

Altered After

CURATED BY CONRAD VENTUR FOR VISUAL AIDS

July 10–August 18, 2019

Considering themes of time, caregiving, and transformation, *Altered After* presents artworks that incorporate archives, archaeology, salvaged objects, material migrations, inherited knowledge, and bequests in response to HIV/AIDS. 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 lost and left behind. Their practices build bonds of kinship and give form to legacies and personal histories. The artists in *Altered After* are field guides reporting between worlds through paint, movement, video and film, light and chemistry, plants, everyday materials, thread, stone, pebbles, and clay.

PARTICIPANT INC

Wednesday – Sunday, 12–7pm
253 E Houston St, NYC 10002

participantinc.org
visualaids.org/alteredafter

Visual AIDS Founded in 1988, Visual AIDS is the only contemporary arts organization fully committed to fighting AIDS by producing and presenting visual arts projects, while assisting artists living with HIV and AIDS.

Public Programs

Absolute Love

Sunday, July 21, 7pm
at Participant Inc

A performance program featuring Oluwadamilare (Dare) Ayorinde, Joselia “Jo” Hughes, and Zachary Tye Richardson, curated by Camilo Godoy

XFR WKND

Saturday, July 27 and Sunday, July 28
at Participant Inc

A weekend of analog video transferring with XFR Collective

Record Time

Thursday, August 8, 7:30pm
at Anthology Film Archives

A moving image program featuring Gregg Bordowitz and Jean Carlomusto for Gay Men’s Health Crisis, Colin Campbell, Barbara Hammer, Jim Hubbard, Hayat Hyatt, Tran T. Kim-Trang, and Nguyen Tan Hoang, curated by Carmel Curtis and Leeroy Kun Young Kang

	Jason Simon	Manuel Solano	fierce pussy	Cookie Mueller	Ronald Lockett	Jonathan Molina-Garcia	
Julie Tolentino			Raúl de Nieves		Kang Seung Lee	Leslie Kaliades	Darrel Ellis
		Jerry the Marble Faun					
XFR Collective		General Idea		Darrel Ellis		Gail Thacker	

Julie Tolentino

Archive In Dirt, 2019

Broken plant derived from a Harvey Milk cutting, succulent mix, and ceramic pot

Courtesy of the artist

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, the first openly gay elected official in the United States. Propagated over the years from pieces shared between friends in California, Tolentino brought a piece of this cactus to display in the exhibition.

Jason Simon

Untitled (Video Against AIDS), 2013

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

Courtesy of the artist and Callicoon Fine Arts, New York

Untitled (Video Against AIDS) arose in response to Jason Simon's inability to find a full set of the 1989 video compilation *Video Against AIDS* in his local libraries. The compilation was originally produced to contend with the rampant circulation of misinformation about the AIDS crisis in mainstream media coverage. By transforming the original tapes and packaging 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 an 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. —Tara Hart

Jerry the Marble Faun

False Door, 2009

Indiana limestone, redbrick and olive oil patina

Vic, 2015

Limestone

Spirit, 2016

Limestone

Courtesy of the artist and SITUATIONS

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 this sculpture, *Vic*, refers to his first sexual encounter. An avid gardener—he also learned horticulture from his 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.

Manuel Solano

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

Acrylic on canvas

Courtesy of the artist and Peres Projects, Berlin

Mexico City-based artist Manuel Solano has painted from memory since an HIV-related infection left them blind in 2013. In *Untitled* (2019), Solano revisits their childhood fascination with interior decoration magazines. Calling on memories of advertisements for linens and appliances, Solano depicts the feeling of glamour and stylishness.

Raúl de Nieves

who would we be with out our memories, 2019

Beads, glue, and artist's shoe

Courtesy of the artist, COMPANY Gallery, and Freedman Fitzpatrick

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, made for this exhibition, responds to a lineage of artists and queer people affected by HIV/AIDS.

fierce pussy

Flag, 1992/2018

Five photocopies on paper

Nancy Brooks Brody, *obituary series, lighthouse* - from The New York Times obituary pages, 1999-2003
Graphite and gouache on newsprint

Joy Episalla, *lawnchair 1*, 2003

Chromogenic print mounted to plexiglass

Carrie Yamaoka, *Transformatory*, 1991

Photocopy on vellum

Courtesy of fierce pussy

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*, a poster created by the collective in 1992 is revisited to include unrealized proofs, "as an echo still reverberating in the present." The work is joined by three pieces from the artists' individual practices, acknowledging the ongoing dialogue between them.

Cookie Mueller (1949–1989)

Title unknown, c. 1984

Clay, wooden branches, dried flowers, paint, and prosthetic eyes

Title unknown, c. 1984

Clay, wooden box, amulets, hat pins, metal knives, ribbon, and fabric

Courtesy of the estate of Cookie Mueller and Richard Turley

Facing a life altered by HIV, the writer and actress Cookie Mueller made these two sculptures around 1984. They 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, and are being shown again here for the first time.

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

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

In *Untitled (Garden)*, Kang Seung Lee honors the legacies of Derek Jarman, the British filmmaker and activist, alongside Joon-Soo Oh, the Korean poet and human rights activist, both of whom passed from AIDS-related causes. Highlighting Jarman's lesser-known history as an avid gardener, Lee arranges dried plants, pebbles, and other items collected from Jarman's garden atop a piece of Sambe (a traditional Korean textile), which includes an 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 artifacts from cruising sites such as Nam San and Tapgol Park in South Korea, once frequented by poet and human rights activist Joon-Soo Oh. 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 in a web of affinity and commonality across past and present. —Tara Hart

Ronald Lockett (1965–1998)

Undiscovered, 1993

Rusted tin and colored pencil on wood

Collection of Ron and June Shelp

Ronald Lockett hailed from Bessemer, Alabama where, prior to his death from AIDS-related complications, he created three-dimensional works incorporating animal imagery and reclaimed industrial materials. *Undiscovered* is constructed from rusted tin found on the farm of his relative, the pioneering African-American artist Thornton Dial.

Jonathan Molina-Garcia

Fire Island Needlepoint, 2016

Custom-printed needlepoint canvas and thread

In office:

Fire Island Book, 2018

Eight-fold book

Courtesy of the artist

Jonathan Molina-Garcia was taught how to needlepoint by Allan, an older man he met online who is also living with HIV. Over a year of meetings, they discussed their personal histories as gay men living with HIV. As part of a larger series, Molina-Garcia made a collage of Allan's photographs from Fire Island and converted it into needlepoint. The accompanying artist's book contends with the intergenerational and interracial dynamics of this exchange.

Leslie Kaliades (1961–1999)

Trilogy: What is Illness?, Altered After, The Journey, 1997
Video, black and white, sound, 15:07 min.

Courtesy of Visual AIDS

Leslie Kaliades joined Visual AIDS as an Artist Member in 1997, two years before she passed away. "When Leslie had pneumonia," her mother Dorothy Kaliades remembers, "she took pictures of breezes in trees, to represent breathing." These respiring trees appear in the video *Altered After*, an example of how Kaliades used her art both to treat and to express her illness. This trilogy of videos was digitized by XFR Collective from a VHS copy in the Visual AIDS Archive.

Gail Thacker

Mark Summer of 1987, 1987

Polaroid type 665

Chloe and Tiny, 2005

Polaroid type 665

Hunter at White Box, 1998/2019

Chromogenic print from Polaroid type 665 negatives, mixed inks, and oil pastels

Courtesy of the artist and Daniel Cooney Fine Art

In 1989, Gail Thacker received a large trove of unexposed Polaroid 665 film from her close friend

and fellow artist Mark Morrisroe, just prior to his death from AIDS-related complications. From that point onward, Thacker shifted from painting to working with instant film as a medium. Her Polaroid *Mark Summer of 1987* was made the day Mark told her that he was HIV positive.

Darrel Ellis (1958–1992)

Self-portrait after photograph by Robert Mapplethorpe, c. 1989
Painting on canvas

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

In office:
Untitled (from Darrel Ellis photo of four figures in mother's bedroom), c. 1987
Painting on canvas

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

Courtesy of the estate of Darrel Ellis and OSMOS

While sharing a studio at PS1 with the artist James Wentzy, Darrel Ellis developed a technique for projecting and manipulating photographic negatives, which he then re-photographed, printing the results and also using them as source material for paintings. Ellis used this practice of rendering and reworking photographs to contend with photographs taken of him by Robert Mapplethorpe and Peter Hujar. He exhibited those paintings in *Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing*, curated by Nan Goldin at Artists Space in 1989, one of the first exhibitions to respond to the impact of AIDS on artists. In his later work, Ellis focused on a trove of family photographs taken by his father, who died before Ellis was born. Speaking about this work, Ellis said, “It can be a metaphor for the idea of generations, the photos are regenerated—from one you get many.”

An exhibition of work by Darrel Ellis is on view at OSMOS, 50 E 1st Street, open by appointment (osmos.address@gmail.com).

General Idea

1968 General Idea Shaped Ziggurat Painting #1, 1986
Fluorescent acrylic, acrylic, and latex on unprimed canvas

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

Cornucopia, 1982
Video, color, sound, 9:52 min.

Courtesy Electronic Arts InterMix (EAI), New York. 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 ancient architectural form of 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. Bronson 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*.

XFR Collective

Video Transfer Station, 2019
Video playback decks, time base corrector, monitor, analog-to-digital converter

Courtesy of XFR Collective

XFR Collective is a roaming platform that offers professional services to artists and organizations that would otherwise be inaccessible due to the high costs associated with reformatting and storing digital material for preservation. 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. —Tara Hart

On view in this installation are a number of video interviews with artists living with HIV recorded by David Hirsh, co-founder of the Visual AIDS Archive Project.

XFR Collective will offer free, drop-in digitization sessions during “XFR WKND” on Saturday, July 27 and Sunday, July 28. More info at visualaids.org/alteredafter

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