NOBODY PROMISED YOU TOMORROW

ART 50 YEARS AFTER STONEWALL

FRESNO STATE / BROOKLYN COLLABORATION

EDITOR : CINDY URRUTIA

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Forward

Fifty Years Later–The Fresno Feminist Art Program and Nobody Promised You Tomorrow.

It is a special honor for Fresno State's Center for Creativity and the Arts (CCA) to host *Nobody Promised You Tomorrow*, an exhibition of artwork by LGBTQ+ artists born since the historic Stonewall uprising in New York City helped galvanize the gay rights movement. In the early hours of June 28, 1969, patrons and employees of the Stonewall Inn—among them several trans people of color—fought back against police who violently forced them outside the club—part of a continuous program of harassment and police brutality against LGBTQ+ individuals—sparking six days of protests and clashes with police. By asserting the rights of LGBTQ+ people simply to occupy space, socialize in safety, and explore their full potential as human beings, the Stonewall protestors acted at significant risk to themselves against institutionalized injustice. Fifty years later, *Nobody Promised You Tomorrow* (NPYT) was organized by Margo Cohen Ristorucci, Lindsay C. Harris, Carmen Hermo, Allie Rickard, and Lauren Argentina Zelaya of the Brooklyn Museum to help ensure that Stonewall is not forgotten, to continue the still unfinished work of forging real equity and inclusion in our society for LGBTQ+ people, and to share the powerful, combative, tender, and thought-provoking artworks created by the artists featured in this exhibition.

The year after the Stonewall protests erupted in New York City, Fresno State's Art Department was the site of a different—but not unrelated— act of revolt against institutionalized prejudice. Visiting instructor Judy Chicago and fifteen female art students initiated an experimental class in which artmaking could be used as a vehicle for exploring—and transforming —their experiences as women in a patriarchal culture. The group determined to meet off-campus to be free from male interference. Initially referred to as the "women's class," the experiment soon developed into a full-time program (now known as the Fresno feminist art program or FAP), where participants spent much of their time together—making art—but also cooking and eating, "rapping," conducting and sharing research, teaching each other new skills, and forging long-lasting bonds. The Fresno feminist art program afforded a place of relative safety where participants could escape the pervasive social policing of sex and gender norms and ask themselves and each other what kind of art they wanted to make, how they wanted to live, and who they wanted to be. In this context, artmaking functioned as a vehicle for challenging society's limiting representations of women and gender. Participants generated artwork, first and foremost, for themselves and for one another.[1]

From my vantage point in 2021, I am struck by the way the goals and strategies of the Fresno feminist class reverberate with those of the artists and curators who created *Nobody Promised You Tomorrow*. Without attempting to situate the Fresno FAP as a direct forebear of NPYT, I wish to explore the family resemblance between the two. Both projects used art as a vehicle for community-building among people who had been disparaged, disempowered, and censored by the dominant culture. Both projects challenged the sex and gender norms imposed by mainstream patriarchal society. Both aimed to create a space where participants could safely share their struggles and aspirations and, thus, pursue their full potential as human beings.[2] *Nobody Promised You Tomorrow* is organized around four overlapping themes—revolt, commemoration, care, and desire—that were also fundamental to the Fresno FAP. Earlier analyses of Fresno State's feminist art program (by myself and others) have approached the project through a related framework of overlapping themes—including collaboration, autobiography, body-based imagery, and the use of nominally "feminine" craft media. In this brief essay, with due thanks to the organizers of NPYT for their insights, I recast the FAP in terms of revolt, commemoration, care and desire.

Revolt

The FAP collective's first act of revolt was to lay claim to a physical space where women could occupy the center. Initially, participants took turns meeting in one another's apartments.[3] Soon, however, they agreed to pool their resources to rent a larger space off campus, and located a former barracks on Maple Avenue in a low-rent South Fresno neighborhood that became their headquarters for the year. Chicago was intent on teaching her female students conventionally "masculine" skills such as construction and, once they took possession of their new space, the group's first project was to refurbish it to serve their needs—with studio space and a forty-foot sheetrock wall for making and displaying artwork, a communal library, a "rap room" for group discussions, a dark room, costume room, bathroom, and kitchen. Participants took turns preparing group dinners every Wednesday night and, over time, many participants ended up spending most of their time at the Maple Avenue studio.

Their second act of revolt was to create a conceptual space that put themselves and other women at the center. The framework for artmaking in the Fresno FAP emerged more or less organically from a combination of rap/consciousness-raising discussions that embodied the slogan "the personal is political," and self-directed research into artwork, literature, and other historical sources of information by and about women of the past, as well as contemporary feminist theory and literature. Chicago identified as the leader and prime authority figure in the group, but she also pushed the students to organize their own research groups and take responsibility for their own creative growth. Students rotated responsibility for identifying reading material and leading group discussions, and often worked together on artworks in pairs or larger teams. This is not to say the group always functioned in complete harmony. Several participants experienced conflict with Chicago, especially when she took on the role of informal (untrained) group therapy leader, insisting that students needed to "change their personality structure" (to become more assertive) if they wanted to succeed as artists. Despite the emphasis on collaboration in the program, Chicago often came across as confrontational and authoritarian. Personally, I credit Chicago with the vision and ambition that made the feminist program possible, but I also credit the collaborative synergy of the participants for making it so powerful.

Commemoration

In the Fresno feminist art program, the work of commemoration was inseparable from the project of centering women's experiences as the conceptual basis for artwork. In 1970, documentation of women's lives and their contributions to culture was strikingly absent from the university curriculum. Art history textbooks, including books on modern art, rarely if ever mentioned any women artists. Courses in history, literature, science, and other disciplines generally omitted information by and/or about women. The first programs in Women's Studies were just beginning to be established at a handful of universities, including Fresno State, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. To combat the erasure of women's lives from the cultural record, participants sought out information on women artists of the past and present, read and discussed novels by female authors, and dug into the emerging body of Second Wave feminist theory.[4] This research sparked artworks exploring the performance of femininity in roles including The Bride, The Kewpie Doll (named for the popular baby doll but closer in appearance to icons of infantilized yet also sexualized femininity

such as the cartoon character Betty Boop and actress Marilyn Monroe), The Victorian Lady, and The Victorian Whore. Nancy Youdelman, who studied costume design before joining the FAP, remembers being motivated, as well, by finding an old family album with photographs of her mother and a friend as very young women—with the caption "one day it rained so Olga and I played dress up."[5] The acts of dressing, adornment, posturing, and other forms of self-(re)presentation became the basis for artworks interrogating gender identity as a kind of performance that is always scripted, more or less, by social norms—but can also be rewritten—though not without consequences for the individual and the community.

Artworks calling out sexual violence against women were among the most powerful acts of commemoration staged by members of the feminist art program. As participants shared their own all-too-common experiences of body shaming, abuse, rape, and other forms of sexual violence, several were moved to make artworks that gave visible form to their feelings of violation, grief, and outrage. Faith Wilding created an installation piece, *Sacrifice*, with her own effigy dressed in white and laid out on a bier, the belly and pelvic region heaped with animal entrails as a symbol of physical and emotional evisceration. Several class members collaborated on a performance piece called *Milking*, in which one performer "milked" another, squeezing blood into a bucket, then threw the blood over the giver of milk/blood. Suzanne Lacy, amplifying these early protest pieces, went on to organize increasingly public interventions against rape culture with collaborative performance pieces including *Ablutions*, *Five Weeks in May*, and *In Mourning and in Rage*.[6]

Care

Care was a central and complex component of the Fresno feminist art program. The principle reason for creating an all-female space for making art was Chicago's and her students' recognition that they needed support—support they weren't getting from the male-dominated art department or from patriarchal society more generally. Collaboration—as an act of mutual care among women—was at the core of the program. Participants pooled their financial resources, their time, and their labor to rent a shared space and transform it into a welcoming venue where they could work and socialize together. They taught one another skills ranging from construction to costume design. They also worked together on many of the artworks they created in the program.

One of the most unique aspects of the Fresno feminist class was the use of group discussions loosely based on the principle of feminist consciousness-raising—partly as a means of generating topics for artwork—but also as a way of understanding and addressing shared experiences of living as women in a society that defined women as inferior and subordinate to men. Prior to joining the feminist class as a graduate student assistant to Chicago, Faith Wilding had organized a women's consciousness-raising group at Fresno State in Fall 1969. Wilding's experience leading a formal C-R group helped lay the groundwork for group conversations in the Maple Avenue studio "rap room," on topics including work, money, ambition, sexuality, parents, power, clothing, body image, and violence. Memories of these group discussions vary from dread and discomfort to finding deep solace and support in the realization that seemingly unique and even unspeakable experiences were shared by others. Making artworks that addressed the experiences and feelings that came up in rap sessions—including terrible experiences of sexual violence and trauma but also people's secret dreams and ambitions—could be a profound act of care.

The range of processes and media used to create artworks was wide open. In this sense the Fresno program was conceptually driven, not medium-specific. Several participants turned to sewing, weaving, and other processes typically deemed feminine craft media. Although the use of so-called "female" media or imagery by women and queer artists has been a controversial practice—which some feminist critics have argued is counter-productive and "essentialist" —meaning that it plays into cultural stereotypes that posit a supposedly essential or innate femininity—it also has special significance in relation to the concept of care. Historically, women have been expected to weave,

sew, quilt, and decorate—including decorating themselves—as part of the largely unrecognized work of caring for others—what artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles has defined as maintenance work. If women have shown pride in their contributions to care they might be criticized for narcissism yet, if they didn't do the work well, they might be beaten. In the Fresno FAP, by contrast, participants used what I will call the "media of care" to show positive regard for one another, and to care for each other and themselves. In the next section I will discuss some of these works in more detail.

Desire

Desire lies at the heart of human experience. At the individual level, every human endeavor is driven by some form of desire—be it for pleasure, love, status, meaning, knowledge, or basic survival. At the cultural level, however, the desires of certain groups are often imposed as defining the values of the whole. If the dominant group deems some people's desires unimportant—or unacceptable—it becomes difficult to even know what those desires might be. By claiming the right to foreground their own desires, the artists in the Fresno feminist art program staged a revolt against the patriarchal status quo. By focusing care on themselves and each other, they found strength to challenge the patriarchal assumption that a woman's value is defined by meeting men's desires.

Sexual desire—and the pursuit of pleasure more broadly—emerged as one of the most important subjects for art-making in the Fresno feminist program. Participants made artworks representing vulvas, wombs, and menstruation as a means of asserting ownership of their own bodies and sexual selves. Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro subsequently published a controversial essay, "Female Imagery," which posited that historical women artists including Emily Carr, Georgia O'Keeffe, Barbara Hepworth and others had been driven, intuitively, to make artwork organized around a "central core" as a way of exploring their sexual identity as women and artists.[7] The students in the Fresno feminist program referred to this type of imagery more bluntly as "cunt art," defiantly recuperating a term meant as an insult, and claiming it as a point of pride (similar to the slogan "black is beautiful," or the adoption of the term "queer" as an assertion of pride). Unsurprisingly, cunt art was one of the most contentious developments in the Fresno feminist program—and the 1970s feminist art movement more broadly—with the most vehement criticism sometimes coming from other feminists who deemed this imagery essentialist, arguing that it reinforces the idea that "anatomy is destiny" or reduces women to sex objects. The context in which the work was created and shared is critical, however, to understanding how it functioned for the artists themselves. In Wilding's words,

> ***Making 'cunt art' was exciting, subversive, and fun, because 'cunt' signified to us an awakened consciousness about our bodies and our sexual selves. Often raw, crude, and obvious, the cunt images were new: they became ubiquitous in women's art of the 70s, and they served as precursors for a new vocabulary for representing female sexuality and the body in art.***[8]

Two examples of artworks evoking women's embodied experience in this way are Wilding's *Crocheted Environment* and Karen LeCocq's *Feather Cunt*. Before arriving in Fresno, Wilding had pursued graduate studies in fiber art, and she continued to experiment with fiber during and after the Fresno feminist art program. Her *Crocheted Environment* is a large, airy, dome-shaped fiber structure with numerous tube-shaped and circular openings through which viewers can enter and exit. Nicknamed the "Womb Room," *Crocheted Environment* offers the embodied experience of a cozy shelter, as well as transforming ordinary space into something fantastical and dreamlike. In contrast to *Crocheted Environment*'s play with negative space, LeCoq's *Feather Cunt* evokes female sexual anatomy in terms of positive mass. A deep red, plush velvet pillow with satin clitoris, labial folds, and pink feather pubic hair, *Feather Cunt* is a celebration of sensory pleasures. Both of these artworks combine sexual symbolism with an aesthetic of care.

Conclusion

When CCA director Cindy Urrutia proposed that I contribute an essay on the Fresno feminist art program to this exhibition catalog, I initially hesitated. Although lesbians and queer individuals played important leadership roles in programs that evolved from the Fresno FAP, especially the Feminist Studio Workshop and the Los Angeles Woman's Building, the founding student participants in the Fresno FAP, to my knowledge, all identified as heterosexual cis-gender women. Most of them were white, came from working class backgrounds, and were the first in their families to attend college. With the exception of Faith Wilding, who was raised in a German pacifist community in Paraguay, they grew up in California's Central Valley.

The artists featured in *Nobody Promised You Tomorrow* engage with the complexity of sex and gender in ways that go beyond the scope of the Fresno feminist art program. Fifty years after Stonewall and the Fresno FAP, thanks to continuing social and cultural activism and advances in scientific research, we should expect a wide range of variation in the field of human gender and sexuality.[9] We have also become increasingly aware of the intersection of sex and gender with other factors that shape our sense of identity, both as we experience ourselves from within and as we are defined and categorized—sometimes against our will—by others. It makes more sense to think in terms of multiple identifications than any singular identity. Race, ethnicity, national origin, economic status, disability, perceived beauty or homeliness, and age are just some of the factors that are inseparably intertwined with sex and gender identifications. Sadly, however, general social acceptance of gender diversity still feels like a long time coming. According to the Human Rights Campaign, the year 2020 saw the highest number ever of murders of transgender and gender non-conforming people in the United States since the organization began tracking anti-transgender violence.[10] Violence and discrimination of all kinds against LGBTQ+ people remains a huge problem. One of the most poignant markers of gender discrimination in our society is that LGBTQ+ people are much more like to die by murder and suicide than the general population. This is heartbreaking and simply unacceptable.

As I pondered the overlapping themes of revolution, commemoration, care, and desire that comprise the conceptual framework of *Nobody Promised You Tomorrow*, however, I was struck by the way these themes resonate with the goals and strategies of the Fresno feminist art program. Individuals whose identities have historically been represented as "other" need to see and hear from one another in order to know that they are NOT other. Revolution can be an act of caring for one's community, commemorating losses and triumphs, and honoring our deepest human desires. Artworks created within this framework lay the groundwork for sharing the full spectrum of human pain, joy, and beauty with the rest of the world.

NOTES

[1]For images of artwork and more detailed accounts of the Fresno feminist art program see Laura Meyer, ed., A Studio of Their Own: The Legacy of the Fresno Feminist Experiment, with essays by Laura Meyer and Faith Wilding (Fresno, CA: The Press at the California State University, Fresno, 2009). Also see Laura Meyer with Faith Wilding, "Collaboration and Conflict in the Fresno Feminist Art Program: An Experiment in Feminist Pedagogy, in Jill Fields, ed., Entering the Picture: Judy Chicago, The Fresno Feminist Art Program, and the Collective Visions of Women Artists (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[2] The Stonewall Inn, likewise, provided a space for community-building, mutual support, and mutual recognition amongst people whom mainstream society sought to marginalize and censor.

[3] The fourteen original students were Dori Atlantis, Susan Boud, Gail Escola, Vanalyne Green, Suzanne Lacy, Cay Lang, Jan Lester, Chris Rush, Judy Schaefer, Henrietta Sparkman, Faith Wilding, Shawnee Wollenman, Nancy Youdelman, and Cheryl Zurilgen. Karen LeCocq joined the program in Spring 1971.

[4] Faith Wilding notes that she still owns her original copy of Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt, eds., Notes From the Second Year: Women's Liberation, Major Writings of the Radical Feminists (New York: Radical Feminism, 1970), with chapters including Pat Mainardi's "The Politics of Housework," Anne Koedt, "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," Kathy Sarahchild, "Consciousness Raising," and Carol Hamisch, "The Personal Is Political." Faith Wilding, "Gestations in a Studio of Our Own: The Feminist Art Program in Fresno, California, 1970-71," in Meyer, ed., A Studio of Their Own, 101, footnote 8.

[5] Nancy Youdelman, personal communication, February 2021.

[6] See Nancy Princenthal, Unspeakable Acts: Women, Art, and Sexual Violence in the 1970s (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2019).

[7] Miriam Schapiro and Judy Chicago, "Female Imagery," Womanspace Journal, no. 3 (Summer 1973): 11-14.

[8] Faith Wilding, "The Feminist Art Programs at Fresno and CalArts, 1970-75," in Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds., The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 35.

[9]For a good review of recent developments in the science of gender, see Robin Marantz Henig, "Rethinking Gender," National Geographic vol. 231, no. 1 (January 2017: 49-69.)

[10] Serena Sonoma, "Worst Year on Record for Transphobic Violence," them., January 7, 2021, https://www.them.us/story/44-trans-people-killed-2020-worst-year-for-transphobic-violence.

THIS IS BETWEEN JANUARY BY BRANFMAN VERISSIMO | PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST © BRANFMAN VERISSIMO

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Detail *of Instructions for a Freedom*
By Amaryllis DeJesus Moleski

Detail *of Reflections*
By Kiyan Williams

Chapter 9

Conclusion

Haunting the Future: Amaryllis DeJesus Moleski and Kiyan Williams in Conversation

Tue, 4/13 10:12PM

AM 04:43
Whew! This has been a wild ass year. We have collectively been experiencing the global covid pandemic, a continuation and amplification of anti-Blackness, racialized violence, and the state sanctioned killing of Black people by police, as well as a world wide climate crisis. In the time of these global arcs we have also witnessed the long term effects of white supremacy and xenophobia in the persisting violence against trans people of color, the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women, and the rising incarcerations of immigrant children and families at the border, to name only a few. If there was ever a year for the planet to have everyone on earth take a damn seat 2020 was it. Many have been experiencing all of this in the context of physical isolation due to the requirements of covid quarantine protocols. As an artist, I am used to being alone for long periods of time and in some ways my day to day hasn't changed much. If anything this year has made me question my role as an artist and what I have to contribute. I question this a lot, maybe more than is healthy lol. But this year was a reckoning in that regard.

As an artist working primarily in fantasy, mythologies, and surrealism, I had to really consider the value of those methodologies in a moment when the present requires our full attention. What is the purpose of building other worlds when there is so much work to be done in this one? Fantasy has gotten the reputation as a genre of escapism. For me, fantasy isn't a means to escape this world, it is the means to be able to stay. It is an exercise in radical imagination not despite the present, but because of it. It is a rebellion against what is, in service of what could be. Our [QTBIPOC] communities do this exercise without thinking, (the way we brush our teeth or eat an apple) because we have had to in order to survive. So anyways, a little bit of winding path, but how are you?

KW 08:02
I resonate so deeply with a lot of what you just said, especially questioning my role as an artist during ongoing loss and struggle. I was in Richmond, Virginia when the COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent quarantine, drastically transformed our lives. In the summer of 2020 people across the country were protesting police violence, of which Richmond was a focal point and epicenter. In the summer following the murder of George Floyd protesters took to the streets in Richmond and across the country. The confederate monuments in Richmond became sites of confrontation and resistance to enduring legacies of white nationalist violence. Many of the protestors inscribed and graffitted text on colonial monuments that affirm the lives of Black, brown, queer, trans, disabled, and immigrant folks. Many protestors and insurrectionist were Black and brown queer folks. The uprisings against state terrorism from the summer of 2020 felt a apart of the legacy of Stonewall.

As an artist questioning the role of art making during moments of social and political struggle

I was reminded that objects hold meaning. The statues were an anchor around which various communities struggled to reflect and imagine political and social realities. I was reminded that as artists we get to participate in creating new meaning, of imagining otherwise futures. We mine and make tangible the voices and presences that exist beyond, below, or between hegemony. That's at the core of my practice, including my work from Nobody Promised You Tomorrow: how can I create art and objects that render history as malleable, fluid, and non-linear? Dominant historical narratives that uphold white supremacy erase and obscure the lives and interiorities of oppressed people. How can I/we create a counter relationship to the past that allows for buried and obscured voices to emerge, even if only in fragments. I don't think I necessarily arrived at an answer.

AM 19:11
Mmmmm yes to those questions. I'm really interested in the terms you are working between: something as ungraspable as the historical past and something as indisputable as the physical soil and earth in the sites that you're working in. In the video Notes on Digging, you talk about the past not as a fixed narrative, but a fluid state that haunts our present moment. That really spoke to me in a lot of different ways. I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit more about that, and your process of making the immaterial material, and how you are working through that now?

KW 20:19
My video installation Reflections, which was included in Nobody Promised You Tomorrow, was a way for me to consider how history haunts, or reflects, in the present. The piece centers on an archival video of Jesse Harris, a black gender expansive person who was being interviewed in 1989 by the filmmaker Marlon Riggs. In live performances the video of Jessie is projected onto my body. In the video installation for Nobody Promised You Tomorrow the video is projected onto suspended mirrors and a wall. The video and the light reflects and refracts off of the mirrors back into the room, and onto the viewer. Jesse's voice echoes from above, at times indecipherable yet every present. I think history works like that. Reflecting the video off of mirrors was my visual strategy to articulate that history, and memory, are not contained within a neat frame, but they spill and slip and echo and reflect into the present.

How do you think about haunting in your practice?

AM 23:04
Haunting is a way for me to think through the experience of in-betweenness: of being neither here nor there. In that same vein, exorcism becomes a way to exhume fugitive histories and repressed futures buried within the heavy immaterial of our DNA. Spiritual concepts attract me for these reasons- they attempt to describe what we don't yet have language for, and I really appreciate that. Haunting comes up both in the symbol languages I use in the drawings, as well as the spectral experiments of light refractions in the installation work. My longing to articulate that which resists categorization brought me to the rainbow as a symbol for in-betweenness. It is used to symbolize a bridge between the spirit and the body, between heaven and earth, between this material realm and The Mystery. It feels apt for these reasons that our communities have inherited the rainbow as a symbol- queer people and people of color are generally accustomed to existing at the crossroads between life and death. Being Puerto Rican, I am also aware of the very problematic racialized mythology of the rainbow- mysegination as a utopic ideal or the melting pot of a rainbow people. In some traditions the rainbow is a bad omen, or a good omen, or a test towards enlightenment. In my work, the rainbow is a ghost that the body is haunted by. I love its messiness and flamboyance and breadth.

KW 27:30
totally I love that. I'm curious, I'm looking at instructions for freedom. Yeah. And just as we're talking about symbols and haunting, I'm curious like, what the symbol of bone how that fixes it within your sort of mythology.

AM 27:49
The two works included in Nobody Promised You Tomorrow Instructions for a Freedom and Instructions for a Hard Time are a part of an ongoing project of large scale works on paper attempting to achor queer femme figuration as a baseline symbol set for being human. I'm inspired by ancient codices, egyptian drawing concepts, cartoons, comics, alchemical diagrams for transformation, and all the wild surreal ass ways humans attempt to describe what the hell we all are doing here. Is it possible through repetition to create a living record of these existential questions for death and the universe that is tuned into a femme frequency? What would our livelihoods be like if we had inherited a queer, femme, Black, brown, earth bound, flamboyant Genisis? The bones are a recurring image in this symbol set- a way to reference a physical body, or the remnants of many.

You know, talking about these threads of haunting and history with you resonates with the experience of commemorating Stonewall in Nobody Promised You Tomorrow. The 50th anniversary of Stonewall felt like a seance; a communal invocation of Marsha P Johnson and Silvia Rivera specifically. It felt like poetic justice to have this collective celebration of a historical revolt against police brutality so fresh in all of our minds just before the present day BLM uprisings that began this summer. Like you were saying earlier, these legacies were palpable. What was it like for you to recall these spirits?

KW
To revisit the beginning of our conversation about art and knowledge production, the art in the exhibition in many ways became anchors that hold the strategies, brilliance, and lived experiences of revolutionary transcestors. In the heritage section there were spaces in the gallery between videos in which multiple voices in different works spoke over, across, and with each other, creating this sense of polyvocality or a kind of chorus of voices from the past. For me that made the exhibition feel like a portal, a bridge, and space/time rupture. The exhibition felt like a way to mourn and grieve loss and also to collectively bear witness to the legacies of Sylvia and Marsha and Miss Major Griffin and Stormé DeLarverie and freedom fighters who provided political pathways and blueprints that have made our lives more possible. It reminded us that Stonewall was a revolt against police brutality and the carceral state. It reminded us how central and essential Black and brown and queer and trans folks are and have been in building abolitionist futures, from Stonewall to Black Lives Matter. In that way, perhaps we can think about history as both a haunting and an inheritance. State violence continues to haunt the present, and the practice of revolt and care are our inheritance to fugitive futures.

Images

Instructions for a Freedom
2015
Amaryllis DeJesus Moleski
Gouache, tea, watercolor, acrylic, and marker on paper.
54 × 102 in.
(137.2 × 259.1 cm)
Photo Courtesy of the artist.

I think we're alone now (Host)
2008-2016
Constantina Zavitsanos
Full mattress topper, wood, eight years sleep with many
67 × 46 1/2 × 8 1/2 in. (170.2 × 118.1 × 21.6 cm)
Photo Courtesy of the artist.

Instructions for a Hard Time
2016
Amaryllis DeJesus Moleski
Gouache, tea, marker, acrylic on paper
45 1/2 × 30 3/8 in. (115.6 × 77.2 cm)
Collection Courtesy of Alexandria Smith.