

MAY 1, 2020



EVER-PRESENT
PRESENCE



STEPHANIE CONCEPCION RAMIREZ

D'ANGELO LOVELL WILLIAMS

HANNAH BATES

FLIP



Stephanie Concepcion Ramirez, D'Angelo Lovell Williams, and Hannah Bates explore present realities, recent histories, and social constructs that have been misrepresented in mass media through acts of whitewashing by political and societal powers. Through seemingly gentle intimate moments made at ACRE residency or inspired by their time there, the three artists use their own bodies and personal histories to disrupt existing mainstream narratives and speak to the lasting impact of political injustice, deliberate ignorance, and/or historical trauma. Their tender acts of care through touch, ingestion, and eye contact embody moments of vulnerability and power as they question historical "truths" and their continued influence on the present. Spotlighting the power dynamics that continue to dictate the ways moments are remembered and communicated as history, the publication supports artists, who through their own self-understanding and placemaking practices, make work that pushes for change in contemporary time through methods of documentation as proof of current realities.

Organized by Rachel McDermott

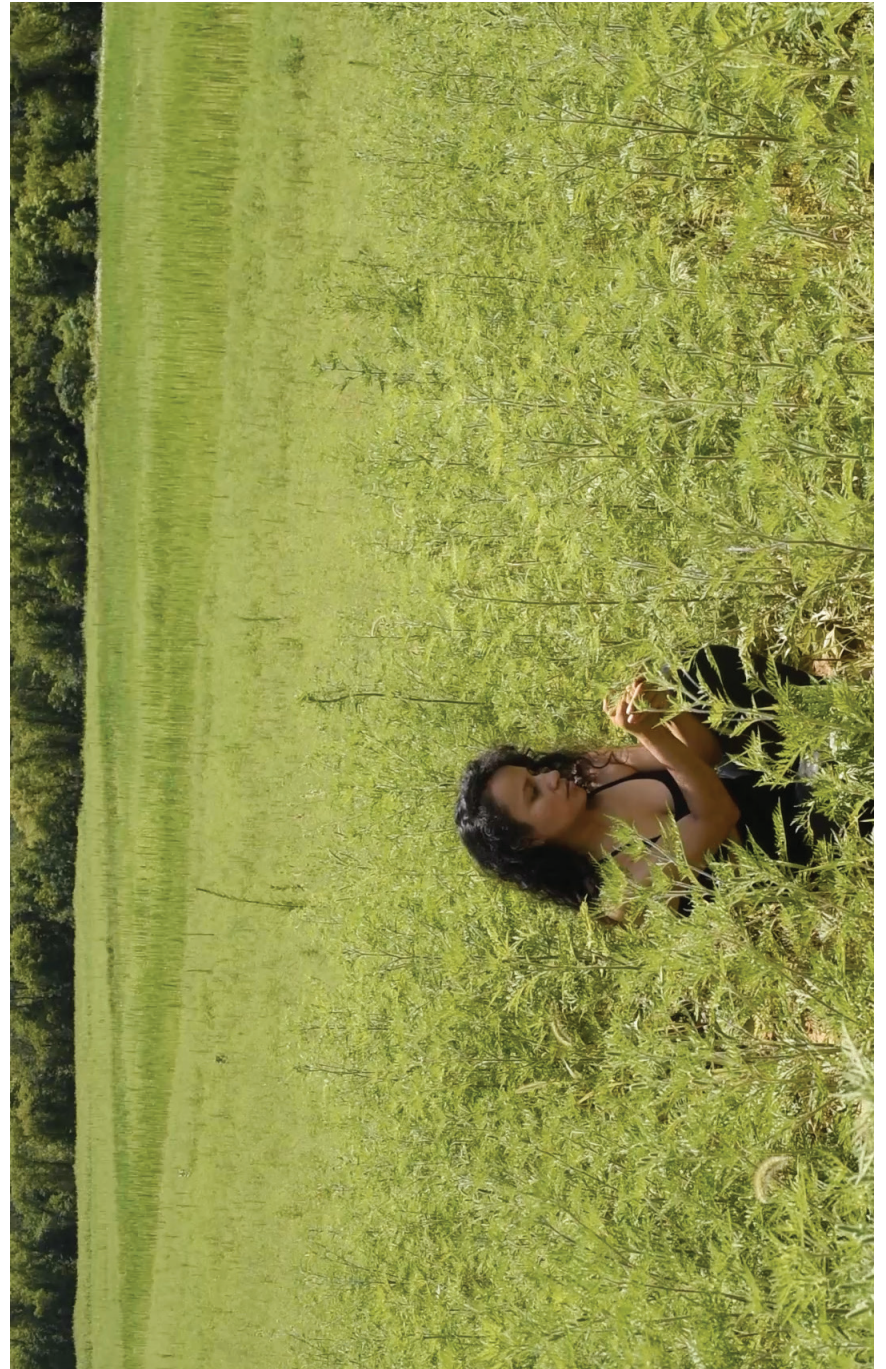


FLIP & OPEN

Washing her hands in the dirt of green pasture, Stephanie Concepcion Ramirez questions her own transnational identity as a Salvadoran-American living in the United States. Disrupting mainstream narratives seen in popular media and culture, her work questions the role of complicity in both personal and societal realms. The United State's violent history of interventionism during the Salvadoran Civil War led her mother to flee to the US and, subsequently, whitewashed civil war and Central American immigration histories. In "Por Amor," her wash, an act of cleansing and purification, with dirt, mimics the US government's decision to politically, economically, and militarily support the right-winged El Salvador government while directing complicit acts of violence to terrorize civilians that continues as a violent cycle today. The US action of "purifying" a country from fear of a communist revolution left 75,000 dead and forced thousands to flee to the US where they were denied refugee status. In "Por Amor," her mother's voice tells stories passed on through oral histories about her family and their testimonies of the civil war, and through layering the audio, the narratives are jumbled mirroring a history that was not well documented by both governments. By meeting the viewers' gaze with direct eye contact, Concepcion Ramirez acknowledges their presence in hopes to bring awareness of the responsibility of our role as US citizens and to invite self-reflection on what we allow and accept in the name of survival. With this engagement, Ramirez "Por Amor" combines connects both the history of the testimonies with the present moment to end the "washing", bringing the "washing" to an end.

Open camera on your phone and hover over the QR code.

Follow to watch Stephanie Concepcion Ramirez "Por Amor" and an opportunity to donate to Cosecha, an immigrant-led movement redistributing donations to undocumented and immigrant families not receiving stimulus checks or unemployment during the pandemic.



Stephanie Concepcion Ramirez, "Por Amor," 2019, Video (still), 1:34 min. Courtesy the artist.

Positioning their own body in their photographs, D'Angelo Lovell Williams challenges historical imagery, associations, and conversations surrounding race, sexuality, gender, intimacy, and the Black body. Inviting Black queer residents at ACRE to sit for their images, the artists' nude bodies in moments of soft and sensual touch within a lush landscape are met with Williams's direct stare that meets and returns the viewer's gaze. Through intergenerational dialogue and personal relationship building, their performative images structure opportunities for conversation, vulnerability, and community among the sitters themselves and those who view them. Williams makes images for Black and queer people-historically misrepresented in popular media and art-changing the way history will be remembered.



D'Angelo Lovell Williams, "3-Way," 2019, Pigment print.
Courtesy the artist and Higher Pictures.



D'Angelo Lovell Williams, "Different Coasts (Lung Pleasure)," 2019, Pigment print.
Courtesy the artist and Higher Pictures.



D'Angelo Lovell Williams, "Desire's Desire," 2019, Pigment print.
Courtesy the artist and Higher Pictures.



D'Angelo Lovell Williams, "Welcome to the Club," 2019, Pigment print.
Courtesy the artist and Higher Pictures.

Hannah Bates "Fruiting Body" explores the body's relationship to the ecological environment and tensions between the body and the ecological environment. Foraged living plants, cast organic matter, cast body parts, and hand-blown glass vessels are arranged as fragmented pieces of organic and inorganic material that when combined transform into healing spirits. The ambiguity of the abstracted forms call for an intertwined social, ecological, and built environment, but recognizes the reality of the societal constructs that influence how the body moves through natural landscapes and engages with organic material. In "Fruiting Body," entanglements of the body and ecology are present with visitors' decision to ingest Bates tinctures and healing remedies. The ecological materials transform upon collaboration with one another with assistance from the inorganic materials and then transform again once ingested. "Fruiting Body" breaks boundaries between humans and their surroundings as the tinctures travel with the visitor beyond their time in the exhibition and eventually become part of the body itself.

FRUITING



BODY

Ferment



Lemon Ginger Mint Kombucha

Bring a pot of water to boil

Add 1 cup of sugar

Add 6 tea bags (three green, three black)

Steep for five minutes

Let cool to room temperature

*Pour into 1 gallon glass container with SCOBY
and 12 oz of starter tea*

Ferment for eight days

*Add ¼ cup lemonade, 1 tbsp fresh ginger and
1 tsp fresh mint into 16 oz glass bottles*

Fill bottles with kombucha

Let ferment for 2-3 days

Refrigerate

Extract



Ashwagandha Tincture

Acquire finely chopped dried or fresh ashwagandha root

Fill glass jar 1/3 of the way

Pour 80 proof vodka to top of jar

Shake jar daily

Let sit for 6 - 8 weeks

Drape cheesecloth over a funnel

Strain tincture into an amber bottle

Squeeze and twist cheesecloth

Store in a cool, dark place

St. John's Wort Tincture

Acquire finely chopped dried or fresh St. John's Wort leaves and flowers

Fill glass jar 3/4 of the way

Pour 80 proof vodka to top of jar

Shake jar daily

Let sit for 6 - 8 weeks in a cool, dark place

Drape cheesecloth over a funnel

Strain tincture into an amber bottle

Squeeze and twist cheesecloth

Store in a cool, dark place

STEPHANIE CONCEPCION RAMIREZ | Stephaniecramirez.com |
[@stephanieconcepcionramirez](https://www.instagram.com/stephanieconcepcionramirez)

Stephanie Concepcion Ramirez is a Salvadoran-American artist from Prince George's County, Maryland. She has had the privilege to attain her BFA at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA and her MFA at the University of Texas at Austin. Ramirez' practice combines the language of photography with site-specific installations and text. Her work is based on notions of memory, personal and historical amnesia that trace the veins of the Central American diaspora. In an attempt to reconcile with her personal and cultural histories and memories, she creates work to validate truth, false memories, filtered history, and fantasy. Ramirez currently works and lives in League City, Texas.

D'ANGELO LOVELL WILLIAMS | Dangelolovellwilliams.com |
[@dangelolovellwilliams](https://www.instagram.com/dangelolovellwilliams)

D'Angelo Lovell Williams (b. 1992, Jackson, Mississippi) is a Black, HIV Positive artist expanding narratives of Black and queer intimacy through photography. They earned their BFA in photography from Memphis College of Art, '15, MFA in photography from Syracuse University, '18, and is a Skowhegan School of Art alum, '18. Williams has most recently exhibited at Higher Pictures (2017-2020), Washington Project for the Arts, OSilas Gallery, Silber Gallery, and FJORD Gallery. Williams's work is featured in CULTURED Magazine, Studio Magazine, The 1619 Project, The Financial Times, VICE, Dazed, OUT, and W Magazine. Their work has been reviewed by Roberta Smith in the "New York Times," Andre Hereford in Metro Weekly, and Johanna Fateman in The New Yorker. D'Angelo lives in and seeks work in New York, NY.

HANNAH BATES | Hbates.org | [@hbates](https://www.instagram.com/hbates)

Hannah Bates is an interdisciplinary artist working in sculpture, glass, and installation. Her work investigates relationships between body and landscape in order to reveal the agency of matter within the Anthropocene. She received an MFA in the Craft/Material Studies department at Virginia Commonwealth University and a BFA in Fine Arts at Columbus College of Art and Design. She was recently a resident at ACRE in Steuben, WI and chaNorth in Pine Plains, NY, and will be a resident at Sculpture Space in 2020. She has upcoming shows at RoyGBiv in Columbus, OH and Heaven Gallery in Chicago, IL.

ACRE | acreresidency.org | [@acreresidency](https://www.instagram.com/acreresidency)

ACRE (Artists' Cooperative Residency and Exhibitions) is a volunteer-run non-profit based in Chicago devoted to employing various systems of support for emerging artists and to creating a generative community of cultural producers. ACRE investigates and institutes models designed to help artists develop, present, and discuss their practices by providing forums for idea exchange, interdisciplinary collaboration, and experimental projects.

ACRE is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, MacArthur Funds for Culture, Equity, and the Arts at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events, and Sustainable Arts Foundation. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Questions?

Email Rachel McDermott at mcdermottrm1@gmail.com or

Danny Floyd exhibitions@acreresidency.com

About This Gathering:

First, whether your home during COVID-19 or have picked this up and took it to the lake in 2028, thank you for this moment with "Ever-Present Presence." Like most people responsibly quarantining, I'm been spending lots of time alone coupled with sporadic attempts at togetherness through digital gatherings. We hope that this will bring a bit of togetherness from afar by bringing the exhibition to you. A type of #Museumathome that rifts on an exhibition catalog and lands somewhere between a publication and an exhibition experience. Stephanie Concepcion Ramirez, D'Angelo Lovell Williams, and Hannah Bates explore ways to use one's own body to communicate experience while examining the power dynamics surrounding how histories are remembered. I'm interested in if your engagement with "Ever-Present Presence" could be considered a moment of gathering by acknowledging that other people, perhaps mostly strangers, are also engaging with this text by reading this letter, turning these pages, listening, and touching an identical object.

Although we're not physically together engaging in celebration, and admittedly the awkward moments that come with openings, I hope this sparks some collective curiosity at whatever time is best for you. The works in the exhibition were either made at ACRE or inspired by the artists' time at the residency, a utopian-esque experience in itself. For two weeks in rural Wisconsin, artists live, create, and eat a least two meals together each day. By centering experimentation, creation, collaboration, and respect, the residency fosters connections unable to be made so quickly in everyday life between artists, organizers, cultural producers, performers, writers, curators, makers, and the kitchen team. Although we may not be gathering for an incredible meal, taking a printmaking class in a print shed, watching the sunset over open fields, or gazing at Jupiter's many moons through a telescope, we collectively share those memories together as ACRE's community and act as a continued support system beyond our time at the residency.

And although those extreme acts of gathering are impossible due to safety during this quarantine time, we hope that when we come together again, maybe those moments will mean even more. For now, as we're feeling (insert your current feeling here) we have to keep in mind how important this moment is, and how each of us will document and remember the pandemic in the future.

Thank you to Stephanie Concepcion Ramirez, D'Angelo Lovell Williams, and Hannah Bates for this opportunity to collaborate and think creatively about how this exhibition could become more meaningful in an alternative form. Thank you to the ACRE curatorial fellows and ACRE exhibition team for your support and brainstorm sessions on what it means to gather from afar.

As this is a shared experience, we would love to hear from you! Email exhibitions@acreresidency.com or mcdermottm1@gmail.com.

Sending healthy and safe wishes,

Rachel McDermott

Quarantined with a small dog, Jet, in Savannah, GA

Rachel McDermott | [@rm.mcdermott](https://twitter.com/rm.mcdermott)

Rachel McDermott is an arts administrator and curator based in Savannah, GA. She collaborates with individuals who question our understandings of the vernacular every day to shift how we move through social, ecological, and digital spaces. McDermott is a 2020 ACRE Curatorial Fellow and works on SCAD's social media team. She has a BA in Historic Preservation and Community Planning from the College of Charleston, an MA in Museum and Exhibition Studies from UIC, and she has previously worked on curatorial and marketing teams at ASMP Chicago/Midwest, Galley 400, EXPO CHICAGO, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, and the Robert F DeCaprio Art Gallery.