Artist Convergence

Curators from Pratt's MFA graduate program present a collection of works by fifteen artists in the November web gallery on Visual AIDS.

November 16, 2020 By Visual AIDS

Contextualizing or situating artwork in relation to other works is an integral part of an arts practice. That is the relevance of curation: an opportunity for artists to explore new meanings as part of a larger conversation.

Artistic Convergence is a collection of works by fifteen artist-curators from the Visual AIDS Artist Registry. These artists share, in addition to their curatorial work, a thematic consideration for isolation, identity, uncertainty, and art-making in times of political unrest. Working through various media, the artists have advanced their practices while also experiencing multiple health crises.

November 2020 Web Gallery Walkthrough from Visual AIDS on Vimeo.

The ever-evolving nature of the times we currently face has universally challenged the way we make and share [and consume] art. Uncertainty, illness, and death echo that of a previous—not too distant and still ongoing—pandemic. But the fear of the unknown, the anxiety and heartbreak of loss usually associated with the AIDS crisis have also given way to acceptance, empathy, and love. This re-contextualization is an enduring topic that realizes new meanings with every new era, and those affected by HIV & AIDS have long negotiated a delicate balance between isolation and social engagement.

For many of the artists in Artistic Convergence, the year 2020 embodies a reminder that elicits a familiar response. Carlos Gutierrez-Solana says, "uncertainty is a given, a constant, sometimes a source of dread, and other times excitement and anticipation". These expressions are to be appropriately viewed in the context of a larger community, during the unrest of a global pandemic with political upheaval, and in a time when much of our safety is contingent on isolation. The select work of the artists collectively addresses these ideas and individually treats their respective environments with strategies that are now re-energized.

Peter Cramer's 2020 text-based piece, The Virus is Us, functions as a reminder that there will always be a common thread uniting marginalized communities, and in this lies their power.

Peter Cramer, The Virus is US, 2020, carbon copy text on paper [A letter size white paper with bold text in the style of a 19th century wanted poster as depicted by Old Western movies with a call to action. It reads: “The Virus is Us. Mask Up!”]

Visual AIDS has worked tirelessly for many decades to address HIV-related issues of the times

through visual arts projects. Artistic Convergence brings together artists whose work and very lives have been shaped by much of the overwhelming turmoil that many have only experienced for the first time this year.

Mike Moreno, Blue Sky Alien In A World Of Illegal Realities, Mixed media [A brightly colored abstracted human figure cut out of wood, situated inside a moderately ornate wooden box.]

“Art has stopped as the new virus brings back the haunting in your soul, so many songs, so many men. Yet I stand strong remembering I evolved from AIDS, it made me reach deep down inside in search of me” —Mike Moreno, 2020

Pratt MFA Graduate Curators are:Jack Byers, Painting 2022; Aria Han, Integrated Practices 2022; Lizzy Li, Sculpture 2021; Monifa Mayo, Painting 2021; Jan Rattia, Photography 2021; Madeleine Riande, Painting 2022; and Nizza Rodriguez, Integrated Practices 2021.

Click here to view the entire gallery on the Visual AIDS website.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/artist-convergence