

Indisposable

Tactics for Care
and Mourning

October 1 - December 10, 2022

FORD
FOUNDATION
GALLERY

Indisposable

Tactics for Care
and Mourning

October 1 - December 10, 2022

Curated by Jessica A. Cooley and Ann M. Fox

Indira Allegra, Black Power Naps (Navild Acosta + Fannie Sosa),
Kevin Quiles Bonilla, Jill H. Casid, Francisco echo Eraso,
fierce pussy, Allison Leigh Holt, Raisa Kabir, Riva Lehrer,
Alex Dolores Salerno, Sami Schalk, Pamela Sneed,
What Would an HIV Doula Do?, Kiyan Williams

Curatorial Statement

Indisposable: Tactics for Care and Mourning is the follow-up to *Indisposable: Structures of Support after the Americans with Disabilities Act*, also curated by Jessica A. Cooley and Ann M. Fox. A three-year collaboration with more than thirty artists and scholars, the originating exhibition emerged as eight online chapters, each addressing the urgent questions of the moment where the Covid-19 pandemic and demands for racial justice laid bare the painful reality that some lives – especially disabled, queer, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) – are deemed disposable. These chapters serve as a unique archive of the ways in which artists and scholars responded to the intertwined histories of ableism and racism in the moment, delving into profound questions such as: *What makes our lives livable? How do we afford our own existence and what happens when we cannot? Who creates the means by which we survive; or were we ever meant to survive? Where are we seen as disposable, and why?*

Indisposable: Tactics for Care and Mourning extends these conversations and questions by focusing on two topics that emerged as critical to the originating eight online chapters: care and mourning. The artists of *Indisposable* address the difficult work of not just how to care and to mourn for those deemed disposable, but how to activate that work into tactics for insisting on our indisposability even as we care for and sustain each other.

For many communities, “care” is veiled language used to justify horrendous acts of brutality. Canada’s residential school system, the Tuskegee Study, Nazi Germany’s T4 program, and the abuse by ostensible “caretakers” that happens every day in nursing homes and psychiatric hospitals are just a few examples of why “care” is often synonymous with medical cruelty, community erasure, control, and trauma. The artists of *Indisposable* confront this cruelty of care by reclaiming it as a practice created by and for those communities that have historically been the most impacted by it. Small-scale, personal, and community-centered work carves a new space for pleasure, rest, nature, conversation, and tenderness that in its insistence to care for that which is deemed disposable also becomes an activist tactic for resisting that very disposability.

This resistance includes mourning as an act of care to claim sacred space for those lives and losses seen as undeserving of such hallowed ground. The reclamation of mourning, like that of care, then also

becomes an activist tactic to not let go of our losses, a call to take them with us into a world where we must continue to demand support structures so that disabled, queer, BIPOC, poor, and immigrant communities might not just survive, but will flourish.

This exhibition takes an expansive approach to access. It embraces Mia Mingus' concept of *access intimacy*, "that elusive, hard to describe feeling when someone else 'gets' your access needs." The access needs of artists and gallery visitors are prioritized by curating and presenting work in a way that anticipates physical, sensory, and processing differences. Access is a form of creativity, with artists incorporating it in ways both innovative and intentionally exceeding the minimal or routine. By centering the daily tactics for survival practiced by those living at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities, access also becomes a powerful tool for resistance.

A large-print exhibition brochure is offered for all visitors. Touch objects are available near the gallery desk and are intended to be handled by all visitors, especially those with different cognitive processing needs and low-vision and blind visitors. You can access an audio guide that contains visual descriptions of all the works in this exhibition. Most of these descriptions have been written and recorded by the artists themselves, allowing you to hear the voice of the artist and their personal description of their work.

The artists in this exhibition are committed to resisting the oppressive ideologies of bodily productivity and "normalcy" that have been used as markers of human worth. Their work offers audiences the chance to consider new tactics for care and mourning, activist strategies emerging from within and uplifting communities living in precarity.



Digital Exhibition Guide



***Indisposable: Structures
of Support After the ADA
Chapters 1-8 Videos***



A Living Model of Hyperbolic Space, 2017 / 2020

Glass, water, steel, neodymium magnets, mirrored acrylic, Parmotrema
 Perlatum lichen
 Dimensions variable

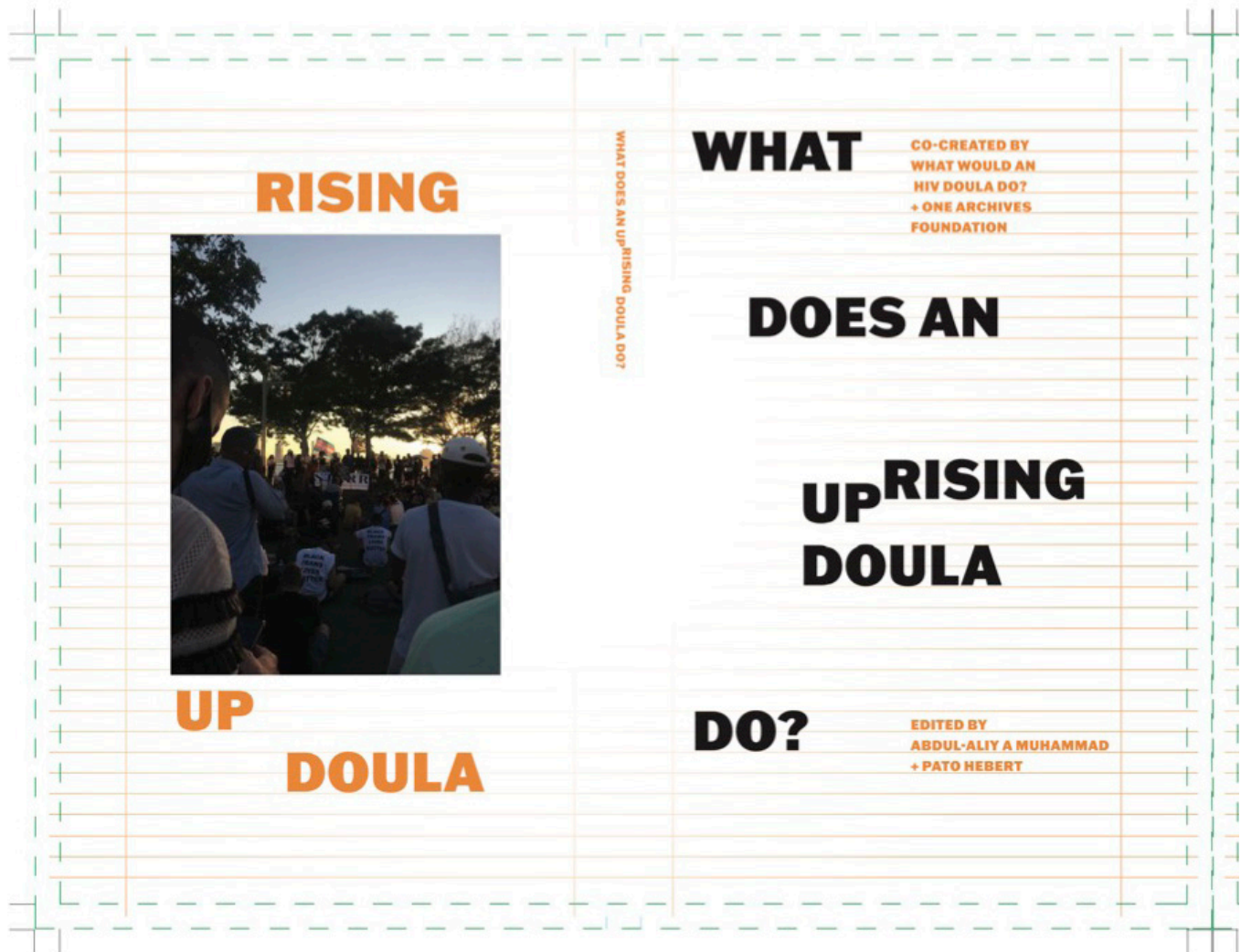
Allison Leigh Holt

Allison Leigh Holt (b. 1972) is a neurodivergent artist, scholar, and teacher living and working in Northern California. Her multidisciplinary research-based work uses techniques of expanded cinema and the Light and Space Movement to model divergent ways of sensing, processing, and exchanging information. Holt also teaches experimental video to autistic teens and adults both in groups and one-on-one, using a pedagogy that she calls Neurodivergent Media.

The water-filled glass spheres in *A Living Model of Hyperbolic Space* are intended as scaled-up water droplets, like those of morning dew, clouds, and the water in the air we breathe. Water's refractive properties act as a lens, magnifying what lies behind it while projecting the image of what lies before it. As Holt writes, "The frilly, crenellated form of Parmotrema lichen is a natural example of the true shape of the space in which we find ourselves, so-called hyperbolic space. The shortest distance between two points, therefore, is never a straight line, but rather, a curved one. From a young age, Westerners learn to live within Euclidean city grids, and to extend that order to the not-quite-fixed world of natural forms and systems, into their worldviews." The work invites us to defamiliarize our sense of scale and positionality relative to the natural world, and in so doing, recast our understanding of our place in it.

For Chapter 7 of *Indisposable: Structures of Support after the ADA*, Holt created an experimental documentary entitled *Stitching the Future with Clues*. In it, Holt looks at neurodivergence as another way of knowing, through a cybernetic lens. Combining animated diagrams, video, audio feedback processes, and expanded media techniques, *Stitching the Future with Clues* draws from Holt's article "The Conversation: Feedback Structures, Ways of Knowing, and Neurodivergence" (*PUBLIC #59*) to ask us to consider feedback systems as a medium for understanding the sensing, processing, and exchanging of information happening not just in human minds and brains, but within and between all scales of intelligent life. This film explores the post-humanist sense-making of neurodivergence: differently attuned to temporal, psychic, and environmental embodied experience.

@oillyoowen @neurodivergentmedia
oillyoowen.com



What Does an Uprising Doula Do?, 2021
128 pages
8.5 x 5.5 inches

What Would an HIV Doula Do?

What Would an HIV Doula Do? is a community of people joined in response to the ongoing HIV/AIDS crisis. They write: “We understand a doula as someone who holds space during times of transition. We understand HIV as a series of transitions that begins long before being tested, continues after treatment and beyond. We know that since no one gets HIV alone, no one should have to deal with HIV alone. We doula ourselves, each other, institutions and culture. Foundational to our process is asking questions.”

Uprisings too are transitions that require the care and support of doulas. The *What Does an Uprising Doula Do?* zine asks us to consider the diversity of uprisings in terms of who participates and how that participation happens. For example, what does uprising mean for folx with disabilities who cannot show up in normative ways? As the community writes, there are “many rhythms, forms and scales” to protest and uprising and thus many needs for diverse spaces and supports. As a result, we “rethink and reshape our shared relationship to resources, our commitment and accountability to mutual care, our very understanding of power. And ourselves.” The *What Does an Uprising Doula Do?* zine will be available for exhibition visitors to take with them as a way of connecting to and carrying forward activist tactics for care and mourning.

@wwhivdd
hivdoula.work



Installation of works from the series:

Tops, 2022

When My Brothers Were Alive and the Sun Shone, 2022

The Mourning Series, 2018

Untitled Haiku, 2022

Watercolor, acrylic, neon

Dimensions variable

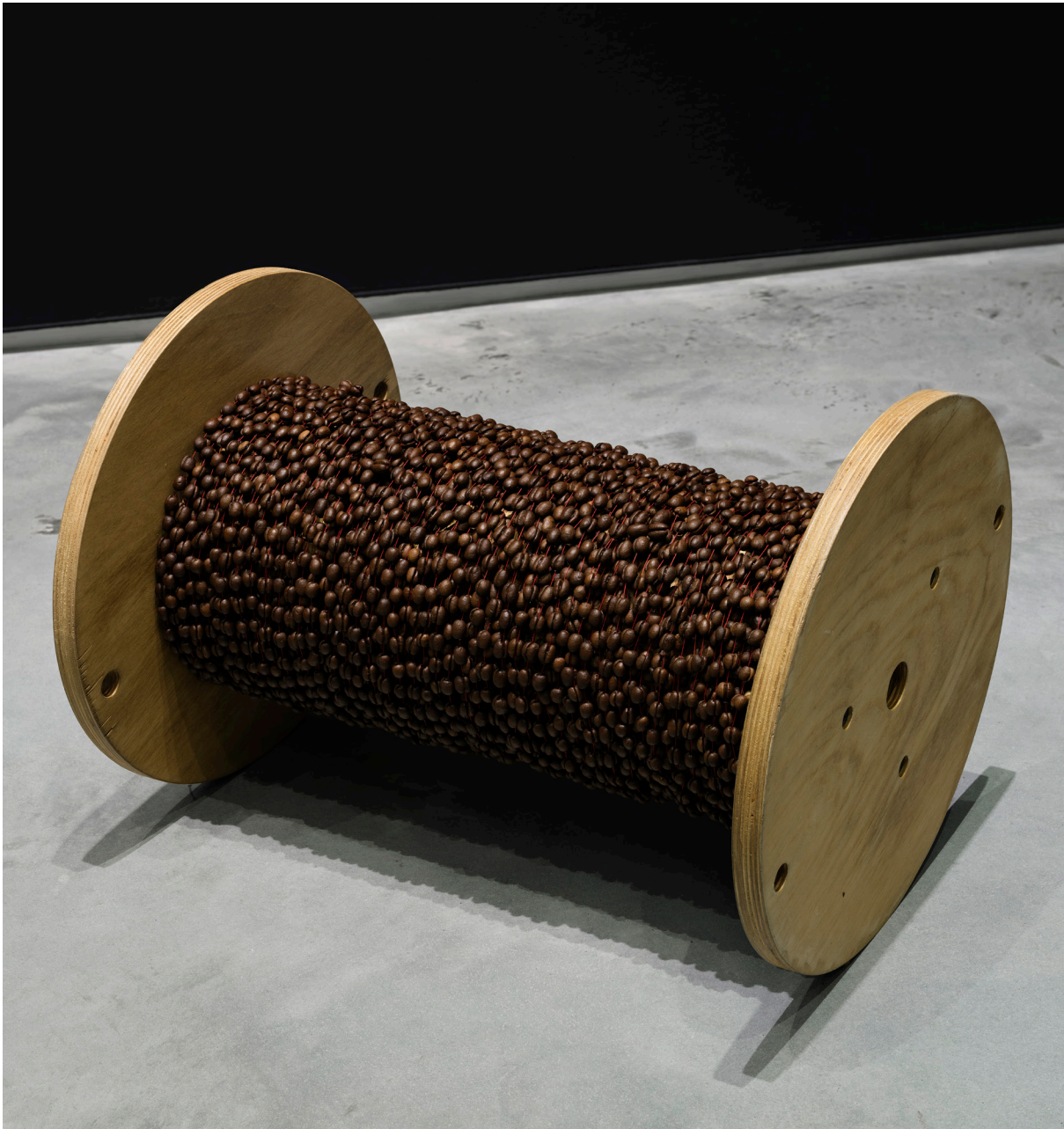
Pamela Sneed

Pamela Sneed (she/hers) is a poet, writer, performer and visual artist, author of *Imagine Being More Afraid of Freedom than Slavery*; *KONG and Other Works*; *Sweet Dreams*; *Funeral Diva*; the chapbooks *Lincoln* and *If the Capitol Rioters Had Been Black*; and two chaplets, *Gift* and *Black Panther*.

Pamela Sneed's watercolors profoundly document her evolving experiences of mourning over time. *When My Brothers Were Alive and the Sun Shone* is a series of portraits of Sneed's chosen family, men from the queer community who died of AIDS in the early days of the pandemic. Sneed vividly brings to life the beauty and joy that their lives embodied, reminding us of the enduring ache of their loss. The images link pandemics; then, as now, vibrant lives were needlessly lost through the stigma and dismissal leveled at seemingly disposable communities; then as now, homophobia, ableism, and racism are foully ensnared. There is a profound connection between these images and her watercolors of those murdered in the 2022 Tops Friendly Markets shooting in Buffalo, NY. The portraits are of community members, activists, and caregivers who formed an important web of support in their families and their East Side community. Sneed mourns their loss, and in presenting the group image, invites us to reassert care as their legacy: as a means of anti-racist work, joy, and survival. In the fragmentation and abstraction of Sneed's *Mourning Series*, she offers another side to the experience of mourning. Her collages are more visceral in their expression of mourning as something that is impossible to fully know or comprehend and never fully complete. Positioned between these framed portraits and collages is a white neon haiku in Sneed's own handwriting. The *Untitled Haiku* radiates and reverberates a message centered by both care and mourning as it makes space for grief to lay her head on Sneed's brown shoulder.

For Chapter 5 of *Indisposable: Structures of Support after the ADA* Sneed performed selections from *Funeral Diva* (2020) to remind us of the forms that resistance shouldn't have to take—like survival.

@pamela_sneed



EXTRAHERE, 2021
Coffee beans, thread, and cable reel
16 x 20 x 16 inches

Alex Dolores Salerno

Alex Dolores Salerno (b. 1994) (they/them) is an interdisciplinary artist based in Brooklyn, NY. Informed by queercrip experience, they work to critique standards of productivity, notions of normative embodiment, the commodification of rest, and 24/7 society.

Despite being one of the world's most traded commodities, coffee has become a normalized and often overlooked symbol of work culture. The title *EXTRAHERE* is Latin for to drag out, draw forth, extract, or remove. Global capitalism's extraction of resources and demand for constant productivity hides behind notions of coffee as social currency and the guise of workplace hospitality. Positioning slowness and rest as an access need, the artist's process entails spending time gluing together countless coffee beans, one by one on a continuous red thread, rejecting urgency, grind culture, and using the process as a way of stimming.

For Chapter 1 of *Indisposable: Structures of Support after the ADA* Salerno created a short meditative film titled *El Dios Acostado* that focused on three scenes from their mother's hometown San Pedro de la Bendita in southern Ecuador and the neighboring town of Vilcabamba, which was made famous by purported claims of residents who lived well beyond 100 years. Dubbed "The Valley of Longevity," Vilcabamba became a popular destination for American and European tourists. The film sets a pace of rest and repose for the viewer while asking us to consider the disabling ramifications of colonialism and tourism and the high value placed on productivity and immortality.

@Alex_Dolores_
alexdolessalerno.com



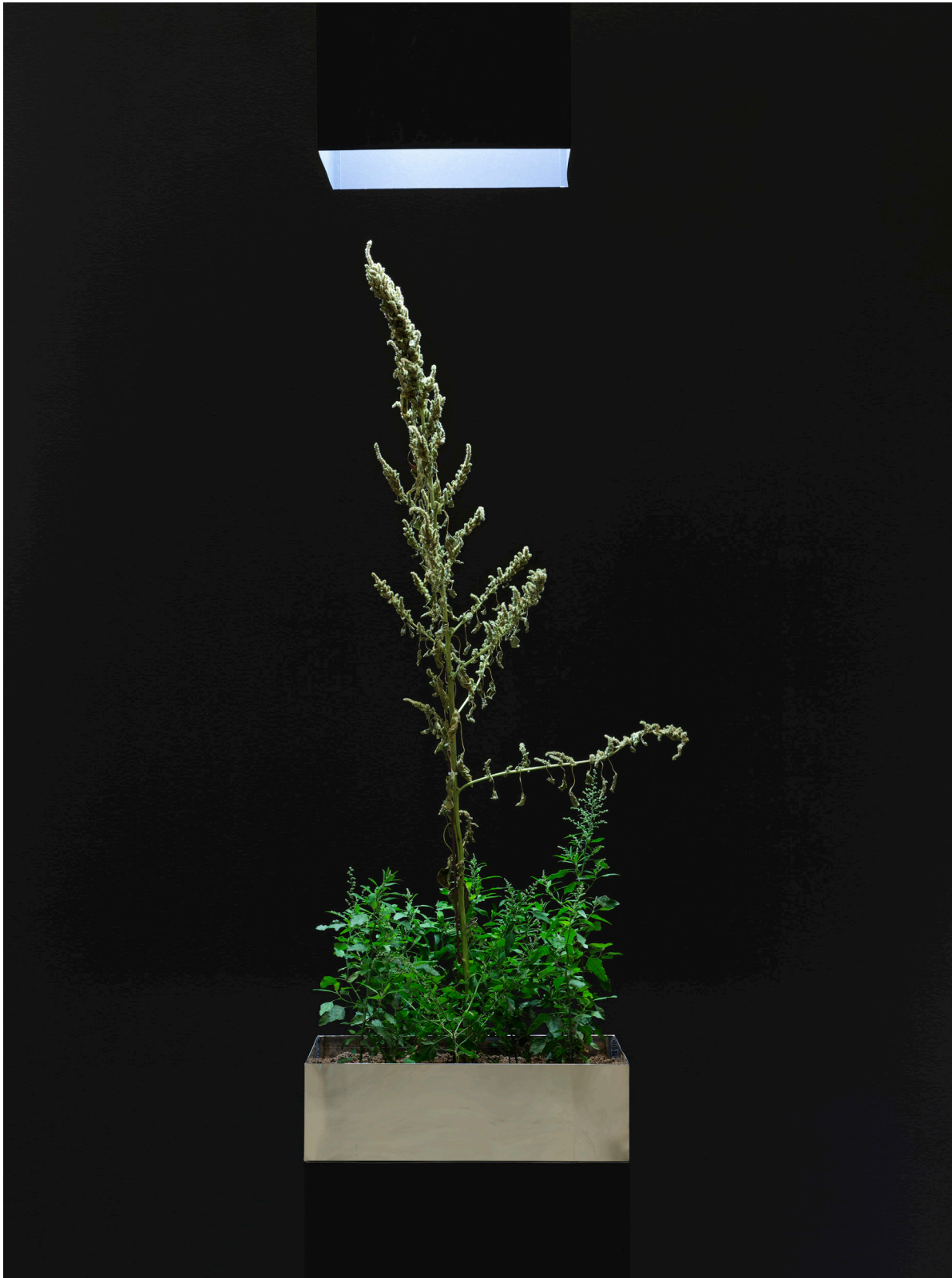
Regalos, 2020
Used pillowcase, handspun thread, hair
94 x 46 inches

Francisco echo Eraso & Alex Dolores Salerno

Francisco echo Eraso (he/él) is a disabled, trans, Colombian-American interdisciplinary craft artist, curator, educator, arts administrator, and accessibility consultant. He is interested in grassroots approaches to disability justice, trans liberation, cooperative textiles, and the creative redistribution of resources. His art practice makes evident the construction of value through reproductions and allusions to the color gold and its related histories of mining, capitalist accumulation, decadence, alchemy, and healing practices.

Regalos (“gifts” in Spanish) is a sculptural installation created in collaboration with Alex Dolores Salerno that explores the embodiment of queer-crip time through the ephemera of dreams, rest, and growth between partners. For *Regalos*, Eraso and Salerno have split open a shared and worn pillowcase where the sweat from sleep has stained both sides of the fabric. Cascading from the pillowcase are handspun golden threads whose collective shape mimics the rectangular space of a bed. Originating from the artists’ practice of gifting their hair to each other, small bundles of hair are tenderly knotted along the lengths of the thread reminiscent of Quipus. The Quipu is a textile made of knotted strings used by pre-Columbian Andean groups to keep records, collect data, and tell stories. Rest, interdependency, and the transcendent space of the bed are here offered as sacred treasures. The collaborative nature of this work speaks to the critical crip tactic of dismantling individual achievement and instead celebrating collective work and collective rest.

@realityhasbeenpostponed
franciscoechoerasojr.com



In Defense of Weeds, 2022
Amaranth, LED grow light, mirror-polished stainless steel, MDF
Dimensions variable

Kiyan Williams

Kiyan Williams (they/them) is a visual artist and writer who works fluidly across performance, sculpture, video, and 2d realms. Rooted in a process-driven practice, they are attracted to quotidian, unconventional materials and methods that evoke the historical, political, and ecological forces that shape individual and collective bodies.

Williams's *In Defense of Weeds* is an installation that quite literally grew out of one of the artist's public art sculptures. Amaranths grew at the base of the sculpture but were removed over the objections of the artist because they were considered weeds by the groundskeepers. What is traditionally worthy and unworthy of our attention within horticultural norms becomes a powerful metaphor in this installation. Plants defined in another context as weeds are now situated within the gallery atop a pedestal. Within the gallery, the plants are now treated with care that contributes to what Williams terms the plant's survivance (a neologism formed out of survival + resistance). As Williams writes, "*In Defense of Weeds* is a small intervention to the protocols of disposability, and an attempt to intervene on what (or who) gets cared for (cultivated), and what (or who) gets thrown away." Despite the artist's utopian hopes, they consider that the conditions of a gallery might not be the most hospitable for life to flourish, and that these plants might meet their original fate. Care, therefore, might be more than offering them a new home but also shifting the culture by which they are rendered disposable.

For Chapter 6 of *Indisposable: Structures of Support after the ADA*, Williams created *Piecing Myself Back Together After The World Has Ended*, a new video in a series of works which furthers the artist's aesthetic and conceptual exploration of Blackness, ecology, and trans/gressive subjectivity; wherein bodies are in process, oscillate in legibility, and blur the boundaries between self and other forms of sentient life.

@kiyanwilliams
kiyanwilliams.com



NO PROTECTION, 2020
Yarn, wool, and cotton
20 x 24 x 4 inches each panel

Raisa Kabir

Raisa Kabir (b. 1989) (she/they) is an interdisciplinary artist and weaver based in London. Kabir utilizes woven text/textiles, sound, video, and performance in their work to materialize concepts concerning the cultural politics of cloth, labor, and embodied geographies. Their (un)weaving performances comment on power, production, disability, and the queer brown body as a living archive of collective trauma.

Kabir examines how some bodies are more valued by and for global structures of production. They interrogate the eugenic-capitalist logic that prizes young, able-bodied persons; extracts their labor at a disabling pace without the most basic support structures of healthcare, rest, and safe food and housing; and then discards them as disposable. Kabir uses textile production in her work to cite these structures, as we see in her eponymous sculpture *NO PROTECTION*. What do we do, Kabir asks, when we cannot look to the world around us for care and safety?

NO PROTECTION protests the pervasive and persistent failure to protect queer, trans, and disabled people of color from harm. Kabir writes that *NO PROTECTION* “...takes root from disability, queerness, dysfunction, and inability to process unspeakable things that were inherited trauma. It is about mourning all the times we were failed by those who were meant to protect us from harm. A collective voice – a personal action.”

Kabir also reclaims the output of weaving as allegory for, in Kabir’s words, “the ways in which marginalized communities rely—and have always relied—on support networks of care and structures of mutual aid to survive that are separate to the state.” In Kabir’s woven sculptures, the intertwined threads of weaving signify the interdependent care on which disability depends. These interrelationships are made visible and perform a disability aesthetic that resists commodification and individuation in Kabir’s *House Made of Tin* (a socially distanced weaving performance) commissioned for Chapter 4 of *Indisposable: Structures of Support after the ADA*.

@raisa_kabir_textiles_
raisakabir.com







Carryover (Blue Tarp in Vega Alta), 2019
C-print
41 x 61 x 2 1/4 inches

Kevin Quiles Bonilla

Kevin Quiles Bonilla (b. 1992) (he/they) is an interdisciplinary artist born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. They explore ideas around power, colonialism, and history with their identity as context.

In *Carryover (Blue Tarp in Vega Alta)*, the body of the queer-crip artist merges with and is abstracted by the detritus left behind in the wake of Hurricane Maria, a blue plastic tarp. What, Bonilla asks us, are we doing with the piles of ruins left in Puerto Rico – and elsewhere – in the wake of the disasters caused by climate change? How does the lack of substantial response to the climate crises pile danger upon danger, indignity upon indignity, further carrying over colonial oppression onto the bodies of those in the storm's path? The blue tarp itself becomes a signifier of loss and disposability after a disaster, serving as flimsy coverings to patch the holes in houses. As Bonilla notes, these blue tarps still dot the island today. Bonilla stands out of and in nature where the stiff folds of the blue tarp over their head and body create a sculptural structure that reappropriates the detritus of disaster that was intended for disposability and remakes it into an almost grand form. However, as Bonilla's limp posture emphasizes, this grandeur is imbued with a grief for those lives and livelihoods lost to climate crises. Bonilla takes the possibilities of the blue tarp one step further, asking us "What happens when the body replaces the structure? – or rather, what happens when the body becomes the structure to protect?"

@kevinquilesbonilla
kevinquilesbonilla.com



Arranged with Care, 2022
2 channel video, airplane pillowcase, herbs,
and the color of horchata lojana
Dimensions variable

Alex Dolores Salerno

Alex Dolores Salerno (b. 1994) (they/them) is an interdisciplinary artist based in Brooklyn, NY. Informed by queercrip experience, they work to critique standards of productivity, notions of normative embodiment, the commodification of rest, and 24/7 society.

Arranged with Care is a 2 channel video that considers translation and slow looking as forms of access, as well as intergenerational healing through access to plants and cultural traditions. The video features the artist's mother and aunt who present many of the herbs used to make horchata lojana, a traditional medicinal drink from Loja, Ecuador, through an iPhone video texted to the artist when they could not travel to visit their family due to the pandemic. The video is installed on two monitors, the original Spanish video on one and an interpreted English version on the other, with a doubling of captions in both languages in large text on each video. The viewing bench is painted the color of horchata lojana.

The vibrant color is understood to invigorate the consumer. Sitting on the bench is a small airplane pillowcase stuffed with many of the same herbs, to be embraced by the audience. By connecting rest and crip time to our relationship with the earth, *Arranged with Care* explores disability aesthetics and embraces disability existence as a tactic to refuse and subvert capitalist expectations.

@Alex_Dolores
alexdoresoalerno.com



#QuarantineLooks: Embracing the Fabulously Mundane, 2020

C-print

Courtesy of Sam Waldron/Dutcher Photography

24 x 36 inches each

Becoming a Pleasure Artist: Pleasure is the Point, 2022

C-print

Courtesy of Sam Waldron/Dutcher Photography

24 x 16 inches each

Sami Schalk

Sami Schalk (b. 1986) (she/hers) is a pleasure artist and an associate professor of Gender & Women's Studies at University of Wisconsin-Madison who celebrates and centers pleasure as a tactic for healing and liberation. Her scholarship focuses on disability, race, and gender in contemporary American literature and culture. Schalk's newest book, *Black Disability Politics* (Duke UP 2022) focuses on disability politics in Black activism in the post-Civil Rights era.

How does disability create knowledge essential to surviving a global pandemic? One answer: joy. As an act of pleasure activism and self-care during the pandemic lockdown, Schalk began posting images of herself on social media with sparkly new hairstyles, outfits, and facemasks. The act of dressing up to handle ordinary tasks such as walking the dog or taking out the trash sparked delight and connection with strangers and friends. In her words, "joy begets joy begets joy."

Photographs from Sami Schalk's *#QuarantineLooks: Embracing the Fabulously Mundane* (2020) and her boudoir series *Becoming a Pleasure Artist: Pleasure is the Point* (2022) insist on joyful visibility for her fat, Black, queer, femme body. They likewise challenge what depression looks like and interrogate what it means to look well or unwell. Melding the politics of both public and private space, Schalk asserts that wherever there is pleasure there is power. Here, pleasure activism is underscored as a tactic for care and resistance.

For Chapter 2 of *Indisposable: Structures of Support after the ADA*, Schalk created a video essay based on her original "lews" entitled *#QuarantineLooks: Embracing the Fabulously Mundane*. During the chapter, Schalk and scholar Jina Kim discussed the importance of pleasure activism and modeled several different looks of their own. They also invited audience members to share ideas about what brings them joy during pandemic, and to show off their own fabulous fashion choices. Comic artist MK Czerwiec live-illustrated the event, adding to the exuberance of the occasion.

@pleasureisthepoint @fierceblackfemme
samischalk.com



Chill Pill (Rockabye Baby), 2022

Plywood, paint, mattress, dye, cotton gauze, Kanekalon hair
16.4 x 9.8 feet

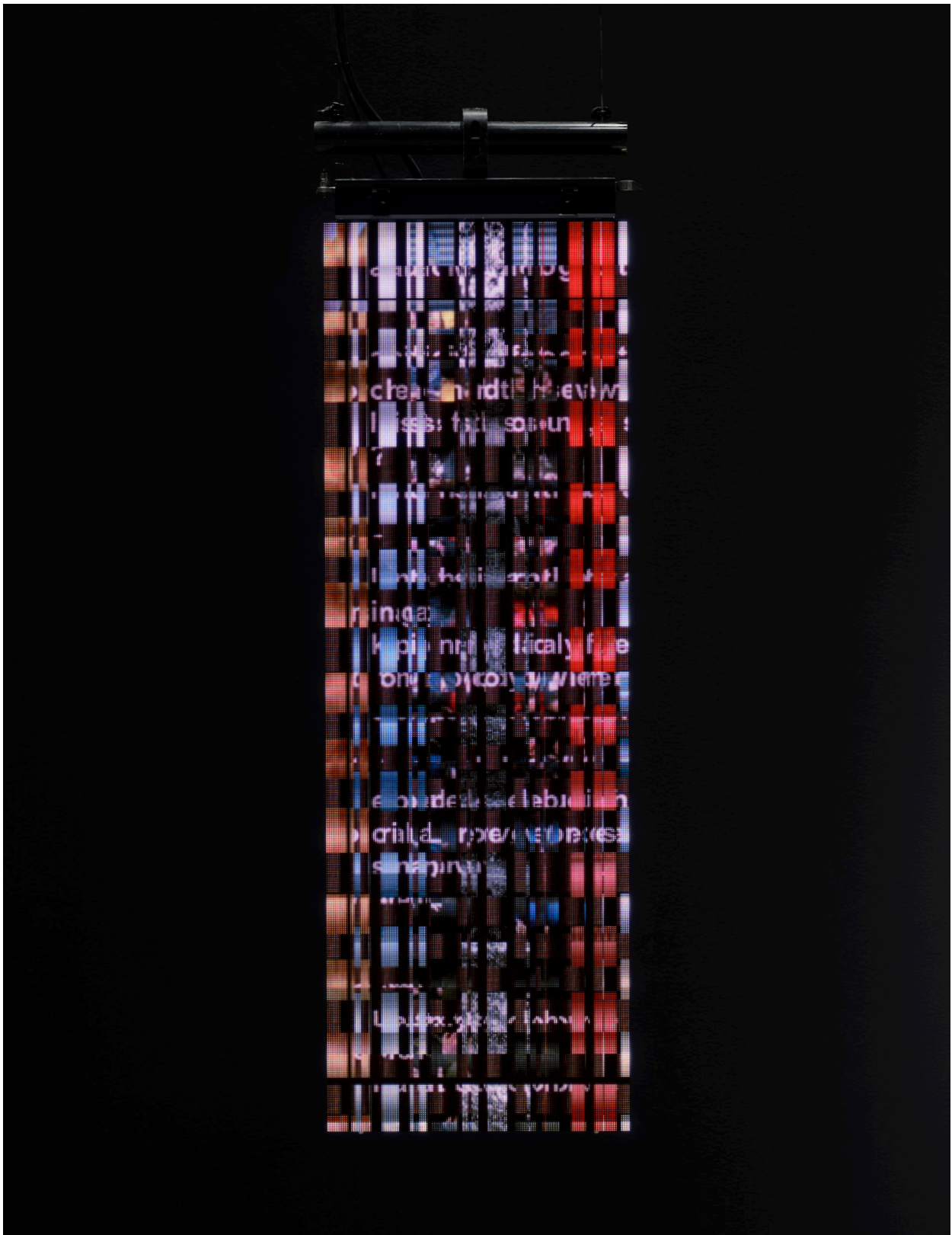
Black Power Naps (Navild Acosta + Fannie Sosa)

Black Power Naps (Navild Acosta + Fannie Sosa) (he/him, they/them) is a sculptural installation, vibrational device, and curatorial initiative that reclaims laziness and idleness as power. Their practice both exposes the oppressive nature of how rest has been denied to marginalized populations and creates a space for reparation and the redistribution of rest.

We invite you to rest and relax in the gallery on the sculptural installation from Black Power Naps. The rocking motion of *Chill Pill*, its soft multihued tie-dyed fabrics, rounded shape, and plush space soothe the weary visitor. This installation is a pointed intervention into traditional gallery spaces that offer few areas for extended contemplation by a seated public, let alone reclining and sleeping. The rocking sculpture soothes the guest and exists as a critical form of care that, in so doing, also serves as an anti-racist tactic. Black and Latinx people have been stereotyped as lazy even as white supremacy has dictated their bodies labor on frontlines of all kinds. During the Covid-19 pandemic, an unsurprising paradox emerged: workers deemed “essential” were also made disposable by a society that exposed them again and again to the dangers of infection through unsafe and laborious working conditions. The *Chill Pill* is a space where rest can be immediately reclaimed, where we can contemplate how to hold institutions accountable, and where the ongoing oppression perpetuated through the denial of repose is, at least for a moment, halted.

For Chapter 3 of *Indisposable: Structures of Support after the ADA*, Black Power Naps created a film entitled *FRONTLINES OF ALL KIND* documenting their endeavors and challenges during the pandemic. By creating a collage of the beautiful moments found against the backdrop of institutional power structures, *FRONTLINES OF ALL KIND* offers an insight into what liberating spaces of rest for Black and racialized people entails.

@black.power.naps @navildacosta @fanniesosalove
blackpowernaps.black



TEXERE: The Shape of Loss is A Tapestry, 2022
Commemorative images and text offered from users of *TEXERE*,
LED Tiles
Dimensions variable

Indira Allegra

Indira Allegra (b.1980) (they/them) is a conceptual artist and recognized leader in the field of performative craft. Allegra's performances and installations explore the transformative poetics of death, memorial, and regeneration.

How can we begin to mourn the many, many losses of the pandemic? How do we counter the ways in which pandemic has created a culture of disposability? For Chapter 8 of *Indisposable: Structures of Support after the ADA*, Allegra addressed these questions by creating a global, web-based platform entitled *TEXERE*. Loss is a normal part of the human experience. Yet so often losses go unrecognized, or we are urged to forget them, get over them, and move on quickly. Indeed, we need more rituals and objects to acknowledge our losses. *TEXERE* transforms human losses into a new kind of memorial object, an ever-evolving digital tapestry created with submissions authored by people using the site. The creation of the digital tapestry exists as both a new kind of memorial object and visual evidence of the need for mutuality and interdependence as the basis of care work that is shared between people. Every *TEXERE* participant becomes an artist in collaboration with other artists worldwide in a new practice of memorial making.

The installation Allegra has created for *Indisposable*, *TEXERE: The Shape of Loss is a Tapestry*, invites you to share something you are grieving. The monitors in the gallery will display the constantly evolving digital tapestry created in real time that interweaves your loss with those entered by others. In creating a visible, accessible point of intersection, Allegra deploys the centuries-old art of weaving in the digital space to remind us that the shape of loss – our intertwined stories of it – is a tapestry. *TEXERE: The Shape of Loss is a Tapestry* moves mourning from the solitary to the collective and intertwined; in so doing, it creates what Allegra terms “global grief equity.”

For Chapter 8 of *Indisposable: Structures of Support after the ADA*, Allegra gave a talk about *TEXERE*, followed by a conversation with Therese Noël Allen (a therapist specializing in trauma-informed psychodynamic and somatic therapy), and curators Jessica A. Cooley and Ann M. Fox.

@indiraallegra
www.indiraallegra.com



fierce pussy

Transmission VI, 2022
Offset and Braille on paper, limited edition of 3000

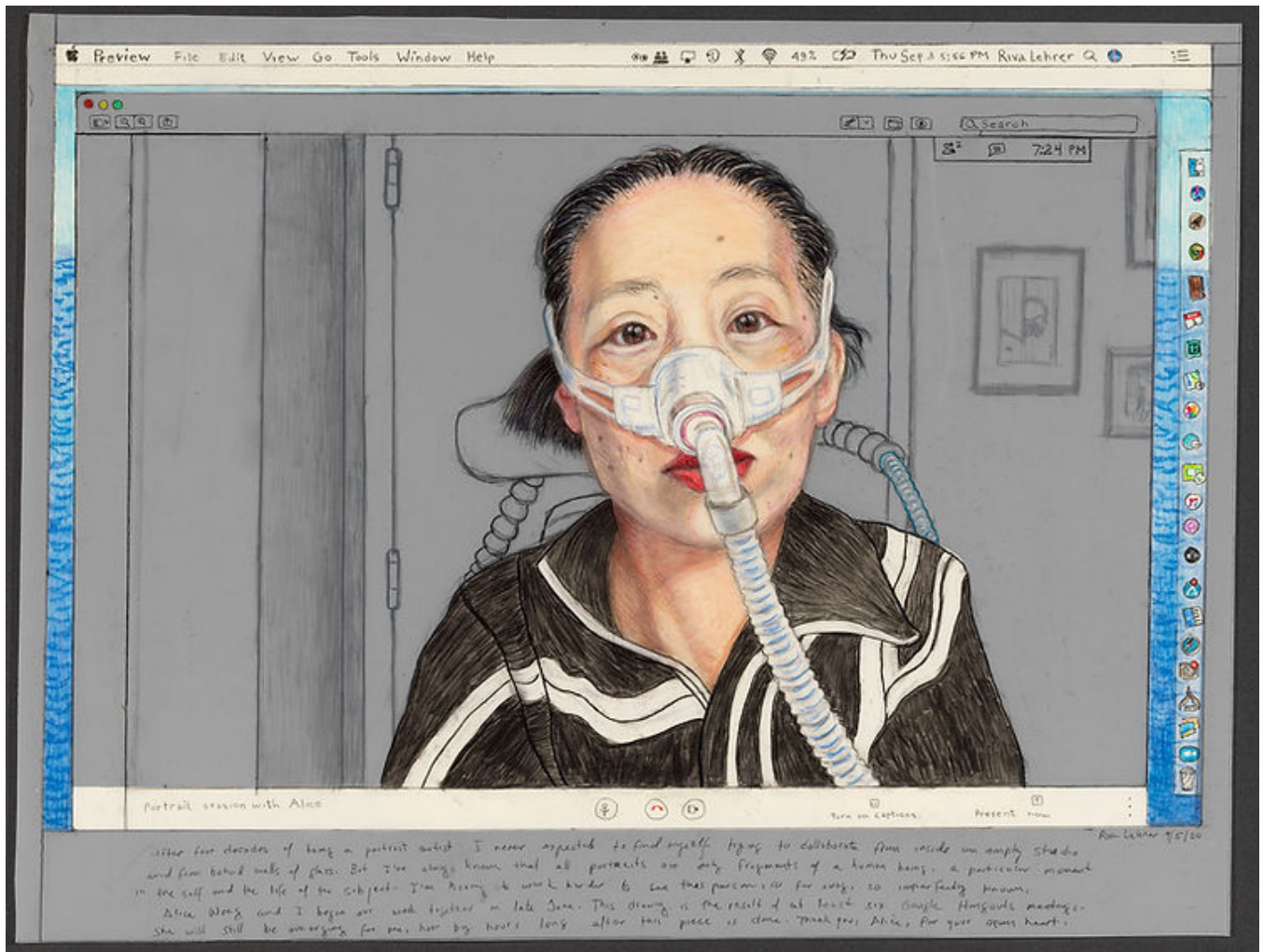
fierce pussy

fierce pussy (Nancy Brooks Brody / Joy Episalla / Zoe Leonard / Carrie Yamaoka) 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 LGBTQ+ 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 by using readily available resources: old typewriters, found photographs, their own baby pictures, and the printing supplies and equipment accessible in their day jobs.

Transmission VI, commissioned for *Indisposable*, is on view in the gallery and available for guests to take with them. *Transmission VI* uses an open-letter format to relay communications from a future or distant utopia where the current horrors of oppression that continue on our dying planet are incomprehensible and worrisome. In each *Transmission* the beings ask more questions in their attempts to understand the violence, inequality, and cruelty in contemporary human society. Through their questions and offers of help, these beings sketch out alternate possibilities for social relationships and sustainable living.

fierce pussy engages written language as inherently visual, while freely combining references to past, present, and future. *Transmission VI* draws on various visual vernaculars: the expansive possibilities of punctuation, the retro styling of a telex machine typeface, the red framing lines of legal documents, and the tactile language of Braille.

@fp_1991 @zoe_leonard_studio @jepisalla @carrie.yamaoka
#nancybrooksbrody
fiercepussy.org



Zoom Portraits: Alice Wong, 2020
 Graphite, colored pencil on acetate
 25.25 x 31.25 inches



The Risk Pictures: Sharrona Pearl, 2021
 Charcoal, pencil, pastel, and collage on acetate and illustration board
 25 x 63 inches

Riva Lehrer

Riva Lehrer (b. 1958) (she/hers) is a Chicago-based artist, writer, and curator whose portraits celebrate and center people stigmatized due to their physical embodiment, sexuality, or gender identity. Lehrer's process explores the relationship between artist and subject, working to upend traditional hierarchies of power in artmaking and recognize the intertwined nature of creation.

Riva Lehrer's *Zoom Portraits: Alice Wong* and *The Risk Pictures: Sharrona Pearl* illustrate the paradoxical and sometimes bittersweet nature of care during a pandemic. For Lehrer, a portraitist, the virus stole from her the intimacy of collaborating with the subjects who pose in her studio, a presence whose loss she deeply mourns. These Zoom portraits portray the imperfect but necessary ways in which she is adapting her process as a protection for herself and others. Indeed, the triptych in *The Risk Pictures: Sharrona Pearl* connects that protection to the PPE frontline medical workers wore as they tended to the sick and vulnerable. Sharrona Pearl, a medical ethicist and historian whose scholarship explores theories and histories of the face, is portrayed here in full-face, a formidable insistence on presence even in the midst of physical absence. The third portrait is of Lehrer herself, based on secret screenshots that Pearl took during their virtual sittings. Similarly, *Zoom Portraits: Alice Wong* is a potent metaphor for the transformative nature of care. Because of affordances like Zoom, disability justice activist Wong can, in concert with Lehrer, espouse a visibility that sustains crip community.

@rivalehrer
rivalehrerart.com



Untitled (Throw Out), 2017 - 2022

Video (16:30), paper envelope, projector

Conceived, written, and performed by Jill H. Casid and realized
by Jack Kellogg

Dimensions variable



Spirochetes of Contact, 2019

SX-70 Polaroids, wooden support structure conceived in collaboration
with and fabricated by Sylvie Rosenthal

30 x 192 x 12 inches

Jill H. Casid

Jill H. Casid (she/they) is Professor of Visual Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A historian, theorist, and practicing artist, Casid's research participates in critically extending the scope of intersectional crip and queer-feminist interventions in visual studies. Casid's hybrid research practice combines performative scholarship that pursues theorizing as a creative writing practice with a performance and photo-based art practice dedicated to developing methods for approaching the materializing force of imaging.

Casid's *Untitled (Throw Out)* takes its name from the handwritten instruction ("letters: throw out") left by their great-aunt on an envelope containing the incomplete remnants of an effort to save their mother who had been deported to the Gurs concentration camp. Casid follows its double-sided command to "throw out" as in discard and "throw out" as in to transmit to approach Hart Island and the lives buried there that are rendered disposable in what Casid calls the *Necrocene*. The film compels us to grapple with how to make crip, queer, trans*, and racialized life livable by holding onto our dead (i.e., melancholy) as fodder for that other sense of "throw out," that is, to express. Flanking this film is Casid's installation, *Spirochetes of Contact*, that takes us to that other New York island, Fire Island (one of the epicenters of the AIDS crisis and Lyme Disease) in the form of the boardwalk as cruising ground where we "pick up" on all its various meanings – sex, ideas, drugs, viruses, conversation. Casid heightens our felt sense of the material volatility of the original Polaroids by exposing them on top of the equally precarious support structure of the wooden boardwalk to engage us in intimate encounter with the images and their fragile supports as vulnerable material sites of and for our desire.

For Chapter 5 of *Indisposable: Structures of Support after the ADA*, Casid created their film, *Untitled (Melancholy as Medium)* that conjures with the material fragility of the Polaroid SX-70 to commune with the incalculable but still powerful presence of unredressed loss. In this film, the twin pandemics of HIV/AIDS and Covid-19 are powerfully connected to investigate how race, ability, incarceration, and sexuality continue to mark some lives as more disposable than others and to agitate for melancholy as an activist and artistic medium. Casid centers the twin ideologies of ableism and white supremacy that make both pandemics excessively lethal with bodies piling up in refrigerated morgue trucks and then buried on Hart Island, the largest mass grave in the United States, and "potter's field," where for decades New York City has literally disposed of the unclaimed, indigent, and stigmatized ill — such as those who died of AIDS in the early years of the pandemic.

@jillhcasid
jillhcasid.net

About the Curators

Jessica A. Cooley and Ann M. Fox have been a collaborative curatorial team since 2009, when they co-curated *RE/FORMATIONS: Disability, Women, and Sculpture* and *STARING* (based on the work of disability studies scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thomson). They have lectured and published internationally on crip curation and crip art.

Curator Jessica A. Cooley (she/her/hers) is a scholar-curator with a PhD in art history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her first book project centers on what she calls “crip materiality” and will forward a new methodology to address how ableism affects the understanding and valuation of the very fibers of art materials within curatorial and conservation discourses. Cooley was assistant curator at Davidson College’s Van Every/Smith Galleries from 2006 - 2010. Currently, Cooley is serving as the ACLS Emerging Voices Fellow for the University of Minnesota’s Liberal Arts Engagement Hub.

Curator Ann M. Fox (she/her/hers) is a Professor of English at Davidson College, where she teaches courses in literary and cultural disability studies, modern and contemporary drama, and graphic medicine. Her scholarship on disability and visual representation has been published widely, and she has also co-curated several disability-related visual arts exhibitions, including *RE/FORMATIONS: Disability, Women, and Sculpture*, *STARING*, and *Re/Presentations of HIV/AIDS*.

Publications about the *Indisposable* project:

- Cooley, Jessica A., and Ann M. Fox. “Becoming Indisposable: Curating Disability in a Time of Pandemic.” In *Curating Access: Disability Art Activism and Creative Accommodation*, edited by Amanda Cachia, Chapter 2. Routledge, 2023.
- . “Crip Curation as Care: A Manifesto.” *Theater* 52, no. 2 (May 2022): 5–19.
- . eds. “Exploring Indisposability: The Entanglements of Crip Art.” *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art*, Colloquium, 8, no. 1 (Spring 2022).

ABOUT THE FORD FOUNDATION GALLERY

Opened in March 2019 at the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice in New York City, the Ford Foundation Gallery aims to shine a light on artwork that wrestles with difficult questions, calls out injustice and points the way toward a fair and just future. Our hope is for this to be a responsive and adaptive space, one that serves the public in its openness to experimentation, contemplation and conversation. Located near the United Nations, the space is situated to draw visitors from around the world—and address questions that cross borders and speak to the universal struggle for human dignity.

www.fordfoundation.org/gallery
[@fordfoundationgallery](https://twitter.com/fordfoundationgallery)

ABOUT THE FORD FOUNDATION

The Ford Foundation is an independent organization working to address inequality and build a future grounded in justice. For more than 85 years, it has supported visionaries on the frontlines of social change worldwide, guided by its mission to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement. Today, with an endowment of \$16 billion, the foundation has headquarters in New York and 10 regional offices across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

