Ephemera As Evidence: OPENING w/ Nao Bustamante with Jason Martin

June 9, 2014 By Visual AIDS

Big turn out for the opening of Ephemera As Evidence, curated by Ricardo Montez and Joshua Lubin-Levy, at La MaMa Galleria on Thursday June 5th that included a performance by Nao Bustamante with Jason Martin.

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ABOUT THE EXHIBITION
Ephemera As Evidence, curated by Joshua Lubin-Levy & Ricardo Montez for Visual AIDS, featuring D-L Alvarez, Nao Bustamante, Vincent Chevalier, Clit Club Archive, Rosson Crow, Luke Dowd, Chloe Dzubilo, Benjamin Fredrickson, Tony Just, Kiki & Herb (Justin Vivian Bond & Kenny Mellman), Kia Labeija, Nancer LeMoins, Charles Long, Kevin McCarty, Eric Rhein, Michael Slocum, Jack Smith, Hugh Steers, Carmelita Tropicana, Conrad Ventur, Jack Waters & Peter Cramer, James Wentzy and

Jessica Whitbread & Anthea Black.

Taking its title from a 1996 essay written by José Esteban Muñoz (1967-2013), Ephemera as Evidence brings together visual art, performance, and pedagogical projects that evidence past lives and future possibilities in the work of artists confronting HIV/AIDS. Thinking through the ephemeral as necessary to the political life of HIV, the exhibition acknowledges a larger history of silence and erasure while at the same time making salient strategies for survival and worldmaking potentials in the face of a violently phobic public sphere. Yet, to consider ephemera in the social and cultural life of HIV/AIDS today is to consider both the burden and blessing of continued life. Within our contemporary moment the question is not merely one of survival but of how survival reverberates beyond the immediacy of a crisis. The works in this show ask us to consider how changing demographics of those affected by HIV/AIDS and the resulting reorientations to crisis force new kinds of temporalities in an engagement with both the past and the future.

Ephemera As Evidence is organized according to three distinct yet interrelated modes of worldmaking--performance, intimacy, and pedagogy. The ephemeral projects collected and staged throughout the run of the show index loss and longing central to queer worlds and social formations. They help to challenge notions of inauthenticity often associated with the ephemeral, not merely using traces to reconstruct a past but also to imagine pasts or futures both longed for and lost, finding new ways to tell untold stories. We present opportunities for visitors to visually and somatically engage with the art works and have constructed an explicitly performative experience in which ephemeral elements reinforce the materiality of the exhibition space as an ever-shifting environment, continually reconstituted in relation to each body that passes through it. Showcasing moments of live performance, evidence of its potential and absence, and student encounters in the archive, the exhibit explores powerful modes of learning that arise in the apprehension of slippery and contingent realities.

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