Fever!

The September 2021 web gallery features artists who tend to the porous boundaries between human and nonhuman worlds.

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In 2018, artist Hugo Moro created Slippery, a monumentally-scaled fence weaving in Seattle's Kinnear Park. The text, sourced from recycled vinyl banners, read as an observation and a warning: "WE ARE ON A SLIPPERY SLOPE MY FRIEND." Woven into steel mesh, bold, white letters called attention to the downhill terrain of the installation's site, and set against deep, verdant trees, signaled towards a fragile Earth that we are urged to save. Beyond the cataclysmic take of this phrase, there is the intimacy provided by my friend––an invocation to reconsider frailty and risk as conditions to collectively share in and align with rather than avoid. The works shown in this web gallery, in addition to Moro's, articulate a queer ecological vision for living in relation with a terminally ill planet.

Fever! features artists who tend to the porous boundaries between human and nonhuman worlds. The Artist+ Registry, an online database of artworks by artists living with HIV and artists who died of AIDS-related complications, provides both the selected works, as well as a conceptual framework for Fever! In de/naturalizing the notion of "living on borrowed time." If illness is perpetual and death is inevitable, ongoing communities and systems of care become critical. Care, in this instance, is not rooted in the prevention or aversion of harm, but nursing a present shaped by it. Queer and trans people of color are often told that we are an abnormality to nature yet, as observed by Interlocking Roots (pdf), nature affirms "the fluidity and multiplicity" of our existence. Fever! draws on this affirmation to ask, can nature reflect our struggle too?

Jack Waters, Aktion Painting #33, August 2007, Performance.Courtesy of Visual AIDS

Multidisciplinary artists Teresa Fabião, Santiago Lemus, and Jack Waters and Peter Cramer, two members of the Inbred Hybrid Collective, turn to the earth as stage, collaborator, and material, performing interventions that leave little trace, while Glammy and Tony Feher use branches to anchor sanguine meditations on making visible the unseen. Composed of a collaged portrait, embroidered plant matter, and clay, a collaborative textile piece by The Keiskamma Art Project and Pippa Hetherington unravels the cloth to mine entangled histories of colonial settlement. The web gallery reaches Fever!pitch with the surreal landscapes and frenetic colors employed by visual artists Carlos Almaraz and Devin N. Morris. In their works, figures live as expansive, messy bodies, spilling over the limitations of their flesh, in communion with the ever-changing and unstable environments in which they dwell. A photograph of the late Ms. Colombia, draped in her signature jewel-toned ruffles, perched with dear animal companions Cariño and Rosita, evidences a practice of terminal care—clueing us into a rhythmic way of being human, moving together with our traumatized world.

Keiskamma Art Project, Clay #5, Pigmented denim, cotton twill, embroidery. Created in collaboration with Pippa Hetherington.Courtesy of Visual AIDS

Postscript.

With every hard rain / sewage pipes overflow / the standing puddle in the parking lot drains / into the ocean / tainting blue waters black.

I am as filthy as the sea.

–– Chayanne Marcano

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

Chayanne Marcano is an art worker and writer. Her research and creative work explores space, place, belonging, and abstraction. She lives in The Bronx, New York.

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