fluorescent acrylic, acrylic and latex on unprimed canvas, 62 ½ x 94 ½ x 4 in.**

... In order to weave these ziggurats into our personal history and our personal mythology, we realized we had to name them. And it felt right, and good, to name the paintings after our beauty queens: Mimi, Miss General Idea 1968, who had brought us all together on the heels of the summer of love; Granada, Miss General Idea 1969, who lived across the street, and quickly became part of our gang, and then of our history; Honey, Miss General Idea 1970, the star of our first beauty pageant performance; and Marcel, Miss General Idea 1971, who we crowned Miss General Idea through to 1984 in order to avoid having to organize another pageant. Pascal was a homeless glamour queen who moved in with us in 1971 and whose multi-octave vocal stylings dominated the 1971 Pageant at the Art Gallery of Ontario; we named her “the androgyne bomb of the Canadian art scene,” and she too was immortalized by a ziggurat painting, or is it vica versa? One painting remained, horizontal and stolid: we named it after our Toronto art dealer, Carmen Lamanna. These six paintings were shown, unstretched, pinned to the walls of the

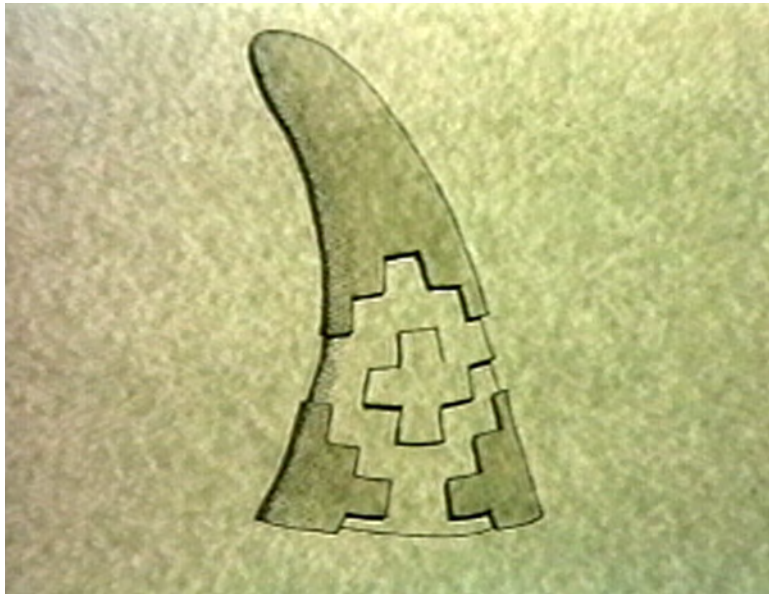
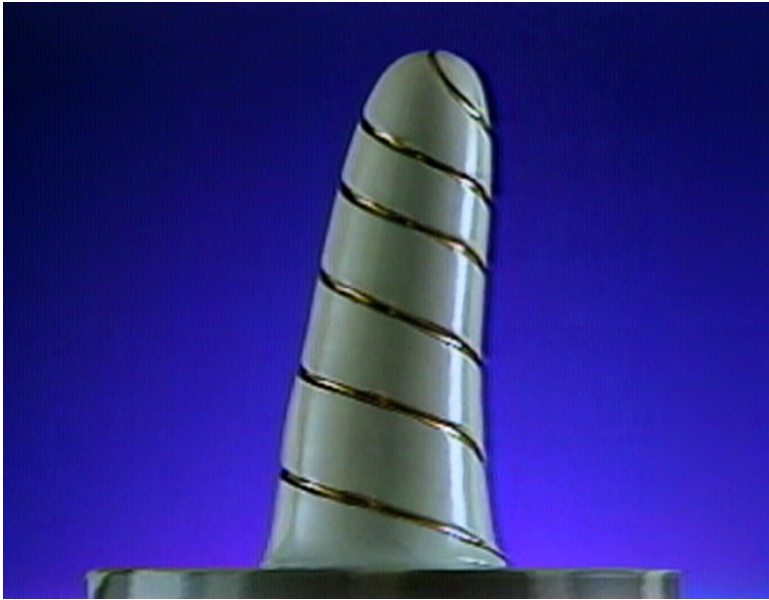
Carmen Lamanna Gallery in 1982. (Two more, the largest, remained untitled and rolled up under Felix's bed, too large for the gallery walls.)

... After 1984, we found ourselves strangely restless. We had made a pact to stay together until 1984, but when that year came, we discovered we had no reason to part. We found ourselves treading water, reviewing old projects, revisiting incomplete ideas. We moved to New York in 1986, but before we went we completed a second series of ziggurat paintings, based on the original drawings of 1968, six squares and five shaped canvases, and we gave them extra thickness, that extra "object quality" that Jean Christophe Ammann had identified as characteristically General Idea. The paints, built on a four-inch grid, now became four inches thick as well.

And then began the adventure—quite literally—of our lives. From 1986 through 1994 we devoted ourselves almost entirely to the subject of AIDS, at first through our *Image Virus* series of paintings, posters and temporary public installations, and then through the image of the capsule pill, which proliferated into vast medical landscapes of AZT or unnamed medications. By 1993, we had regrouped back in Toronto, where Felix and Jorge, both now living with AIDS, spent their last days making art: in the Toronto medical system, those who chose to die at home had the doctors and nurses sent to them. Our last year was perhaps the most productive year of our twenty-five years together. We knew we didn't have much time and we mobilized our forces to actualize our ideas.

Every morning Felix retreated to a small desk in a back room where he returned to the theme of the ziggurat. The 34 drawings that remain from that intense period touch on every part of the ziggurat cosmology and legacy: the designs for a ziggurat "No-End Table" and "Zig Planter" to a barrage of diagrams for additional ziggurat paintings. Maybe one day I will complete them on his behalf.

—Adapted from AA Bronson, "Ziggurat as fractal: the visual economy of General Idea" in *Ziggurat: General Idea 1968–1994* (Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 2017).



General Idea, stills from *Cornucopia*, 1982. Video, color, sound, 9:52 min.

Jerry the Marble Faun



Jerry the Marble Faun, *Symbol*, 2007. Limestone, 7 x 20 x 12 in.

I have been gardening since 1970. It was taught to me at an early age. Gardening opened doors for me—one was in East Hampton, New York, where I was hired at Grey Gardens as a gardener, handyman, and confidant to Mrs. Edith Beale and her devoted daughter Edie. Once invited into their reclusive lives at Grey Gardens, a young Edie Beale nicknamed me “The Marble Faun.” The reference was to a novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne with the same name. The cover of the book was a stone sculpture of a young man with long, thick hair and a body that resembled mine. Years later, I appeared in the film by Albert and David Maysles about Mrs. Edith Bouvier Beale, her devoted daughter Edie, and their home, Grey Gardens.

I have been carving since 1987. My uncle Freddy would help himself to cobble stones from Brooklyn streets when they were digging up the old sewers to renovate. There were tons of stones and they didn’t use them because they didn’t have good traction. He took tons of them and took them to his house in Long Island on a Friday night. He had me sit on a pail with a hammer and chisel and make flat the Belgian block stones so he could build them into the new house. It’s still there standing. It’s like a fortress. He was a really good mason. He built fireplaces. He taught me how to carve stone. Clear stone. Then I fell in love with it.



Jerry the Marble Faun, *Spirit*, 2016. Limestone, 17 x 19 x 12 in.

With stone, you work your tail off. You get carpal tunnel. Your hands hurt. You really work on them. It's labor. And it's not light labor. It's heavy-duty labor. It takes three steps. First cleaning off what's not useful loose stone. Then getting an idea of what you want or just listening to your heart. I like to pray while I'm carving a little bit. And then finishing the subject regardless of it being anatomical or not being anatomical. And then just carving!

Life is funny. I had nothing, but I did have a lust for living and I said, "I'd love to see the pyramids one day." Who wouldn't? And Italy. And Greece. I loved all the history I've learned. And it all came to fruition. It's funny when you ask and wish for something hard enough and it happens. And it did. Observation of historic monuments means so much to me. It's as old as civilization, as the Aztecs and the Egyptians, and the Romans and Greeks. Their material was basic stone. They had wood. But mostly stone, and they decided to make a statement in stone to represent their beliefs and their civilization. These monuments, they portray such precision, soulful carving.

—As told to Conrad Ventur in Jerry's garden where he carves stone and tends to plants, Queens, NY



Leslie Kaliades (1961–1999)

I am ill. I have an illness. What I have is serious.

I'm afraid to have thoughts, to feel, to be here in this desolate, ill place.

I am alone here, no thoughts, no feelings, trying to remain nowhere for fear of something happening.

The challenge of being here never ceases. I am forced to dig deep within myself, to adapt and survive this place.

I remind myself that I am not sick now, I am okay now, and the fear subsides. At least for a little while.

Uncertain of who I am now, I stumble along.

I close my eyes now and I am back again, not here but there. Away from the virus that dwells within me.

I must cry now. Thoughts of illness paralyze me and I retreat to where it feels safe and familiar, and dull.

—*Text from Leslie Kaliade's 1997 video The Journey.*

Opposite: Leslie Kaliades, stills from *Trilogy: What is Illness, Altered After, The Journey*, 1997. Video, black and white, sound, 15:07 min.

Kang Seung Lee

The primary focus of my artwork is the creation of critical/cross-cultural/queer histories. By researching, excavating, and appropriating images/text from public and private archives—art collections, publications, libraries—I allow for alternative historical and personal voices, counter-narratives and strategies to emerge. My work places emphasis on marginalized individual experiences and personal histories that disturb the established structures and orders of the traditional archive, and challenges singular mainstream knowledge/history.

I was born in South Korea and thereafter lived in various countries in Asia, the Middle East and Latin America before relocating to Los Angeles. Because of this, my work comes from a desire to challenge the narrow and biased perspective of first world oriented histories, and speaks about the potential to intervene in systems. The work manifests itself in the form of visual marks, traces, and as index. I re-imagine archival information, primarily through labor-intensive mediums such as tracing, graphite and colored pencil drawings, embroidery, collecting and multimedia installations.

Garden (2018) is a project that consists of drawings, archival installation and video works centering on Derek Jarman (1942–1994) and Joon-Soo Oh (1964–1998), both gay rights activists in their respective England and Korea who died from AIDS-related complications in the 1990s. For the past two years, I have visited the garden at Prospect Cottage built near Dungeness Beach in Kent. This was the private garden of British film director Derek Jarman, who designed and tended the garden himself for several years before his death. Over the visits, I collected plants, soil, rocks, scrap metal, discarded wood, and other similar materials that Jarman combined to make pieces in his garden. The materials that I collected were used in my drawings and embroideries to recode memories from Jarman's works and essays on his garden planning. Concurrently, I looked into the life of Korean gay human rights and AIDS activist Joon-Soo Oh. Oh's diaries and poems, many published and archived by his friends, have also appeared in my work.

Opposite: Kang Seung Lee, detail of *Untitled (Garden)*, 2018. 24K Nishijin gold thread on Samba, ceramic (California clay, soils from Derek Jarman's garden, Nam San, Tappol Park), pebbles from Dungeness and Tappol Park, metal parts and dried plants from Derek Jarman's garden, 116 x 73 x 8 in.





Ronald Lockett, *Undiscovered*, 1993.
Rusted tin and colored pencil on wood, 47 x 45 in.

Ronald Lockett (1965–1998)

...my uncle [the artist Thornton Dial] was the driving force of my artwork. I told him I wanted to go to art school and he told me I had the best school of all just making artwork or whatever. He was a big influence on my artwork. I mean, he helped me find out that you could take tin or barbed wire or different small little metals and make things out of them. So he was a big inspiration for me. All the pieces that I made are primarily because of him, because he helped me to keep going on even when I couldn't afford to buy paint. He had paint and would pour me out blue paint, red paint, when I couldn't really afford paint until I started making some money off of it. But he was a big driving force to where I am today, to keep me making my artwork....

...my artwork, ever since I been a kid, has always been my strength—you know, something positive about me. Lately I've been going through a lot of hard times, where I've kind of lost my way, but any time I want to regain myself when I lose myself I go back to my artwork, my drawings, painting, creating. Like I said, nobody was very supportive of me in my family and I realized that when I was back then in the past my mother and my father weren't that supportive of me but I was determined to do something, and now when I feel kind of lost in my life I always turn to my artwork and that is how I get back in touch with myself. My artwork is a part of me, whether it's good or bad, whether people like it, it's a part of what I do from the heart. I care about my artwork and you know, like I say, it's a way of getting back in touch with myself when I seem to lose my way. I always, either I draw or paint, or I come out here and I draw, and I regain who I am. That's all I ever did since I been a kid, is draw, and that's a part of me and that's who I am whether people like it or not. That will always be a part of me no matter what.

—Ronald Lockett, video interview
with David Seehausen, 1997

Jonathan Molina-Garcia

The Bethesda Brotherhood is a mixed media project that emerged out of a series of intergenerational relationships with HIV-positive men that I met on a cruising website. Allan is one of those men. He was an avid needlepointer. Needlepoint is a cross-stitching method usually associated with domestic crafts. A canvas is printed with an image, and you follow along, weaving by color. In a video I made, we sit naked on his bed, and he teaches me how to needlepoint. A year after this interaction, I borrowed Allan's photo albums, and scanned all of them.

I made a collage of Allan's photographs from Fire Island—an iconic queer beach town—which I converted into a needlepoint. The book that accompanies this work tells the story of one of Allan's friends, Larry, a high school English teacher who seduced his students, almost all underage Latino boys, and brought them to the Island. Eventually, Larry was caught and let go quietly. In Allan's retelling, he cannot remember any of the students' names, even after my prodding and questioning.

I've used needlework, scrapbooking, and the family album—all practices attached to the home and the sentimental—to heavy-handedly interject Allan's recollections with questions and propositions of my own. Who is allowed into paradise? And for whom is it a brief and sponsored visit? And how will queer communities negotiate or police its own abuses, particularly when it involves minors?

What is remarkable about this story is that I am repeating aspects of it in my present dyad with Allan. The timeline is reincarnating, with some key similarities, like my role as a [Latino] guest of Allan's in West Hollywood. But this is decidedly an imperfect doubling, since the pattern of white patronage has been disrupted. Less predatory, more mutual perhaps.

My collaborations with Allan, nevertheless, have probably been some of the most exquisite and bond-altering moments I've had with a stranger.

—Adapted from an interview between Jonathan Molina-Garcia and Matthew Lax, "Bethesda Brotherhood" exhibition catalog, 2019



Jonathan Molina-Garcia, *Fire Island Needlepoint*, 2016.
Custom-printed needlepoint canvas and thread, 20 ¼ x 17 ½ in.

Cookie Mueller (1949–1989)

MAX MUELLER, SON OF COOKIE MUELLER:

I remember my mother working on these sculptures and shaping the clay at home. I was thirteen, fourteen, maybe a little bit older. I remember her having an idea for the eyes of a piece. She had this ring and it had these marble kind of eyes, from a jeweler on MacDougal Street in Greenwich Village called *C'est Magnifique*. I loved that place. We lived on Bleecker Street and it was only a couple blocks away. They took her a while. She did them in stages—she made the clay, then we got the eyes at *C'est Magnifique*.

I haven't heard about these sculptures in twenty or thirty years. I really think there was a title, but I couldn't remember. I would have to go under some hypnosis to call that one up. It's two different, separate pieces—one that became a shroud in a casket at some point, and another, like a mummy head. The last time I saw them was in her casket, so I never knew what happened to them. It was incredible to hear that Richard [Turley] had them.

It was definitely something she felt like she had to make. I didn't know she was sick at the time but I think that was really where her head was. It was like her Incan doll. That's the feeling that I got from it.

She kept me in the dark until before my 17th birthday about how sick she was, as it hadn't really made her ill yet. She had my father tell me. She had been sick for years, but it wasn't until [her husband] Vittorio died that she really got bad. I was just shocked, there was just a lot going on.

She was always doing something with her writing, her art, seamstressing. She made all her own outfits. She liked the styles but not the materials, so I would go with her down to Orchard Street and she'd find the materials she wanted and use that. I wish I had some of her clothing because it was just such crazy stuff that she had. Her monkey fur coat—I wish I had that damn thing.

My mother did want to do a collaboration show with me, but I was just a little too young. We actually did one big canvas together. God knows where that is. It's so hard remembering this stuff, but I need to.

—As told to Alex Fialho and Conrad Ventur
at the Visual AIDS office, March 2019



Cookie Mueller, detail of *Title unknown*, c. 1984.
Clay, wooden branches, dried flowers, paint, and prosthetic eyes, 18 ½ x 11 x 8 in.



Raúl de Nieves

I make art because it makes my connection to others clearer. This sometimes occurs through the way the work reveals itself to me, but also through collaborations, which form a large extent of my practice. My journey is to create a shared experience and to allow objects to flourish that may have gone undervalued. I use materials that are easily obtainable, or incidentally on hand. This practice has shown me the possibility of giving life to a mundane object, something that has no inherent worth or whose purpose has ended, to give it a new beginning through labor or contemplation. My process is inspired by the traditional craftsmanship of my native Mexico, and the concepts are derived from the icons of history, spirituality, fashion, and subculture.

Beauty is the ideal that guides my process. The forms that my sculptures take reflect the generative process of growth and decay in nature. Failure, fear, and collapse are embraced as natural symptoms of life, creativity, and social reform. They are changing through being celebrated and made useful rather than rejected—just as the raw materials of the piece itself might have been discarded—forming a cycle of renewal through metamorphosis and revealing struggles of the self and of society.

**Opposite: Raúl de Nieves, detail of *Fina Joya*, 2009.
Vintage military suit, sequins, metal bells, threads, glue, cardboard,
plastic beads, tape, trims, and mannequin, dimensions variable**

Jason Simon



Jason Simon, *Untitled (Video Against AIDS)*, 2013. Three facsimile cassette wraps and original printed materials designed by Hannah H. Alderfer, dimensions variable

I mark 1989 as the year that film and video began to share screens, or, more precisely, venues, and as the beginning of the end of a self-contained media-art culture more or less independent of the art market. *Video Against AIDS* is also from 1989, and proved more and more fascinating as it proved harder and harder to find. The story behind these tapes is that Bill Horrigan (who is a regular source of inspiration for me) and John Greyson were commissioned by Kate Horsfield at the Video Data Bank to co-curate an ambitious program of AIDS activist media art. Important to understand about the context is the degree to which ACT UP and AIDS video was changing the landscape of film and video culture in general: you couldn't stand on the sidelines of the culture wars, and AIDS video was suddenly the prime shifter of media art culture. And with that program too, you had this booklet that accompanied the tapes, entitled "Using Video Against AIDS." ... These are writings addressing teachers. There is this directed, intimate, discursive

bond between avant-garde art works and a pedagogical economy. Bill and John did an amazing job of parsing the work and making a coherent case for artists taking on an urgent public mandate. But it was only distributed on VHS, and most VHS collections, even those in major libraries, have disappeared.

...The presence of *Video Against AIDS* on both the modest CRT monitor and in the vitrine grew out of the sheer difficulty in even assembling a visible version of that historic program. Once I found out just how lost it was, each element became supercharged and somehow necessary to declare in the show. It wasn't part of any early plan and I'm not trying to make it sound heroic—it was more just compulsive. But when you discover that all the people you know who are in the program, or who have even curated the program, have lost all or part of it, and that all the libraries (save one) that list it as current in their catalogs have actually tossed it away, well, it seemed important.

Addendum: Recovering and assembling the six hours of *Video Against AIDS* as viewable digital files gave the packaging of the programs, the VHS boxes and the didactic booklet and guide, a special significance. The printed matter was an example of positioning an avant-garde within an American education market place, which was my research area at the time. I eventually got hold of all the printed matter and wrappers and scanned, printed, reassembled, encased and displayed them. My 2013 exhibition at Callicoon Fine Arts then made the gallery into a site of access to these twenty-five year old movies from the beginnings of AIDS activist media. Mediated through the gallery's economy of objects, I thought this printed ephemera should migrate too. Then Hannah Alderfer, an early member of the artists collective Group Material, visited the gallery and, finding her work displayed anonymously, revealed herself as the original packaging designer. It seems fine art objects always stand in for bodies, even in the lowly form of the VHS cassette cover. But rather than consolidating, these objects were multiplying their lost and found, anonymous and authored, hidden and seen lives.

—*Excerpted and adapted from a conversation between Jason Simon and Jacob King, "Before and After UbuWeb," on Rhizome.org.*

Manuel Solano

This canvas belongs to a series of paintings titled *An Interior, A Sensation, An Instant*. It is the first time since I became blind that I painted about decoration and atmosphere. These are paintings about a room, but they are not about the room itself, which doesn't exist, but about the room's personality. When I was little, I enjoyed working with magazines, making collages and so on. My mom had a bunch of old decoration magazines from the eighties and nineties and I remember being fascinated by the photographs of interiors used for advertising linens or appliances. Rooms seemed to have an almost cinematic life of their own in these photos. A lot of times it was a little kitsch or a little ironic. I attempted to reference those images through painting for the first time in 2013. I made an oil painting depicting a luxurious bathtub. I was very proud of how I rendered the faucet on the bathtub, but I didn't manage to capture the atmosphere of the photos in those old decor magazines. The light was too cold in my painting. Back then, I remember wanting to make more paintings about this and really learn how to capture what I wanted. I could say I was very excited about the idea. But right after, I fell sick. And then I went blind. And I didn't return to the subject until now. I wanted to also include a neon sign in this new series, as neon was another one of the things I used to be able to paint very well.

In this series of three canvases, I borrowed elements from my memories of my aunt's living room and other interiors in the nineties, such as a fish tank and a black leather couch and a geometric granite block coffee table. The idea is to convey a sense that whomever inhabits this interior is endowed with a strong identity and visual taste. For instance, the inside of the fish tank is decorated to go with the room, a white sculpture and all-black Moor fish—whomever owns this fish tank must have some style. And the tone of the series crosses over to make us feel, in the last canvas, the portrait, that this person is almost taken over by this personality and glamour in the room. If the person is feeling whatever they are feeling, they seem to be having an orgasm



Manuel Solano, *Untitled from the series An Interior, A Sensation, An Instant*, 2019.
Acrylic on canvas, 67 x 59 in.

or other strong physical sensation, it is made all the sharper and richer because it's happening on that couch in that room.

And so, because of the decorational but not decorative aspect of the series, it is to me very tied to memory, as decor and taste are primarily visual. With this series I have shifted from painting people and things that I saw to capturing an abstract visual identity, not focused around one particular object or person—capturing glamour and stylishness, rather than faces and objects and clothes.

Gail Thacker

In 1978 I started studying art at The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. There I met one of my closest friends, Mark Morrisroe. I graduated in 1981, and he graduated in 1982. A group of us moved to New York between 1982–84. We were just kids, romantic dreamers. We believed no harm could come to any of us because we were filled with so much hope and the love of art. As we geared ourselves towards success, it was always mixed with sex, drugs, and alcohol. We weren't naive; we were risk takers. We did realize the dangers, but we were already in so deep and swimming in denial that it seemed nothing could hurt us... you're invincible when you're a kid. We pushed the moral fabric of right and wrong (note we both went to Catholic school) but there was still a sense of integrity. Mark was a good friend.

By the 1980s we were both playing around with Polaroid. I would go over to Mark's apartment, and in excitement he'd be like, "Oh my God, look at this Gail. I left this on the windowsill and it turned gold." This film no doubt had magical components. Very alchemical.

In 1987, Mark told me he was HIV positive. He called me up and said, "Gail I'm coming up to Port Chester. I want to talk to you about something." Of course, we got high first and off we went to Rye Playland Beach. While soaking up the sun, he turned to me and said, "Gail. I'm HIV positive." It was plain and simple. No story behind it. We looked at each other in the eyes. So much was silently communicated, but I said nothing. Probably one minute passed, but it felt longer. I turned and said, "Oh.... Ok.... Want to go in the water?" And that was it. No big drama. We would just deal with it. I really loved him. I couldn't imagine life without him.

Before he died he gave me his film. It was almost like a passing of the torch. We were lying in bed having a conversation when he was very sick, and he asked, "How will I know when it will happen?" I said, "I don't know Mark, but I'm right behind you. I'll see you on the other side." And in the beat of a heart he told me, "Gail, you can have my film. The unexposed film that Polaroid gives me. I have a big box. Take it." And I did. It was a very simple gesture. But in hindsight, this became symbolic to me because that box of film changed my life and



Gail Thacker, *Mark Summer of 1987*, 1987.
Polaroid type 665, 3 ¼ x 4 ¼ in.

my approach to art. All of a sudden I had a whole shitload of Polaroid film to use. I just started always having my Polaroid camera with me.

What he gave me was Polaroid 665 Positive/Negative, the same kind of magical film that sat on the windowsill and turned shades of gold. This film gives you both a positive and a negative that needs to be fixed immediately, and I refused to fix either... at least not right away. Like us, like life, like Mark, I allowed the film to go through a process of change. The image could literally disappear if you let it, or you could stop the process by fixing the negative or positive at a chosen point. The process was a careful balance of time and temperature. There were so many different effects to explore, even the differences caused by hot and cold weather. In hot weather you would find these beautiful bubbles; in cold weather the image would become flexible, resembling a charcoal drawing. You never knew exactly what you were going to get. My obsessive activity of exploring these techniques saved my life down the line. I would seek the thrill of the risk in my work, rather than in my personal life.

—*As told to Conrad Ventur,*
Gene Frankel Theatre, April 2019

Julie Tolentino



Julie Tolentino, *Harvey*, 2019.
Living plant, dimensions variable

ON APR 12, 2019, AT 9:49 PM PT, JULIE TOLENTINO WROTE [VIA SIRI]:

Hi Conrad!

Yes I'm just so swamped I can't keep up. Sorry forgive me. The piece was looking good but had a lil accident so it's "growing" itself back to health I hope. Here's the story the piece I was going to submit is a cactus that I was able to revive that originally belonged to Harvey milk So my friend who is an archivist in the special collections at UCLA who had acquired a piece of this cactus and sent it to me by mail. I'm not sure how long it had been separated from its original but it was in an envelope that accompanied many pieces many items many archival pieces that they had been collecting to send to me for a while it wasn't submerged in dirt. It's a long story how they received it but it came in a package of other special archival bits and pieces. K is a specialist in queer punk stuff especially LA and in California.

Anyway there's a backstory to the plant like Harvey's ex-boyfriend maintained these many of his Xmas cacti from his apt in san francisco the piece I received arrived in the mail to me as a as dangling piece of limp limp cactus and here I was in the Bay again it is not a given that I would have ever returned to San Francisco to be honest I grew

up there and was in high school when Harvey milk was murdered I also attended the same school that Moscone's daughters went to. It was a devastating experience - a young queer person who went to their all girls school (bussed from the poor neighborhood across town) to a Catholic girls-only school Only to leave soon after, move to ny, join act up & originate the clit club To have any touch back to the milk legacy to be reminded and for what he meant, did for us, for me as a person or a person in the making has been profound. Fast forward as you know I am in grad school at 100 exclamation mark years old. I'm in Southern California and had brought it with me revived the plant, I named him Harvey."@ I brought him to live with me to live with me during school. It's been hard keeping him hearty in the desert but he was doing fine. Was. And it was during this time when you invited me to come into the show I was thrilled because I really wanted Harvey to be in the show. I knew that immediately. So then for spring break, I was very worried about leaving him here in so cal alone so I brought him with me into this tiny plane going from Palm Springs to San Francisco. The plane was one of those tiny planes. I put him under my seat. We had crazy turbulence and I didn't know that Harvey tipped to the side inside of my bag - upright - during the flight.. And as a result this his longest bits, mind you, after growing the last few years, he ended up with multiple arms even though he only started as one stem with no root of course because of his species

anyway all his arms broke I am devastated

So right now Harvey is in a state of repair living in up north where I think at this moment he is safe and growing I i'm going back up into weeks to check and bring some nutrients back after the trauma I thought he needed the local weather of the bay area to restore I talk to him by Skype on the phone with Pigpen oh there is a picture of his beauty pre-plane flight. In fact I was so excited to take that picture so I could start writing about Harvey as a part of the show and the way that it moved from Harvey milk into my hands. I am back in Southern California now totally crazy just getting back into the swing of school so that is partially why you haven't heard for me on top of the fact that I'm trying to reckon with where Harvey is in terms of how he his body the plant is doing I am also sure that when you see the plant you will understand that in real life this plant is actually very easy to propagate and as you will know as a horticulture person that a plant like this could live after all of these years however when I received the plant it had clearly

been separated for awhile also it came in the mail very very saggy I was so worried about being able to plant it again and I Have been so Thrilled that the plant came back to life Not to be a size queen but it is now very small again and the pieces are living beside itself side by side hoping I can re-propagate it again now in multiple pieces I think that is what you will receive if everything goes well between now and then is yet another cutting of this plant that will be then shared with you so that it will live with you (after the show) from the piece that was sent to me I'm sorry I could not offer the tall beautiful vibrant piece that Harvey had become. Instead it seems it's important that we continue this legacy via small cuttings that pass/get passed from one queer hand to another. From the past. I'm not sure that this is the story for your catalog so let's just say that this is a communication between you and me for now And Siri who has no idea how to find the natural I mean the word or meaning Unless you tell her to put a period and she misses sometimes see clearly Anyway until you read the rest of this til you read this. Perhaps. Decide what you think might be best. In fact to make the point that I am not "writing about" the piece. I am actually speaking through Siri hoping she's capturing the words the tempo. I will attach a photograph of Harvey before our plane flight. I don't have the heart at the moment to send the Harvey photograph - the one of Now Nuevo And his current state of propagation revival or just in the shop for repair. Ha ha. What I'm also hoping is to create the probably broken vessel in which the plant will be in the show in. I am thinking that I will hand a make it so This hand work is something that will take me a little while to do.

Just know that I will be in New York in May and in June so I am hoping to deliver the peace pieces the little Harvey by hand. And yes again, by plane. I'd love to talk to you on the phone sometime and if there something that you think we should write about, if there's anything here, I will be very happy to work on texts. I adore / appreciate you Conrad and love to hear about you and Karl and all the threads that are our connects. I really appreciate that there's space for me and frankly my trauma over this. And I actually cannot believe how fortunate we are that you work with plants and that We get to do this together. So here's the thing, I am writing to you via Siri and I think that probably there's some breaks in hell Ha ha I mean there are some breaks or no break in how she is picking up my words. Every once in a while I look down to see if we are on track and if I'm recording. But I really don't know and though I will just skim through very quickly, I also think that thinking about this and feeling slowly and feeling awkward with my words,

which is how I am anyway, is the best way for me to communicate what it means to have this plant and to want it in the show. And how sad I am that I broke it. Or that it collapsed right under me broke and I didn't know. And that it looked fine from the outside but the inside was broken. Like us, like me for sure. It's taken me two weeks to even face the fact of what happened because I felt so bad about it so sad about it and I just takes so long with everything and then I started to think about how Harvey's ex who took care of the plants had also been apparently, through all the years he has been sharing this very very strong species of plant with friends and roommates. The person who gave this plant to my friend the archivist was one of (Harvey's ex) roommates. this person had come to SF as a person needing a place he moved in in the nick of time there he was he was in need. and it's the unusual usual how queer folks find each other when they need each other. It's both how we are linked thru the rhizome not merely the roots + plus also to me, who isn't a very family person, perfectly fine without the ordinary familial link of things super young parents, not close, not traditional family and not complaining or going to therapy over it but well I am aware of and have lived by how these kinds of linkages the ones that don't carry blood obligation but are timed through the patch of queer Drama, trauma, luck, and bad luck and how this ends up being

the way. The way I can get with, the one I can feel.

A kind of only way to live.

a bit broken and put together regrown rearranged held given away unrecognizable sometimes small carrying though something big, bigger or just something that took time to understand

Harvey is in the sun the warm the fog and thriving in the midst. The mist. Like a mist. For so many years, that's what I considered myself. a kind of mist. So this broken kinship doesn't rhyme and has accidental poetics. Clumsy. But. Still here. I'm crying a bit. You know, misty.

X

J

My gratitude to UCLA Special Collections archivist Kelly Besser for sharing the cutting with me and thanks to Conrad for inviting me into the project.

XFR Collective

The seeds of our collective were planted in the summer of 2013 with “XFR STN,” an installation hosted by the New Museum in which artists and audiovisual archivists set up A/V digitization and digital file recovery stations and spent eight weeks transferring artists’ work and putting it online on the Internet Archive for access by the artists and public.

At the close of the exhibit it was suggested that the equipment and momentum should be kept together to continue digitizing artists’ media on obsolete formats in a non-institutional space. The equipment was moved to Andrea Callard’s studio, where she, Kristin MacDonough, Rebecca Fraimow, and Julia Kim began to meet in 2014 to continue the work as XFR Collective. In its initial phase, XFR Collective partnered with artists and organizations including Elevator Repair Service, Visual AIDS, New York Women in Film and Television, Deep Dish Television, Felicia Telsey, Cara Perlman, Alan Moore, Coleen Fitzgibbon, and COLAB.

Over the years, XFR Collective’s membership has expanded, and its work has grown to include curation, educational partnerships, digital preservation programs, and an increasing number of pop-up transfer stations, while still maintaining our core activity of preserving video for marginalized and underrepresented artists and groups. Installations have included stations at Secret Project Robot, Spectacle Theater, and Home Movie Day, a mobile rack that traveled to coastal Maine to transfer tapes in a former cow barn, and a week-long residency at MIX NYC in 2015.

Additional partners have included the Educational Video Center, La MaMa, WITNESS, Le Petit Versailles, Joan Jubela, the Asian American Oral History Collective, Groundswell, Great Small Works, KBOO, the White Plains Public Library, Interference Archive, and the construction of a community transfer station at METRO.



XFR Collective rack at Andrea Callard's studio, 2015

Following pages: Barbara Hammer, still from *Vital Signs*, 1991.
16mm film, color, sound, 10 min.



A dark, blue-toned photograph with a grainy texture. On the left side, a person's hand is visible, holding a long, thin, light-colored object, possibly a pen or pencil, which extends towards the center. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a book cover or a wall. The overall lighting is low, creating a moody and artistic atmosphere.

Public Programs

Absolute Love

A performance program curated by CAMILO GODOY

Artists in the performance series:



Oluwadamilare (Dare)
Ayorinde



Joselia "Jo" Hughes



Zachary Tye
Richardson

So 9 tastes of male seed in two nights. I'm delirious.

I doubt if I'll see him again, but it's okay. I guess you learn to love life in bits and you have to look at the people you meet in just that way—tiny sparkling bits of a whole gem.

I'm looking at my arm and I don't trust what I just said. There is a geometry to this, a poetry too. If I didn't know it was cancer and AIDS I'd say my arm—my right arm—is interesting, attractive.

—Gary Fisher¹

The lustful and melancholic thoughts written by Gary Fisher in his journals, notebooks and poems have been persistently on my mind. His passionate sincerity confronted being a Black gay man living with AIDS in this racist and homophobic society. When Conrad Ventur invited me to organize this performance series I thought of Gary and desired that he was alive so that I could invite him to read from his work. When I started meeting with artists to invite to participate in this series, I brought up Gary's raging view of the world. His writings were a source for our conversations. *Absolute Love* is a performance series that brings together artists Oluwadamilare (Dare) Ayorinde, Joselia "Jo" Hughes, and Zachary Tye Richardson. Each artist presents performance work engaged with the intersection of lust, love, illness, and legacy. Ayorinde dances using improvisation, voice and humor to challenge history. Hughes performs writings that reflect on living with a degenerative disease. Richardson transforms movement and language to create spaces for solidarity.

Gary Fisher died of AIDS-related complications in 1993 at the age of 32. His work was unpublished until his friend Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick organized his writings into a book published two years after his death. Gary ended a letter to Sedgwick by writing "Absolute love." This series borrows these two words as a title to consider "love as the practice of freedom."² The political moment that Gary inhabited and described parallels the terrifying and violent conservative moment that we are currently living in. *Absolute Love* invites these artists to explore their practice in relation to the writings by Gary Fisher and in the context of *Altered After* to observe and resist the catastrophe of this historical moment.

—Camilo Godoy

1 Journal entries by Gary Fisher; published in *Gary In Your Pocket: Stories and Notebooks of Gary Fisher*, edited by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Duke University Press, 1996.

2 bell hooks, "love as the practice of freedom," *The Outlaw Bible of American Essays*, edited by Alan Kaufman. New York: Basic Books, 2006, 317-24.

Record Time

A moving image program curated by CARMEL CURTIS
and LEEROY KUN YOUNG KANG

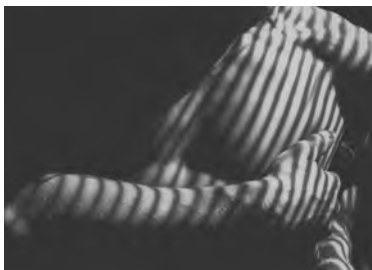
Framing “record” as both subject and action, this program features works spanning from 1989–2015 that question the function and expectations of a document in the context of HIV/AIDS. The artists included in this program challenge the way in which documents are commonly upheld as sources of objective meaning or authenticity by employing different methods of strategy. Through the use of hybrid elements of documentary, homage, found/appropriated footage, educational media, and performance, these seven film and video pieces extend the parameters of genres that are often found in HIV/AIDS media by centering empirical and sensorial evidence, both real and imagined.

The curators thank all of the artists, Conrad Ventur, David Evans Frantz, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives at the USC Libraries, Dani Heffernan, Karl McCool, Kyle Croft, and Jean Foos.

Films and videos in the program:



Gregg Bordowitz and
Jean Carlomusto for
Gay Men's Health Crisis
SOMETHING FIERCE
(1989, 3:30 min, video)



Colin Campbell
SKIN
(1990, 18 min, 16mm)



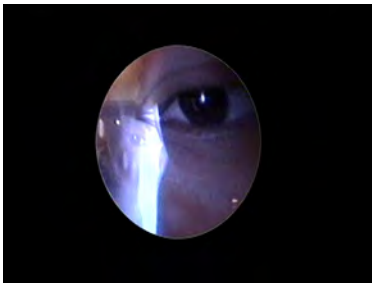
Nguyen Tan Hoang
K.I.P.

(2002, 4 min, video)



Hayat Hyatt
VILLANELLE

(2015, 15:30 min, digital)



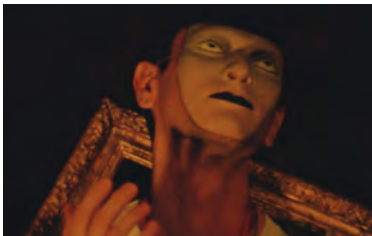
Tran T. Kim-Trang
KORE

(1994, 17 min, video)



Barbara Hammer
VITAL SIGNS

(1991, 10 min, 16mm)



Jim Hubbard
THE DANCE

(1992, 8 min, 16mm)

Search

AIDS

Show Job: The Media Hysteria of AIDS

Barbara Hammer, 1986, 08:00, 215.00

Show Job: The media hysteria of AIDS deconstructs the repressing, repressing increased homophobia, sexual discrimination and...



TheNewMuseum
110 Thompson
New York, NY 10022
212 279 1022

VIDEO TAPES, Where We Are Now
A Program of Video Tapes by Gay Men and Lesbians

The following tapes form the core of the program. Please contact the Museum for additional titles.

- Peter Adair and Robert Epstein
The AIDS Show: Artists Involved with Death and Survival, 1987, 37'
- Jerry Allen
Blue Movie, 1986, 2'58"
- Lyn Blumenthal
Doublecross, 1985, 8'
- Gregory Bordowitz
...as an aspect of a shared lifestyle, 1986, 22'
- Richard Ford
Childish Characters, 1985, 28'
- John Goss
Wild Tale, ...



with AIDS proje...
1991, 22:00

comedic work—a humorous, autobiographical...
conflicting agendas of community-based group:

...artists I treat here engage th...
...arrive at a different modality...
...the past into meaningful and transform...
...moment, their works seem to argue, will not do. But nor will its opposite...
...a purely futur orientation that depends on forgetting the past. Instead...
...the queerness of these artists consists in mining the past. Instead...
...undetonated energy from...

Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts

JOSÉ ESTEBAN MUÑOZ



independent video archive
For students of communication

The 90's, episode 111: Conspiracies



...scholarship is a queer impulse that...
...ontology, in its inability to "count...
...ndly queer. The notion of queer acts...
...ffer is immediately linked to a belie...
...ctual and discursive occasion for...
...s, I want to propose queerness as a po...
...a mode of sociality and relat...
...tted covertly. This has everything to...
...uch of a trace has often meant that...
...for attack. Instead of being clearly...
...ess has instead existed as innuend...
...stances that are meant to be intera...
...ological sphere—while evaporated...
...eliminate queer possibility. To...
...he kind of invisible evidence wh...

UbuWeb Found 203 items, now showing 1 - 12

<< Prev | Next >> AIDS Search New Refine

Unpub_056_Glasson_8
hit the tower were "missiles" (aided by an amateur CGI representation), and that this fact we...
the media coverage. Disregarding all the footage taken by
www.ubu.com/ubu/umpub/Unpub_056_Glasson.pdf

UbuWeb Film & Video: Rosa Von Praunheim - Aids-Trilogie: Positiv - Die Antwort...
Praunheim's series of AIDS documentaries focuses on artists' ... s response to the AIDS crisi...

Video Data Bank



Keywords

AIDS

Tags

VHS ARCHIVE

About + **Class Materials** + Student Documents +

BROWSE ITEMS (201 TOTAL)

Browse All Browse by Tag Search Items

Collection: Alexandra Juhasz AIDS Activism VHS Collection

1 of 5 Next Page

WALKER

OPEN TODAY AT
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Performance and HIV/AIDS



ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX
CATALOGUE ARTISTS SERVICES RESOURCES PUBLIC PROGRAMS ABOUT EAI



Home Video: Media Art in Re

Electronic Arts InterMix (EAI)
535 W. 22nd St. 5th Floor
New York, NY 10011
Thursday, July 27, 2017
7:00 PM
PRESS RELEASE

EAI is pleased to partner with the Museum of

Video: Media Art in Response to HIV/AIDS, a

retaking,

at Home

maker

portrait of

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andra Jul

will appo



and the...
on struggle. This war has a...

Seeing Through AIDS

Because making apologies that nobody gives a shit a...
ing to sing my song, finally, finally, got on my absol...
ed, I lift up my shield, and I stay ready for...
whole lot more than that. —June Jordan

ing videography complements this b...
y in the age of AIDS. M...
and out

As archivists and curators, we believe in the value of process. This spread is a glance into our process: the many sources, conversations, and life occurrences existing both within and outside of these pages that led us to our final curatorial selections.

—Carmel Curtis and Leeroy Kun Young Kang

Checklist for the Exhibition

Unless otherwise indicated, all artwork courtesy of the artist.

DARREL ELLIS

Self-portrait after photograph by Robert Mapplethorpe, c. 1989
Painting on canvas, 60 x 42 in.

Untitled (from Darrel Ellis photo of mother at window of her bedroom), c. 1987
Painting on canvas, 22 x 39 in.

Untitled (from Darrel Ellis photo of four figures in mother's bedroom), c. 1987
Painting on canvas, 32 x 40 in.

Untitled (from Thomas Ellis photo of child's birthday party), c. 1990
Gelatin silver print, 25 x 29 in.

Courtesy of the estate of Darrel Ellis and OSMOS

fierce pussy

Flag, 1992/2018
Five photocopies on paper, 95 x 24 in.

Nancy Brooks Brody, *obituary series, lighthouse* from The New York Times obituary pages, 1999–2003
Gouache on newsprint, 17 x 9 in.

Joy Episalla, *lawnchair 1*, 2003
Chromogenic print mounted to plexiglass, 11 ½ x 27 ½ in.

Carrie Yamaoka, *Transformatory*, 1991
Photocopy on vellum, 17 x 11 in.

GENERAL IDEA

1968 General Idea Shaped Ziggurat Painting #1, 1986
Fluorescent acrylic, acrylic and latex on unprimed canvas,
62 ½ x 94 ½ x 4 in.

Courtesy of General Idea and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York

Cornucopia, 1982
Video, color, sound, 9:52 min.
Courtesy of General Idea and Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

JERRY THE MARBLE FAUN

Vic, 2015

Limestone, 15 x 17 x 18 in.

Symbol, 2007

Limestone, 7 x 20 x 12 in.

Spirit, 2016

Limestone, 17 x 19 x 12 in.

Courtesy of the artist and SITUATIONS

LESLIE KALIADES

Trilogy: What is Illness?, Altered After, The Journey, 1997

Video, black and white, sound, 15:07 min.

Courtesy of Visual AIDS

KANG SEUNG LEE

Untitled (Garden), 2018

24K Nishijin gold thread on Sambe, ceramic (California clay, soils from Derek Jarman's garden, Nam San, Tapgol Park), pebbles from Dungeness and Tapgol Park, metal parts and dried plants from Derek Jarman's garden, 116 x 73 x 8 in.

Courtesy of the artist, Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles and ONE AND J. Gallery, Seoul

RONALD LOCKETT

Undiscovered, 1993

Rusted tin and colored pencil on wood, 47 x 45 in.

Collection of Ron and June Shelp

JONATHAN MOLINA-GARCIA

Fire Island Needlepoint, 2016

Custom-printed needlepoint canvas and thread, 20 ¼ x 17 ½ in.

Fire Island Book, 2018

Eight-fold book, 5 ½ x 4 ¼ in.

COOKIE MUELLER

Title unknown, c. 1984

Clay, branches, dried flowers, paint, and prosthetic eyes, 18 ½ x 11 x 8 in.

Title unknown, c. 1984

Clay, wooden box, amulets, hat pins, metal knives, ribbon, and fabric, 11 ¼ x 7 ¼ x 9 in.

Courtesy of Richard Turley and the estate of Cookie Mueller

RAÚL DE NIEVES

who would we be with out our memories, 2019

Beads, glue, artist's shoe, dimensions variable

Courtesy of COMPANY Gallery and Freedman Fitzpatrick

JASON SIMON

Untitled (Video Against AIDS), 2013

Three facsimile cassette wraps and original printed materials designed by Hannah H. Alderfer, dimensions variable.

Courtesy of the artist and Callicoon Fine Arts, New York

MANUEL SOLANO

Untitled from the series *An Interior, A Sensation, An Instant*, 2019

Acrylic on canvas, 67 x 59 in.

Courtesy of the artist and Peres Projects, Berlin

GAIL THACKER

Mark Summer of 1987, 1987

Polaroid type 665, 3 ¼ x 4 ¼ in.

Chloe and Tiny, 2005

Polaroid type 665, 3 ¼ x 4 ¼ in.

Hunter at White Box, 1998/2019

Chromogenic print from Polaroid type 665 negatives, mixed inks, and oil pastels, 20 x 24 in.

Courtesy of the artist and Daniel Cooney Fine Art

JULIE TOLENTINO

Harvey, 2019

Living plant, dimensions variable

XFR COLLECTIVE

Video Transfer Station, 2019

Video playback decks, time base corrector, monitor, analog-to-digital converter, dimensions variable

Artist Biographies

Darrel Ellis (1958–1992) was a New York-based mixed media artist. His work appeared in “Witnesses Against Our Vanishing” at Artists Space, curated by Nan Goldin in 1989–1990; “New Photography 8” at The Museum of Modern Art, curated by Peter Galassi in 1992; a major retrospective at Art in General curated by Allen Frame in 1996–1997; and more recently at OSMOS in 2019. Ellis died of AIDS-related complications at the age of 33.

fierce pussy is a collective of queer women artists. Formed in New York City in 1991 through their immersion in AIDS activism during a decade of increasing political mobilization around LGBT rights, fierce pussy brought lesbian identity and visibility directly into the streets. Low-tech and low budget, the collective responded to the urgency of those years, using readily available resources: old typewriters, found photographs, their own baby pictures, and the printing supplies and equipment accessible in their day jobs. fierce pussy projects included wheat pasting posters on the street, renaming New York City streets after prominent lesbian heroines, re-designing the restroom at the LGBT community center, printing and distributing stickers and t-shirts, a greeting card campaign, a video PSA and more recently, various installations and exhibitions in galleries and museums. Originally fierce pussy was composed of a fluid and often shifting cadre of dykes including Pam Brandt, Jean Carlomusto, Donna Evans, Alison Froling, and Suzanne Wright. Many other women came to an occasional meeting, and joined in to wheat paste, stencil and sticker. Four of the original core members—Nancy Brooks Brody, Joy Episalla, Zoe Leonard, and Carrie Yamaoka—continue to work together. fierce pussy’s work can be seen at the upcoming “arms ache avid aeon: Nancy Brooks Brody, Joy Episalla, Zoe Leonard, Carrie Yamaoka: fierce pussy amplified” at the ICA Philadelphia in fall 2019.

General Idea is internationally recognized for work that tackled such subjects as the myth of the artist, the role of mass media, the relationship between the body and the identity, issues of gender and sexual repression, and famously HIV/AIDS activism at a time when talking about the disease was a taboo. It was formed in Toronto in 1969 by AA Bronson, Felix Partz and Jorge Zontal. The members of General Idea were key figures in the 1970-80s conceptual art scenes and, with equal parts humor and criticality, created work across a variety of mediums and platforms. Performances and fictionalized, self-referential mythologies played a large role in their work – the group staged beauty pageants, boutiques, television talk shows, trade fair pavilions, and more, and their work often took on unconventional forms of media such as prints, magazines, posters, crests, and postcards.

Jerry the Marble Faun lives and works in Queens, NY. He began hand-carving stone in 1987 and recently began pursuing ceramic sculpture. Jerry is well known as the Bouvier-Beales’ handyman from the Maysles brothers’ 1975 documentary *Grey Gardens*. While living at Grey Gardens, Edith “Little Edie” Bouvier-Beale gave Jerry the nickname “the Marble Faun,” which Jerry accepted as a fated path to art-making. In addition to sculpting stone, Jerry worked as a gardener for the royal family of Saudi Arabia, with Wayland Flowers and his puppet, Madame, during their cabaret acts in the ‘70s, and for twenty-five years as a taxi cab driver in New York City. Jerry has received widespread recognition and critical praise for his artwork from major outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Observer*, *Forbes*, *Interview*, and *Artforum*. Jerry held his first exhibition in 2014 at Jackie Klempay Gallery, Brooklyn and has appeared in exhibitions at SITUATIONS, New York; Canada, New York; Andrew

Edlin Gallery, New York; Sculpture Center, Queens; 2nd Floor Projects, San Francisco; The Elaine de Kooning House, South Hampton, Geary Contemporary, New York; Bureau of General Services/Queer Division, New York; and NADA Presents at Close Quarters at Governor's Island, New York; amongst others. Jerry's time as the caretaker of Grey Gardens is recounted in his memoir *The Marble Faun of Grey Gardens: A Memoir of the Beales, the Maysles Brothers, and Jacqueline Kennedy* by Tony Maietta and Jerry Torre (Querelle Press, 2018).

Leslie Kaliades (1961–1999) was an artist who worked primarily in photography and video. After studying at Rutgers University and the International Center of Photography in New York, she worked as a photographer for the City of New York. Her work has been published in *The New York Times*, *The Photo Review*, *Shots*, and *Body Positive*. Kaliades died of AIDS at the age of 38.

Kang Seung Lee is a multidisciplinary artist who was born in South Korea and now lives and works in Los Angeles. Lee has had solo exhibitions at ONE AND J. Gallery, Seoul, South Korea (2018); Artpace, San Antonio, TX (2017); Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles, CA (2017, 2016); Los Angeles Contemporary Archive, Los Angeles, CA (2016); Pitzer College Art Galleries, Claremont, CA (2015); Centro Cultural Border, Mexico City, Mexico (2012). Selected group exhibitions include Canton Gallery, Guangzhou, China (2018); LAXART, Los Angeles, CA (2017); DiverseWorks, Houston, TX (2017); Centro Cultural Metropolitano, Quito, Ecuador (2016); SOMArts, San Francisco, CA (2014); Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA (2014); and Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC (2012). Lee is the recipient of the CCF Fellowship for Visual Artists (2019), the Rema Hort Mann Foundation grant (2018), and Artpace San Antonio International Artist-in-Residence program (2017). His work has been reviewed and featured in *Artforum*, *The New York Times*, *Frieze*, *New York Magazine*, *Artnet*, *LA Weekly*, among others.

Ronald Lockett (1965–1998) was born and raised in Bessemer, Alabama. He turned his attention to artmaking full-time in his early twenties. His elder cousin, the artist Thornton Dial (1928–2016), mentored and encouraged him. By the time of his death at age thirty-two from AIDS-related pneumonia, Lockett had produced more than 350 works. Working within the artistic traditions of found materials, he addressed subjects of racial, economic, and political unrest, including the unfulfilled promises of the civil rights movement and environmental degradation. Largely unrecognized in his lifetime, Lockett fits squarely into evolving histories of American art in the late twentieth century.

Jonathan Molina-Garcia is a Salvadoran-American, photographic media artist residing in Dallas, Texas. His projects are committed to radical experiments in loving and sharing, and consider the emotional text of images; or, how feelings like longing, community, and home are organized when pictures puncture soul and mind. Much of his work manifests the pleasurable and rebellious nature of manipulating images. The literal act of stitching, cutting, and undoing is a longstanding and consistent through-line. Jonathan holds an MFA degree in Photography from the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), and graduated with a BFA in Photography and a BA in Art History from the University of North Texas. Recent exhibitions include “In Sickness” at Texas Woman's University and “Transmission Reentry” at the University of Texas, Dallas. He is currently a Visiting Lecturer in Photography at Southern Methodist University.

Cookie Mueller (1949–1989) was an actress, writer, and artist. Mueller starred in the early John Waters films *Multiple Maniacs*, *Pink Flamingos*, *Female Trouble*, *Desperate Living*, and *Polyester*. She also performed in seminal early 1980s independent films *Underground U.S.A.* (Eric Mitchell, 1980), *Subway Riders* (Amos Poe, 1981), *Smithereens* (Susan Seidelman, 1982), and *Variety* (Bette Gordon, 1985). A muse to many filmmakers and photographers, Mueller was photographed by David Armstrong, Peter Hujar, Robert

Mapplethorpe, and Nan Goldin, featuring prominently in Goldin's iconic visual diary *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*. Mueller wrote the health column "Ask Dr. Mueller" for the *East Village Eye* and served as art critic for *Details* magazine. Her books, considered cult classics, include *Ask Dr. Mueller*, *How to Get Rid of Pimples*, and *Walking Through Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black*. Mueller died from AIDS-related complications at the age of 40. Shortly before her death she would write: "Fortunately I am not the first person to tell you that you will never die. You simply lose your body. You will be the same except you won't have to worry about rent or mortgages or fashionable clothes. You will be released from sexual obsessions. You will not have drug addictions. You will not need alcohol. You will not have to worry about cellulite or cigarettes or cancer or AIDS or venereal disease. You will be free."

Raúl de Nieves is a multimedia artist, performer, and musician whose wide-ranging practice investigates notions of beauty and transformation. De Nieves' visual symbolism draws on both classical Catholic and Mexican vernacular motifs to create his own unique mythology that often challenges and explores themes of sexuality, the human body, and individual and public histories. Through processes of accumulation and adornment, the artist transforms readily available materials into spectacular objects, which he then integrates into immersive narrative environments. Recent solo exhibitions by de Nieves include those at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio; COMPANY, New York; Apalazzo Gallery, Brescia, Italy; and Freedman Fitzpatrick, Los Angeles. Additional group shows include those at the New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans; The Museum of Art and Design, New York; the Zabludowicz Collection, London as well as the 2017 "Whitney Biennial" and MoMA PS1's 2015 "Greater New York." De Nieves has performed at Documenta 14, Performa 13, MoMA PS1, ICA Philadelphia, The Watermill Center, The Kitchen, Artists Space and numerous other venues. Forthcoming solo exhibitions include those at COMPANY, New York in 2019 and ICA Boston in 2020. His work is included in public collections at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA.

Jason Simon is an artist who lives and works in New York and teaches at The College of Staten Island, City University of New York. Recent solo exhibitions include "The Red Books," King's Leap, Brooklyn (2019); "Imprint and Request Lines are Open," Callicoon Fine Arts, New York (2018, 2015); "In and Around the Ohio Pen," Sismografo, Porto, Portugal (2015); and "Changeover," Artexite, Montreal (2014). Recent group exhibitions have taken place at Azkuna Zentroa, Bilbao; mumok, Vienna; the Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; McEvoy Foundation for the Arts, San Francisco; The Kitchen, New York; Yale Union, Oregon; and Ibid, London. Simon's videos are distributed by The Video Data Bank and Icarus Films. His writing has appeared in *Artforum*, *May Revue*, *Parkett, Frieze*, *Springer*, and *Aferimage*, among others. Simon established the Art & Tech Filmmaking Residency facility at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio, in 1989. He was a founding member of the cooperatively-run gallery, Orchard (2005–08), and most recently curated a five-part film series at LAMoCA inspired by Manny Farber entitled "Blame the Audience."

Manuel Solano studied at the National School of Painting, Sculpture and Printmaking in Mexico City. In 2013 Solano went blind due to complications from an HIV-related infection. Since then, Solano has developed unique methodologies to continue an art practice which includes painting, video, and installation, exploring memory and identity while balancing the autobiographical with pop cultural imagery. In 2019, Solano will participate in a group exhibition entitled "City Prince/sses" at the Palais de Tokyo, curated by Hugo Vitran, and a solo exhibition at Peres Projects, Berlin. Recent solo exhibitions include "I Don't Wanna Wait For Our Lives To Be Over" at

the ICA Miami, curated by Alex Gartenfeld, and “PUNCHIS PUNCHIS PUNCHIS PUM PUM PUNCHIS PUNCHIS PUNCHIS” at the Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, curated by Guillermo Santamarina in Mexico City. In 2018 Solano also participated in a group exhibition at Peres Projects as well as The New Museum Triennial in New York, co-curated by Gary Carrion-Murayari and Alex Gartenfeld.

Gail Thacker is a visual artist most known for her unique use of type 665 Polaroid positive/negative film in which her subjects—friends, lovers, the city—become intertwined with the process and chemistry of her photos. She attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts and has lived and worked in New York City since 1982. Gail is represented by Daniel Cooney Fine Art. She has been exhibited at the Wrightwood 659, Chicago, Museum of the City of New York, the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art; Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporáneo (CGAC), Spain; Daniel Cooney Fine Arts, Elizabeth Dee Gallery, Clamp Art, Grey Art Gallery, HowlArts in New York, and others. Gail’s Polaroid work is included in numerous collections, including The Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston, MA), Museum of the City of New York, the Fotomuseum Winterthur (Switzerland), CGAC (Spain), The New York Public Library, and The Polaroid Collection (Massachusetts). Publications include *Between the Sun and the Moon: Gail Thacker’s Polaroids* (City University of New York), *The Polaroid Book* (Taschen), *Mark Dirt* (Paper Chase Press), *Tabboo! The Art of Stephen Tashjian* (Damiani), *There Was A Sense of Family; The Friends of Mark Morrisroe* (Moderne Kunst Nürnbergsa) and *Frontiers Journal of Women Studies* (University of Nebraska Press).

Julie Tolentino is an Filipina-Salvadorean artist whose practice explores durational performance, movement, video, object- and scent-making, soundscapes, and sensual practices within installation environments. Her work and collaborations with Stosh Fila explore the interstitial spaces of memory, race, gender. Working closely with the archive, she draws from the rich spaces of activism, advocacy, loss, and caregiving. Tolentino has hosted queer club spaces such as Clit Club, Tattooed Love Child, and Dagger in New York City and was a member of ACT UP NY, Art Positive and House of Color Video Collective. With Cynthia Madansky, she co-created the *Safer Sex Handbook for Women for Lesbian AIDS Project/GMHC*. Visual AIDS’ DUETS 5 (2019) highlights the work of Kia Labeija and Tolentino. In 2016, she re-staged Ellen Cantor’s 1993 exhibition “Coming To Power: Twenty Five Years of Sexually X-plicit Art By Women” with Pati Hertling. She recently contributed to a group-penned essay: “The Sum of All Questions: Clit Club” (GLQ Winter ’18) to anticipate a forthcoming book with Josh Lubin-Levy entitled *Guard Your Daughters—Clit Club 1990–2002*. Tolentino is also the co-editor of *Provocations in The Drama Review*. Selected awards include the Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grant To Artists Award—Performance (2019), Pieter Dancemakers Grant (2018), BOFFO Fire Island (2018), PACT Zollverein, Essen, Germany (2012), Art Matters (2010 and 2015), CHIME with Doran George (2010) and Jmy Kidd (2012).

XFR Collective is a non-profit organization that partners with artists, activists, individuals, and groups to lower the barriers to preserving at-risk audiovisual media—especially unseen, unheard, or marginalized works—by providing low-cost digitization services and fostering a community of support for archiving and access through education, research, and cultural engagement. XFR Collective has partnered with artists and organizations including Elevator Repair Service, Visual AIDS, New York Women in Film and Television, Deep Dish Television, Felicia Telsey, Cara Perlman, Alan Moore, Coleen Fitzgibbon, and COLAB.

Contributor Biographies

Carmel Curtis is a moving image archivist and curator. Over the past decade, she has been committed to increasing access to film and video by supporting viewing of diverse media by diverse audiences. Carmel currently works in the Moving Image Archive of Indiana University; is a board member of the non-profit Screen Slate, a daily resource for independent, repertory, and gallery screenings in New York City; and is a proud member of XFR Collective (pronounced transfer collective), a volunteer run group that works to increase community access to at-risk audiovisual media.

Camilo Godoy is an artist born in Bogotá, Colombia and based in New York, United States. He is a graduate of The New School with a BFA from Parsons School of Design, 2012; and a BA from Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts, 2013. Godoy was a 2018 Session Artist, Recess; 2018 Artist-in-Residence, Leslie-Lohman Museum; 2018 Artist-in-Residence, coleção moraes-barbosa; 2017 Artist-in-Residence, International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP); among others. His work has been presented at venues including the Brooklyn Museum, CUE, and Danspace Project, as well as on a public billboard in New York, and at Mousonturm in Frankfurt.

Tara Hart is an archivist who currently serves as Managing Archivist at the Whitney Museum of American Art. She has held positions within a number of libraries, museums, and arts organizations in New York City, including the New Museum and the Fales Library & Special Collections at NYU. Her work is concerned with the complexities of how legacy is reconstructed and negotiated in the present, and how dialogues surrounding embodied archives and speculative histories can inform new approaches to archival practice. She holds an M.S. in Library and Information Science from Pratt Institute and a B.A. in Visual Arts from UC San Diego. Her writing has been published in *Archive Journal*, and *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*.

Leeroy Kun Young Kang is an archivist and film programmer based in Los Angeles. His work focuses on the intersections of audiovisual preservation and access, experimental film and video, and LGBTQ visual culture. He currently works in the Public Access Department of the Academy Film Archive and has had the privilege of working with diverse archival collections at several institutions including the New Museum, Brooklyn Academy of Music, and MTV Networks. In 2016, Kang was a Fellow at the Robert Flaherty Film Seminar and a Visiting Scholar at the Asian/Pacific/American Institute at NYU from 2016–2019. His writing recently appeared in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*.

Conrad Ventur is a multimedia artist and horticulturist based in New York City. His intimate photographic series emerge from years collaborating with subjects. His work, which also encompasses video, installation, and independent publication projects, considers queerness, ecologies, habitat, home, and pain and memory. Ventur studied photography at the Rochester Institute of Technology (BFA, 1999) and fine art at Goldsmiths, University of London (MFA, 2008). Recent solo exhibitions include “IVY” at Baxter Street at the Camera Club of New York (2016) and “Pink Seat” at Rokeby, London (2016). Recent group shows include: “Be Seen: Portrait Photography After Stonewall,” The Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT (2019); and “Face to Face: Portraits of Artists,” The Philadelphia Museum of Art (2018). His moving image work has screened at the Andy Warhol Museum; C/O Berlin; the Museum of Modern Art; Museum of the City of New York; Participant Inc; and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, among other venues. His work is held in the permanent collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Wadsworth Atheneum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.



Founded in 1988, **Visual AIDS** is the only contemporary arts organization fully committed to raising AIDS awareness and creating dialogue around HIV issues today, by producing and presenting visual art, exhibitions, public forums and publications, while assisting artists living with HIV and AIDS. We are committed to preserving and honoring the work of artists with HIV and AIDS and the artistic contributions of the AIDS movement.

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Front cover and pp. iii and 68: Leslie Kaliades, stills from *Altered After*, 1997. Video, black and white, sound, 15:07 min.

Back cover and p. vi: XFR Collective rack at Andrea Callard's studio, 2015. Photo by Marie Lascu

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Darrel Ellis

fierce pussy

General Idea

Jerry the Marble Faun

Leslie Kaliades

Kang Seung Lee

Ronald Lockett

Jonathan Molina-Garcia

Cookie Mueller

Raúl de Nieves

Jason Simon

Manuel Solano

Gail Thacker

Julie Tolentino

XFR Collective

AN EXHIBITION
CURATED BY CONRAD VENTUR
FOR VISUAL AIDS

Visual
AIDS