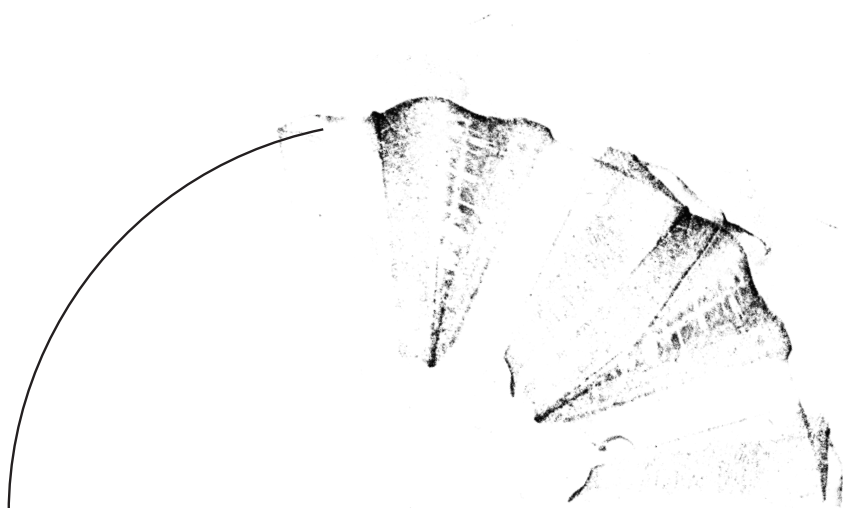


THE MOON WILL SINK INTO THE STREET



DEC 2017

FREE

This publication, featuring the work of three scholars, poets, and artists, is assembled on the occasion of Day With(out) Art, an annual day of action and mourning initiated by the New York- based organization Visual AIDS. Founded in 1988, Visual AIDS has worked in the field of contemporary art for three decades to assist artists with HIV/AIDS, preserve the legacies of those who have died from related illnesses, and initiate dialogue about the ongoingness of the AIDS epidemic. This publication is published by the Institute of Contemporary Art, whose current director, Amy Sadao, is a woman of color who served for ten years as Executive Director of Visual AIDS. It has taken me about two minutes in the art world to grasp the rarity of a director of a major contemporary art institution having this activist background and engagement.

Throughout the process of conceptualizing and assembling this publication, I drifted in and out of *Fire in the Belly*, Cynthia Carr's biography of artist and activist David Wojnarowicz, who died of AIDS-related illnesses at 37. In it, Carr recalls a letter David sent to a friend in 1990, two years before his death. "I'm tired of being perceived as a radical when I know I ain't particularly radical," David writes. I'm interested in what constitutes radical action today, and even more so in what happens when we shift the work of AIDS activism from the margins to the center—or, at least, closer to the center.

This inquiry is a delicate one. I'm drawn to Wojnarowicz's disavowal of his own radicalism in part because—and perhaps this is a generous interpretation—it signals to me an awareness of being a white gay man in a much less precarious position than the many queer and trans people of color whose labor has animated the fight against AIDS from the very beginning. But it also makes me wonder what possibilities open up to us once we move past our own insistence that AIDS work is always radical. In my milieu, radicalism is understood as inherently valuable. *She has radical politics* is legible shorthand for any number of leftist affinities on a broad spectrum, whether or not these are accompanied by political action or engagement. But when grappling with a disease that has always been met with deadly stigmatization and marginalization and remains so today, who benefits from AIDS activism remaining exclusively on the fringe?

What you hold here is a small and modest rupture in ICA's programming, in various public spaces in Philadelphia, and in my life as a writer and editor. I consider the writing herein to be rigorous and necessary and even radical, but any illusion that the work of bringing this into the world is a radical act would be mistaken. I am continually inspired by the day-in-and-day-out activism of individuals and organizations—like Visual AIDS—who have been tackling questions of visibility, destigmatization, education, and liberation for decades now, the queer radicals who gave a vocabulary to the ongoing struggle. The works here stretch backwards and forwards in time simultaneously, imagining alternate futures while illuminating what has been. It has been an honor.

— HEATHER HOLMES

DIGITAL EDITOR &
COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE
NOVEMBER 13TH 2017

Gustavo

Ojeda &

What He Made

GABRIEL OJEDA-SAGUE



IN SEVERAL OF HIS SKETCHBOOKS,

especially toward the end of his life, my uncle Gustavo Ojeda expresses shame about how often he paints. Even during his most generative period of night paintings, he seemed to be disappointed by the volume of work he was putting out. Productivity was always on his mind and he never seemed to measure up to his self-imposed expectations. The bitter edge of his anxiety around production is that he died at 31, leaving behind a relatively small catalogue of paintings to a family with no experience in the arts and few English speakers to disseminate them and keep their recognition going.

••••

I arrived in New York in May of 2017 to pick up a series of boxes labeled “Gustavo documents” that were left at the apartment belonging to Lester Edelstein, Gustavo’s long-time partner, when he passed away. They had been put aside for me to pick up. What Lester’s accountant-brain labeled “documents” was actually a large collection of inventories, posters, art magazines, exhibition catalogs, tickets, photographs, unfinished canvases, small framed paintings, student prints, transparencies, slides, tax papers, hand-made collages, Halloween decorations, wedding invitations, coloring books, jewelry, bills, mailing lists, and postcards. And most importantly, boxes upon boxes of sketchbooks.

••••

Gustavo was a painter who exhibited and created most of his work in New York during the 1980s. He was born in Cuba alongside my father. The family left for Spain in 1967 in response to the rise of Fidel Castro, joining what would become the first generation of Cuban exiles. From Spain they moved to Virginia and Gustavo later went to New York City to attend Parsons. He was a Cintas

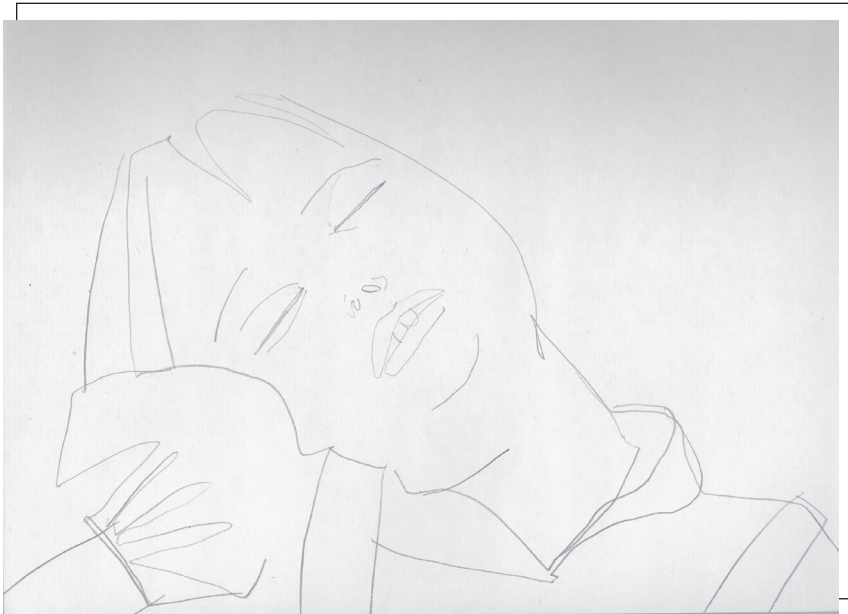
Fellow and exhibited with a bevy of well-known New York artists. At the 1984 MoMA *International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture*, he was the second-youngest artist exhibited, passed only by Basquiat. He died of AIDS complications in 1989. I never met him. The last major show of his work was organized in the 1990s.

My familiarity with his work came from two places, my grandparents and Lester Edelstein. My father passed away when I was quite young, certainly too young to begin exploring Gustavo’s work, and so what he knew is lost. My grandparents own about a third of the remaining artwork, much of it student work and other non-exhibit-ready pieces. Most of the exhibited work was owned by Lester, whom I consider my uncle. Lester passed away this year, putting my brother and me in an unexpected position.

In the mire of complicated legalese, the paintings are ours but we can’t touch them, for now. We are at a moment when the indelicate and defensive proceedings around estates block us from taking something we could have accessed any time before. Our motivation to finally get Gustavo’s work back into the world feels blocked by proceedings that will take over a year. However, I was able to take home the “documents” and sketchbooks belonging to Gustavo that were in Lester’s home.

HOW DO YOU START TO TELL A STORY AGAIN, 28 YEARS LATER, THAT PEOPLE HAVE ALL THE REASON IN THE WORLD NOT TO CARE TO HEAR?

HOW DO YOU START TO TELL THAT STORY AGAIN FROM A HALF SET OF MATERIALS AND WITH FEW ABLE ALLIES?



Every day after work I would spend two hours at the University of Pennsylvania's library in a small computer lab that had two high quality scanners. I would spend those two hours scanning and compiling every page of the 125 sketchbooks I had taken from Lester's apartment. I would label each folder with mostly arbitrary metadata, like the sketchbook brand name and a number, a number for each page, and a year if it was dated. I did this for about two months.

♦♦♦♦

Gustavo's paintings are notably unpopulated. His interest lies in urban architecture (skyscrapers, windows, subway tunnels) and, in the case of his paintings from Spain, flora of the urban environment (parks, trees

planted by the city). You are lucky to find a single human body in most of his exhibited work. The titles are simple labels of subject matter, like "Downtown Evening," "Station," "Intersection." There are no tricks up his sleeve, no hidden effects, no high theoretical framework, no "deeper meaning." An early supporter of his work, Ricardo Pau-Llosa, wrote that "his work is unsettling because, in some mysterious way, beneath the shell of what seem 'safe' themes and subject matter, lies an instinctive and intuitive sense of art's most necessary function: the placing of craft at the service of altering our sense of the real....Ojeda undermines, rather than ambushes, the boundaries of what we think of as real."

Growing up around these paintings, I've always felt they had something charging beneath them, as if the skyscrapers wanted to be volcanic but couldn't. I was always on the edge of being afraid of them. There is one in my grandmother's house that always looked like the building in it had a mouth. In the context of the American art scene of the 1980s, and most specifically the gay American art scene of the 1980s, the paintings are stylistically conservative. But it is easy to

see through his night paintings that few could handle the playful techniques around light the way he could. If something shrouded in darkness is in the realm of the imaginary, light should reveal it and make it explicit. In Gustavo's work, the light only seems to obfuscate it further.

♦♦♦♦

HIS WORK IS UNSETTLING BECAUSE, IN SOME MYSTERIOUS WAY, BENEATH THE SHELL OF WHAT SEEM 'SAFE' THEMES AND SUBJECT MATTER, LIES AN INSTINCTIVE AND INTUITIVE SENSE OF ART'S MOST NECESSARY FUNCTION: THE PLACING OF CRAFT AT THE SERVICE OF ALTERING OUR SENSE OF THE REAL...



Looking through the sketchbooks I received from Lester's home, the first sketch that ever caught my eye was one of a nude woman, framed from chest up with her eyes open, staring directly at the viewer. She wears what might be a cross around her neck. She is drawn with her body parts simply outlined, little to no shading: a style characteristic of most of his sketches. A collarbone is rendered as a mostly straight line with a small hook at the end, no other detail. But the outlines of this woman's body parts, from her shoulders, to her neck, to her breast, have been redrawn several times. Some of these lines are erased almost fully, some reduced, and some left at the same density. I wasn't sure when I saw it the first time, and I am still unsure now, how to reconcile the simple technique of the drawing with how I felt her body was bursting wildly out of its seams.

♦♦♦♦

Most of Gustavo's sketches follow a pattern. Occasionally, there is what you would expect from a sketchbook: preparatory drawings of skyscrapers in advance of paintings, still life exercises of furniture, the female nude portrait. However, the vast majority of pages are taken up by sketches of sleeping people, most often from the shoulders up. It is safe to assume, from certain sketches that reveal more context, that these are people sleeping on public transportation or in random public spaces in the city. The majority are rendered without shading, often drawn with a single or a small handful of lines. Some have no mouths, some no eyes, some no necks, some none of the three, many all of the three. They are not really somber, nor are they joyful. They are, by turns, unsentimental and hopelessly tenderhearted. Much like the paintings, they are deeply invested in silence.

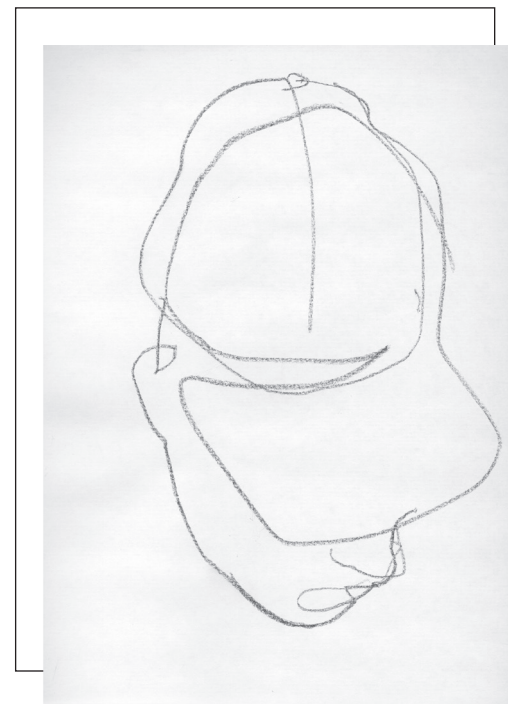
But they are ecstatic in their quietness. The sketches have an underbelly of texture, like how a limb that is "asleep" feels electric. Looking at them together, I feel both calmed and disturbed by the volume of sleepers. Their bodies are often expanding with re-drawing, or the lines of their face are made of the same lines as that of the chairs they sleep in. These sleepers are both ripping out of their environment and are constitutive of it.

••••



Loss has never been about silence or stillness. Loss is certainly about wildness. A person is turned into documents and searches, a series of rumors and changed opinions, whose opinion of who and whose story about whozzit's what. That absence, which makes itself into a series of lines around what is missing, is familiar to all of us who have lost. Encountering softly that lost thing in a moment, only to find it is running amok inside another.

••••



Gustavo replicates the real-life perspective of the sleeping person in public space, bringing us back to Pau-Llosa's comment that Gustavo's work is centered in the placement of technique. But we are also often shown impossible angles of the strangers' bodies, as if Gustavo is below or above them. Or, the bodies (or, more accurately, parts of bodies) are so limited by the borders of the page that they look deeply unreal. And so, I begin to doubt the idea that all of these faces are real and seen in public, and I think perhaps the conceit of public, urban voyeurism that dominates his work is at least partially fabricated or imagined. I return, then, to Pau-Llosa's argument that his work is less about the real than it is about the craft.

And speaking of perspective, I have no idea what the truth about his practice may be. Almost all of his close artistic connections, his lover, his brother, and himself have all passed. As his nephew, I feel both intensely close to the work and intensely far away from it.

I must note the great irony of his insistence on his own unproductiveness, looking at the boxes of over 100,000 sketches he made over a decade. His sketching is clearly a practically separate, though thematically connected practice to his painting. In the casual speed of these thousands of sketches, in both technique and subject matter, Gustavo pinched out a much more developed and intricate relationship between the aesthetic and the real than his paintings had. And he did not seem to notice it. Starting in 2017 to answer again a question that once had a clear answer, now lost, "what did Gustavo Ojeda make and who cares about it," means sorting everything and not taking the worth of anything for granted. It takes accepting that we are starting at a version of zero, where there is an abundance of material, but no arbiters or allies of the work to help plow the mass of it. But in that zero, there is intense potential energy, the electricity of a sleeping limb. ●

LA

THERE IS SOMETHING I WANT
TO TELL YOU I HAVE TO TELL YOU I AM GAY

something conjured something the thing was absence disappearance of the
that became present crying a lesbian cry on my log **A.I.D.S.** does my mother know
about everyone dead Us alive but i in line studying the movement of weak bodies
i am a whore a whore in the classroom paul takes off his clothes says "i have ____" but that is
paul's story and my story is absence i never heard of _____ until the form is space the form is
gaps i'm **lucky** to be the whore 2 fuck without thinking of _____ our pleasure fraught but *pleasure*
but perhaps less hidden listen my mother did not know about _____ and i didnt know my fathers
best friend **gay** but all of us evangelical and grandfather saying the gays are dying because they
are *sinners* the gays are dying because they are sinners !!! **I Alive A Sinner** I act on my
desires I interview my Mother but refuse to quote her because she is my Mother my Mother went
to school with Magic Johnson and 40,000 other people My gynecologist doesn't give me an
test because i am a lesbian and **Not At Risk** Ask For protection but god wont give it to U *To insert yself*
in any topic is a problem Ask For forgiveness Ask For protection Ask For moments
without fear and a quiet corner and a hug from the child who isn't yours and now what we
want is to be married an orange in the trash can a political poem from a white woman tugging
at my pants with a gloved hand and the scent I carry **They kill us/Them** then sell our
houses to the person who pays the most expanding the price grows our body sinks Fighting
for our lives We Were we control our representation The Disease The Sickness
those who tell the story are alive those who tell the story are alive

If my room is on fire I want to be the first to know. *they were upset because they thought*
they had privilege and they found out the government did not care if they died
she sighs on the bed she says i can do it Okay get me alone for once and tell me what to do
the little pieces of sage stuck to me salt bath for the stomach ache but everything else discon-
nected the child said i had one wish and i said i wanted to be happy and she said she could
not grant my wish so i should make another and i wished that she would be happy and she said
could not grant my wish being in love is worse than being alone because there is nothing pro-
tecting you and your lover knows **"Bury Me Furiously"** said Jon Greenberg and I'm in the
green grass not the hay today because it is wet and I can absorb it. I can press into the mud. Why
the stomach ache I just ate lentils but my stomach is talking to me almost screaming mom says
she sees no symptoms *remove the green grass from the ground* mush it in my hand mush mush
till green palm then let the clod go free it to the ground pick more green grass smooch it again
okay enough. Pick three pieces of grass. Manage to braid them. **AGAIN.** Pick three and braid
like mom braiding is just pull straight and put on top and cross is that clear it is just cross cross
cross. I want my skin to be the grass and I want to believe in my self and I want to be faithful
and I want to be alone for now and I don't want to be woken up in the night by a coyote I want
them to leave me alone tonight because all last night they were laughing, everyone in their cir-

WARMAN

cle of friends hanging out, laughing, or screaming, and not a laugh like you laugh when you are
having fun but a laugh like you stole \$5 or you are about to eat something a laugh that wakes
me up in the night and doesn't make me feel good it makes me feel closed and make me hide
in my sheets and doesn't let me open myself to anyone except my bed, not the door, not the
carpet. When they come into the yard dad fires the BB gun. Not at them but in the air. **SOME-
TIMES I FEEL LIKE ANGER IS ALL I HAVE** He is too afraid to shoot anything at
them. Sometimes it isn't the BB gun it is the super soaker and he runs and locks Cat in the house
and if he leaves the BB gun leaning against the garage I take it into the forest and shoot anything.
A leaf, the barn, a brick, a fence, the trough filled with water no animal will drink besides algae.
I'm screaming in my room last night and she doesn't wake up she sleeps through everything,
disloyal. I want to be warm and covered like a piece of grass I don't want to be mud I want to
be safe **Passing As Protest** *All the people I knew that had AIDS had died*
said Sarah Schulman, Maria Maggenti, Ann Northrop, Mary Cotter the three some is the
the visible is the im more interested in standing in an empty room alone *the quality of the*
discourse, and the depth of knowledge that people had – coupled with outrage.
me too lil cunt me too solid sold my cunt to the only bidder who showed up showed
them my hands they were clean enough but in the desire there is _____ I WANTED
HER every lick think of her hair her roughness the desire that every1 says they Would Die 4 **One**
woman had her brother's ashes. A guy had his lover's ashes, those who remain posi-
tive repress everything or never knew it in the first place they are socially unmarked but those
who are declared Positive the tearing u stood before you and god & said
i must profess the truth this once for I am a queer and they said
NO NO NO YOU WILL NOT BE THAT the cancer is gay and who
tells of the riches of the the the first generation of gays with a future
or second first or second transmit the desire know the desire keep the desire
close CAN YOU BE MORE SPECIFIC NO you and I must they live because
they have the money i'll run into this later whose bodies die & matter whose
bodies _____ untold who knew how who died how the orgy was two carrots
one tiffany? transmit infect *i'm being what's the word?* gay morose horrible **"IF**
OUR FANTASIES CEASE TO BE COMPELLING EVEN ONLY TO US
THEN WE HAVE LOST, THEN WE ARE TRULY DOMINATED" they
will kill us they will make us disappear *gathering is bias* alone on the farm or in the
forest but senior year of high school we watch a movie about a woman with _____ and
by the end of the movie she is dead they would be happy if we died *research isn't real-*
ness the doctor of the wind said none of this is a surprise the government will kill you
in whatever way they see fit: military deportation forced resettlement masculinity
marriage white supremacy the family form jail time im on my knees in a curl
on the floor with dice snake eyes wrapped in a curl TODAY THINGS COULD
BE DIFFERENT wet pussy growing the moon cut in half got lower the light white


LA

her hair brown her body small but solid but the moon will fall back into the ocean and we will lose it and we thought the government would save us it was her her her in my head and i knew it was wrong but i did it any way the lovers risk stability or being too stable because they are two and the world is many and the orgy was the community was our way past the individual and you cant have _____ without sex and you cant have sex without violence but you can have sex with pleasure i rub her shoulder I WAS NOT THERE I DID NOT EXPERIENCE IT THE ONLY THING I FEEL NOW IS ABSENCE our first time just a Rub what are her lips like can i bite her lips can our clits rub each other is there a better word for electric what are the terms and conditions monogamy will get you a stability moment but then it will fall apart and u will have an instability moment and you will fuck other people there are always more people to fuck i was so depressed i took the drugs but was i depressed because or or or two clits and a rug her body rubbing hard on the surface not good enough never good enough the moon will sink into the street and they will tell us that being gay is no longer a death sentence but for some it is still a death sentence *I was tired of pretending for the sake of others that I would survive.* and at mom's church they are saying it is okay to be gay but you cannot act on your desires you cannot cum because that is a sin you cannot be with another woman if you are a lesbian because that is a sin Oh that was BEFORE i met BE THE DISEASE i am at the playground with my temporary child and the Mothers stare at me for I Cannot Be A Mother for I am VISIBLY gay and my t-shirt says dyke anyway i push her in the swing and they still stare and my temporary child says why do you always dress like a boy you cannot have a baby if you marry another woman and i am alone and my mother calls me on the phone telling me she did the right thing she didn't make a mistake and disappearance was me not answering the phone for 2 years or 3 months the people who shame you dont deserve your attention and i am alone and white and gay and it is 2013 and my doctor wont give me the test and my friend who has _____ lives and is living and my other friend says he uses PREP so he doesn't need to use a condom and ten leaves on the street the rain makes them squish and the light was temporary and the darkness was and i couldn't write and nothing was coming out because the whole history of us here is silence and when we are not silent we are seen and what is better and Ann Northrop says they were so angry because they were white gay men and they thought they had privilege and then the government let them die and we found out that we will know who is uninfected the quarantine was the orgy the reaction the _____ the disease the diagnosis the birth the illness the monitoring the self will die there are many ways to die **When did you know you were gay?** i overcame then i succumbed then i fell again then i kissed her and Not A Death Sentence but what is it it was her arms

down my back the first time i was sober i don't know her im touching myself in bed falling the drugs to save u will hurt you IS IT DISAPPEARANCE is Gregg Bordowitz saying what is vulgarity? what is erotica? what sexualities are permissible? what are encouraged? what are denied? what is sex beyond gender? what is sex beyond and considering gender? what is a body politic? what are ways we make our body politicized? what are ways our body is already politicized? is the utopia erotic? what happens when i show pain? is the erotic always tied to imperialism? what is intersectionality to the white space? what is sex with a body? what is not gendered? what are places most bodies can feel pleasure? why do we want Queer any way? was queer always already white? does He think your very existence is erotic? whose erotics are visible? who can hold a mirror to the gaze? who is desired? how can we fuck with desire? how can we turn desire around? how can we fold desire? how does it feel when i touch you there? GET NEAR TO GOD & HE WILL HEAR YOU OR NOT WHO DOES GOD HEAR ACTUALLY im touching myself in bed and god is listening to the sound when i become moist to the sound when my fingers touch the moist and god is not pleased god is not experiencing pleasure and this is utopia the knowing act of the Wrong a _____ a a a im on the floor and and _____ and not knowing unsure a future or is it no future is it the queer already was the disease (but people are dying) but we already were the disease we already are the disease. i am vomiting on the sidewalk and the world knows i'm gay. i'm shitting in the stairwell and the world knows i'm gay. I'm touching her clit on the plane and the world knows i'm gay. i'm screaming on the sidewalk and the world knows i'm gay and the world looks at me or doesn't or looks at me and quickly looks away or looks at me and says no or looks at me and changes the subject or looks and me and imagines someone else and I know I am the disease I will be the disease I will be the disease until we exit. ●

WARMAN

Next to None: On Memory, Disappear- ance, and the Impossibility of Intimacy



SAVANNAH SHANGE

I.

Negligible.
Extremely low risk.
Virtually impossible.
Next to none.

II.

“Initial physical examination revealed nothing abnormal, and was notable only for the absence of track marks, nasal abnormalities, tattoos, or body piercing. The patient had good oral hygiene with healthy gums and teeth and no evidence of bleeding.”¹

III.

“A gentleman took one of the prettiest of them by the chin, and opened her mouth to see the state of her gums and teeth, with no more ceremony than if she had been a horse.”²

IV.

Did we make eye contact one night through the fog of the smoke machine at Libations, years before we would mourn its closure as the longest-running Black lesbian bar on the east coast? We must have been the same age, holding our breath as the crabby stone butch at the door waved along our flimsy fake IDs. Maybe we kicked it at a BEBASHI³ street team training, picking up condoms and lube to hand out at The Gallery between the mixtape stand and the Popeyes? Or was it your butta suede Timbs between my Reebok classics, my thighs spread atop the too-cold dented orange City Paper box at 12th & Locust, muffled giggles & moans til my mama paged me?

¹Kwakwa, HA and MW Ghobrial. 2003. “Female-to-Female Transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus.” *Clinical Infectious Diseases* 36(3): 40-41.

²AB Hart. 1906. *The American Nation: Slavery and Abolition: 1831-1941*. New York: Harper (127).

³Blacks Educating Blacks About Sexual Health Issues (BEBASHI) is a long-running community health and advocacy program in Philadelphia

V.
0.00000451%

VI.

I don't have a gold star, but you do. It took me ten years of bi-by-default to find solace in a community of women, to embrace the political practice of something-like-lesbian: femme as in fuck you. You knew from jump, and loved a wayward queer like me despite the risk—maybe because of it.

I am desperate to find you, to envelop you in care, hold your healing as my own. To fuck you with abandon, cultivate an intimate fearlessness in the face of the death that has haunted us for twenty generations. Lay on my sagging bosom and sleep long—drool on me and wake up to tofu scramble and good head.

Come.

Be kin to me.

VII.

In her analysis of the 2005 documentary *The Aggressives*, film scholar Kara Keeling reflects on the gender defiant character M___ who goes AWOL from the military and leaves home during the course of production, abandoning the film's narrative.

*"Given that M___'s disappearance from the film's mise-en-scène is a form of resistance and survival, what are the ethical implications of looking for hir and to what extent are they imbricated in a thinking through of black queer temporality and political possibility?"*⁴

Looking for M___ risks the rehearsal of fatal antiblack surveillance, because to find M___ *[track them like a runaway]* is to premeditate their exposure to state violence. This surveillance extends beyond the military through the medical industrial complex, prisons and policing, and the punitive system of social welfare. Seeking to know, we become cops-by-proxy, infecting our own communities with the virus of transparency.

VIII.

"Fuck tha police."⁵

IX.

"The sexual practices engaged in by our patient—specifically, using sex toys vigorously enough to cause exchange of blood-tinged body fluids—pose a reasonable theoretical risk of HIV transmission. As this case illustrates, failure to identify lesbian sex as a potential risk for HIV transmission may result in untoward consequences."⁶

X.

Is it you Camilla, AKA Camil?
Is it you Ayana?
Is it you Yazzy?
Is it you LaNette?
Is it you Chrissy?
Is it you L.?

XI.

Of the 1,107,700 or so people living and dying with HIV in the US, there are three, four, or five "women" contracted the virus by having sex with another "woman."⁷ The first confirmed case of seroconversion via lesbian sex was in 2003, when a 20-year-old Black woman was diagnosed at Mercy Hospital in West Philadelphia. What the epidemiological case report misses is that the "untoward consequences" for Black queer women are produced not at the moment of infection, but at the disembarkation of the enslavement. This is what Christina Sharpe calls "the lie at the center of everything" that would have us blame ourselves for risking the intimacy of heart and flesh, rather than indict a national imaginary held whole by the force of antiblackness.⁸ In this frame, AIDS is not the emergency: the American project is.

⁵ As quoted in NWA (1994), in a graffiti tag on a bench at the 62nd Street El stop nine blocks from Mercy Hospital. See also everyone else, everywhere else, who has stared down the barrel of a publicly funded gun.

⁶ Kwakwa & Ghobrian, 2013

⁷ The violence of the medical industrial complex means that anyone assigned female at birth is swept into the category of "woman," and our sisters who were not are banished to another column, another vector, another footnote in the epidemiological study.

⁸ Sharpe, Christina. 2014. "The Lie at the Center of Everything." *Black Studies Papers* 1(1):189-214.

⁹ For more on the demographics of HIV/AIDS in Philly, see Christopher Norris, "People Aren't Taking this Miracle AIDS Drug, and That's a Big Problem for Philly," *Philadelphia Magazine* (2016).

¹⁰ This is the trademark chant of black queer feminist organization BYPIO, sung over and over in public actions protesting murderous policing, housing precarity, and electoral disenfranchisement.

Our very existence is an untoward consequence: the glitch in the Matrix of settler slaver heteropatriarchy. Black queer flesh refuses the ruse of reproductive futurity, instead marshaling the erotic in the service of an interminable now, marked off between this orgasm and the next. The Time of AIDS is a temporality only available to those for whom death was not always already premature; this is not to dispute that there are more Black women living with HIV in Philadelphia than white or Latino gay men.⁹ It's just to say that we *been* living and loving through death, and the same resources of fugitive survival and thrival that produce our existence in the face of obliteration will keep organizing towards not only a time, but a *place* for Black life. We can stop searching for M____, for the 1 of 3, for the 1 of 1,107,700 when we refuse the lie that visibility will protect us. This refusal is antecedent to marronage.

XII.

"We ready, we coming!
We ready, we coming!
We ready, we coming!"¹⁰

GABRIEL OJEDA-SAGUE

is a Miami-→Philly, Latino, gay Leo. His first collection, *Oil and Candle* (March 2016, Timeless, Infinite Light), is a set of writings on Santería, war, and the precarity of Latino-American lives. He is also the author of four chapbooks, most recently *Where Everything is in Halves* (Be About It, 2015), poems against death through The Legend of Zelda, and 'Yo' *Quiere Decir Sunburn* (2016), poems of anxious bilingualism. His second full-length book *Jazzercise is a Language* is forthcoming from The Operating System in 2018.

SAVANNAH SHANGE

is a Black queer femme scholar who works at the intersections of race, place, sexuality, and the state. She is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz and holds a joint PhD in Africana Studies and Education from the University of Pennsylvania. Her writing has been featured in *Women and Performance*, *The Feminist Wire* & *Anthropology News*. Her research interests include Black femme gender, queer of color critique, and the afterlife of slavery.

LA WARMAN

is a poet and performer. She is the founder of GLASS PRESS, a publisher of art and poetry on flash drives. Warman has had work in shows at MOCA Cleveland, Time-Based Art Festival, General Public Collective, Flying Object, and Open Engagement. She has chapbooks from Inpatient Press and After Hours Ltd. Warman is also the author of *Whore Foods*, a serialized erotic novella.

HEATHER HOLMES

is a Philadelphia-based writer and editor. Her ongoing Zodiac Novel series—books about bodies and what we do with them—are published by the Philadelphia publishing realm SWAG PURGATORY. She is the Digital Editor & Communications Associate at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania.

JARED RUSH JACKSON

is an artist and graphic designer based in Philadelphia. His work revolves around abstraction informed by contemporary visual culture, specifically technology and the internet. Primarily interested in painting and the moving image, his work is placed around a critique and resistance of binary thinking and social constructs—engaging with deeper dialogue around black identity and subjectivity.

*Designed by Jared Rush Jackson

ICA is always Free. For All.

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ACTIVISM IS OFTEN RETROSPECTIVE,
THERE IS ALSO A NEED FOR
SCHOLARSHIP THAT ADDRESSES
THE (CON)TEMPORALITY OF AIDS
AND ONGOING AIDS ACTIVISM.”

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