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#AfterLifeYBCA

YBCA Presents *AFTER LIFE (we survive)*



Art 25: Art in the 25th Century, *Future Ancestors*, 2019, installation view, *AFTER LIFE (we survive)*, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 2020. Courtesy Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Photograph by Thea Quiray Tagle.

An immersive multimedia presentation featuring works by 10 Black, Brown, Indigenous, Queer, and Trans artists who have developed strategies for survival in the midst of ongoing racial injustice, environmental disasters, and health disparities.

***AFTER LIFE (we survive) can be simultaneously experienced in-person and online
November 9, 2020–January 24, 2021***

SAN FRANCISCO (November 12, 2020)—YBCA is proud to present [*AFTER LIFE \(we survive\)*](#), a multimedia public art experience that explores speculative and real modes of survival developed by artists in response to ongoing racial injustice, environmental collapse, health disparities, and loss of homes and land impacting communities of color. A new presentation by independent curator and scholar **Thea Quiray Tagle**, *AFTER LIFE* asks: How can new media, visual art, and performance help us imagine new ways of surviving and thriving, and how can these creative proposals for more just and livable futures support and amplify the grassroots organizing led by LGBTQ, Indigenous, Latinx, Black, Asian, and Pacific Islander communities in the Bay Area and beyond?

The answers are multiple and multidisciplinary. Ten artists and collectives, many with roots in the Bay Area, evidence a wide range of approaches to remembering past and continuing losses through their crafting of alternative visions of the worlds that they hope to see. Together, the artworks of **alejandro t. acierto; Art 25: Art in the 25th Century** (Lehua M. Taitano & Lisa Jarrett, with Jocelyn Kapumealani Ng); **Jeremiah Barber; Zulfikar Ali Bhutto; micha cárdenas; Coven Intelligence Program** (Margaretha Haughwout, Suzanne Husky, and efrén cruz cortés); **FIFTY-FIFTY** (Lisa Bulawsky & Laurencia Strauss, with Dimitry Saïd Chamy); **Courtney Desiree Morris; Super Futures Haunt Collective** (C. Ree, F. Sam Jung, and Angie Morrill); and **Rea Tajiri** bring the YBCA buildings to life through projections, window displays, and digital interactive works that display the resilience of the artists who are survivors and witnesses to our difficult times. *AFTER LIFE (we survive)* can be simultaneously experienced in-person at YBCA and online at YBCA.org as a 3D walk-through alongside exclusive digital content, artworks, programming, and artist-curator conversations from November 9–January 24, 2021.

“When I first presented *AFTER LIFE* at Seattle’s The Alice Gallery in 2018, the question that drove the exhibition was: How have Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Indigenous communities practiced modes of surviving after ecological disaster and after political violence? That first show felt incredibly timely to a moment just after the 2016 elections,” **remarks Quiray Tagle**. “This totally new iteration of *AFTER LIFE (we survive)* opens at YBCA just days after the 2020 presidential election and in the midst of an ongoing pandemic, and the questions of Black, Brown, Indigenous, Trans, and Queer survival are even more pressing today. We all need to be asking ourselves how we can truly transform the systems and structures that continue to harm our communities, beyond an election cycle and for generations. *AFTER LIFE (we survive)* is an archive of freedom dreams, that we can draw on for inspiration as we continue that necessary work.”

Selected from YBCA’s 2019 Open Call, *AFTER LIFE (we survive)* was originally scheduled to be presented on YBCA’s 2nd-floor galleries but as a result of COVID-19, was reimagined and expanded and turned inside out for public engagement both online and in-person.

“With *AFTER LIFE (we survive)* we were presented with a unique opportunity due to COVID to radically shift our thinking around how exhibitions can be experienced,” **said YBCA’s Associate Director of Public Life Martin Strickland**. “We looked at our building and used the architecture to our advantage. With so many windows facing the Yerba Buena Gardens, we worked fast to scale up the works to a larger than life-size and to investigate architectural eccentricities with the artists to rethink how their work could be installed. By thinking outside the box, and in concert with the artists in the exhibition, we’ve been able to find nuanced, surprising ways to bring art to the public. Our goal was to create a safe physical experience that could be

visited anytime, day or night, and to also mirror that with a robust digital presence which allowed for deep dives into the artworks no matter how one visits *AFTER LIFE*.”

Multimedia and interactive artworks offer us ways of recognizing our ancestors’ survival strategies that we may have forgotten. Mourning and memorializing lost places and connections are practiced by *AFTER LIFE* artists *micha cárdenas*, Courtney Desiree Morris, and FIFTY-FIFTY artist collective. **micha cárdenas**’s immersive Augmented Reality video game *Sin Sol / No Sun* (2020) is projected over 15 feet high on the side of the YBCA Forum building and invites users to follow her avatar, Aura, as she escapes wildfires and navigates safety as a trans-Latinx, disabled femme. **Courtney Desiree Morris**’s photographs from the *Solastalgia* series (2019) archive a “mourning diary” of family and homeplace in Louisiana that is rapidly being eroded by flooding, drilling, and other natural and unnatural disasters. **FIFTY-FIFTY** invites the Bay Area and the global publics’ participation in *Portable Memories in Rising Seas* (2016–present), an ongoing project that captures peoples’ memories of shorelines being swallowed by sea-level rise. The public is invited to witness the memories of others’ shifting relationship to land and oceans, before contributing their own image that adds to the expanding archive of the project.

Indigenous contemporary art and collaborative practices are other themes of the show. **Art 25: Art in the 25th Century**’s series *Future Ancestors* (2019) are larger-than-life photographs accompanied by sounds and words that perform Black and Indigenous queer intimacies in a world that does not value such togetherness. **Super Futures Haunt Collective (SFHQ)**’s *Super Furs for the Super Futures* (2020) takes over the entire vestibule on the south side of YBCA and calls for an anti-colonial alliance between “future ghosts” and beavers which can literally reshape the world. Taking eco-activism to the network, **Coven Intelligence Program**’s *One two three potions a secret word / and soon you’ll see a freer world* (2020) entices the public to join their revolutionary anti-capitalist alliance among witches, plants, and machines. Their interactive SpellWeaver app invites the public to create spells that will generate livable and sustainable futures.

Finally, queer futures are imagined in the projects of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and alejandro t. acierto. **Zulfikar Ali Bhutto**’s *Tomorrow We Inherit the Earth* (2020) takes us to a queer Muslim future via two rocketships, *Grace 298* and *Mercy 258*. **alejandro t. acierto**’s *How to take up space when you’ve only been given the margin* (2019) pairs the ACT UP pink triangle, rendered in neon, with a famous Sylvia Rivera speech that plays based on the frequency of the #LGBTQ hashtag on Twitter. These works remind us of the urgency of queer activism in the past, present, and future.

Two works will be presented exclusively online. Histories of white settlement, Lenape haunting, land, and place collide in Lordville, NY, an upstate New York town captured in **Rea Tajiri**’s experimental documentary *LORDVILLE* (2014; runtime 1hr, 7 min). *LORDVILLE* will be available to stream on YBCA’s website for 72 hours at a soon to be announced date.

Jeremiah Barber presents two new interactive web presentations, *Darkroom* and *Lightroom* (2020), which he created for *AFTER LIFE* while in COVID quarantine. Barber invites us to follow his journey through the history of photography and film and proposes different working relationships with plants, animals, and fungi to generate new visions.

AFTER LIFE (we survive) will feature a series of digital engagements including a live spell casting workshop led by **Coven Intelligence Program** where participants will use the SpellWeaver app to add in their own spells which will then be woven into a digital textile pattern

and rhizomes. **FIFTY-FIFTY** will lead the public in a live workshop that will encourage participants to submit their own digital drawings after a discussion on sea-level rise and how we grapple with the realities of changing places due to climate change. More information will be made available as the program dates are confirmed.

AFTER LIFE (we survive) is organized with the assistance of Martin Strickland, Associate Director of Public Life; Fiona Ball, Curatorial Project Manager; and John Foster Cartwright, Chief Preparator.

CREDITS

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About the Curator

Thea Quiray Tagle, Ph.D. is a curator, writer, and assistant professor of ethnic studies and gender & sexuality studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Throughout her various research and creative projects, Thea remains interested in the following questions: *How can socially engaged art and performance move us, collectively and individually, to inhabit the world and relate to each other in ways that are non-extractive, anti-capitalist, and queer?* This exhibition of *AFTER LIFE (we survive)* at YBCA is the second of a series of research-based curatorial projects about creative modes of surviving climate collapse and political violence practiced by LGBTQ and BIPOC peoples; the first, *AFTER LIFE (what remains)*, ran from June–July 2018 at The Alice, an independent gallery in Seattle run by a collective of femme and queer artists that Thea was proud to be a member of from 2018 through its closure in 2019. Thea's writing on Filipinx American contemporary art, visual cultures of violence, urban redevelopment in the Bay Area, and grassroots activism and speculative futures in the expanded Pacific Rim can be found in scholarly and popular venues including *ASAP/J*, *Critical Ethnic Studies Journal*, *Hyperallergic*, and *ACME: An International Journal of Critical Geographies*. During the COVID-19 crisis, Thea is a visitor on occupied Ohlone territory. For more about her writing, teaching, and curatorial projects, visit www.theaquiraytagle.com

About Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA)

YBCA centers artists as essential agents in catalyzing social and cultural movement. Our programs position and propel artists as critical drivers of health and well-being in their communities. We are focused first on our city and our Bay Area region and are committed to racial, economic, health, and climate justice. We leverage our national leadership and are committed to serving the urgent needs of today.