FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

As Far as the Heart Can See
September 21 - November 17, 2018

Nao Bustamante, Billy X. Curmano, Irina Danilova & Project 59, Beatrice Glow, Ivan Monforte, Linda Mary Montano, Praxis (Delia & Brainard Carey), Beth Stephens & Annie Sprinkle, and Martha Wilson & Franklin Furnace Archive

Curated by: Nicolás Dumit Estévez Raful
Curatorial Fellow: JP-Anne Giera

EFA Project Space, 323 W. 39 St., 2nd Floor, NYC, between 8th and 9th Avenues, Hours: Wed - Sat, 12 – 6 PM
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EFA Project Space is thrilled to present As Far as the Heart Can See, an exhibition that brings together art and everyday life through performative acts of care, transgression, and multigenerational collaboration. The exhibition marks the start of EFA Project Space’s 10th anniversary season.

Curated by Nicolás Dumit Estévez Raful—whose elusive creative path embodies intimacy, healing, empathy,
and radical generosity—As Far as the Heart Can See focuses on figures who parry institutional canons and over-professionalization to pursue art as a call to the heart. In the words of Linda Mary Montano, this is art that "gives one permission to…"

Artists fatigued by pressure to both make and “be” objects, take note – As Far as the Heart Can See assembles those who have shifted gear, broken away, found shelter in the wilderness, or ventured astray from art-historical validation in order to speak truth. Many of those in As Far as the Heart Can See refer to what they do as a ‘vocation,’ suggesting bold acts and a readiness to trade normative success for something more. These artists have expanded their own fields and have pushed one to rethink disciplines such as ecology, thanatology, gender studies, anthropology, and social work.

Nao Bustamante’s sculptures and photographs mix the beautiful with the grotesque: duct tape, shadow-play, and boxed wine provide a material basis for an existential exploration of human desire – natural and contrived. Martha Wilson embodies a prophetic discourse, from her body transformations of the 1970s to her ongoing series of impersonations of U.S. dignitaries, including Michelle Obama, Barbara Bush, and Bill Clinton. Wilson’s lifework, Franklin Furnace, is an iconoclastic arts organization whose mission “to make the world safe for avant-garde art” has propelled the practices of hundreds of artists since 1976. Billy X. Curmano’s performances are at once modest and extreme: for instance, a ten-year-long performance in which he swam, lap by lap, the length of the Mississippi River, or the three days spent buried alive in order to perform for the dead. Beth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle meld sexuality and ecology into SexEcology (or Ecosexuality), such as in their Ecosex Weddings series, in which the duo weds soil, snow, the mountains and sea in environmental ardour.

Linda Mary Montano serves as a central figure in the exhibition: over her career she has cared for her elder father as art, performed blessings as Saint Teresa of Calcutta, and declared her body to be a living sculpture, chiseled by time. Montano’s performance video, NURSE! NURSE! (2016) leads us through a rehearsal of being cared for, and compels us to shout aloud the work’s title. Likewise, Ivan Monforte encourages affect within the gallery’s controlled emotional context with There But For The Grace Of God Go I, in which he partners with Gay Men’s Health Crisis to facilitate free and confidential HIV screenings and referrals to gallery-goers. Beatrice Glow traverses anthropology, ethnography, botany, and archeology to awaken latent imaginaries. Her film, Tapatapaco Myth (2009), unfolds as a journey through urban and rural South America to trace the migratory route of an Asian immigrant, El Chino. Ukrainian-born Irina Danilova’s move to New York in 1994 led to the creation of a random number-based project, Project 59, which manifests as a compilation of poems from page 59 of popular poetry collections, dinners prepared from recipes found on page 59 of different cookbooks, and a climbing plant that proclaims “59” on the gallery’s wall. Praxis’ (Delia & Brainard Carey) interventions comprise an unusual inventory of strategies, substances, and rituals, such as a long-distance prayer through the Internet and Band-Aids for invisible wounds. The exhibition features documentation of Forget Me Not (2004), which tells the story of Brainard Carey’s mother’s death and burial in two parts: “Tools for the Living” and “Tools for the Dying.”

Highlighting ongoing and durational work, the exhibition also features performance documentation, ephemera, manifestos, interviews, and artist proposals culled from nearly 20 years of the Franklin Furnace Fund for Performance Art serving as a testament to the transient and intransigent lifework of cultural producers.

Launched in September 2008, EFA Project Space was founded on the belief that art is intrinsically tied to the individuals who produce it, the communities that arise because of it, and to everyday life. For our 10-year anniversary, we have assembled an exhibition of artists who give permission to operate astride genres, enact disciplines, initiate mentorship, nurture community, and redefine civic engagement. As Far as the Heart Can See asks us to roll up our sleeves and pursue our calling.

RELATED EVENTS

- Friday, September 21, 5 - 6 PM — Curatorial walkthrough with Nicolás Dumit Estévez Raful
6:30 PM — Praxis: We like Death and Death likes Us, and Threat Level 3
Presented during the opening reception, Praxis (Delia & Brainard Carey) will premiere We like Death and Death likes Us (2018). Threat Level 3 (Billy X. Curmano, John Pendergast and Steve Smith) will perform through the opening.

- **Saturday, October 20, 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM — In Honor Of …**
  A performance series hosted during EFA Open Studios. Mentees, students, assistants, and collaborators with the artists in the exhibition perform In Honor Of… their inspiration. With performances by: Nina Isabelle, Sindy Butz, Elena Bajo, Xinan (Helen) Ran, and Larissa Gilbert.

- **Thursday, November 1, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM — Screening: Beth Stephens’ and Annie Sprinkle’s Good Bye Gauley Mountain: An Eco-Sexual Love Story (2013); Q&A with Lillian Ball & Brooke Singer.**

- **Saturday, November 3, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM — AGING AS ART and Performing for the Dead**
  An evening with seminal performance artists Linda Mary Montano and Billy X. Curmano.

- **Saturday, November 10, 2018, 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM — The Non-Professional Development Workshop,** in partnership with the Artist Alliance Inc. (AAI), conceived by Mary Ting and Nicolás Dumit Estévez Rafal, with: Bill Carroll, Jodi Waynberg, and Martha Wilson.

- **Wednesday, November 14, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM — Project 59 Hosts Dinner 59 #40; Limited seating.**

- **Saturday, November 17, 2018, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM — The Angry Heart: AIDS, Art, Activism.**
  A panel discussion organized by Ivan Monforte and Gay Men’s Health Crisis. Followed by exhibition closing reception from 5:30 - 6:30 pm

- **Ongoing: Ivan Monforte’s There But For the Grace of God Go I**
  Saturdays: September 29, October 13, October 27, November 17, 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM
  A social sculpture in which the artist invites the public to participate in free and confidential HIV testing in partnership with Gay Men’s Health Crisis.

*Entry to the above events is free and on a first come, first served basis. RSVPs appreciated via [EventBrite](https://www.eventbrite.com).*

**CURATOR BIOS**

**Nicolás Dumit Estévez Rafal’s** treads an elusive path that manifests itself performatively or through experiences where the quotidian and art overlap. He has exhibited and performed extensively in the U.S. as well as internationally. Residencies attended include P.S. 1/MoMA, Yaddo, Center for Book Arts, and the MacDowell Colony. Estévez Rafal holds an MFA from Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, where he studied with Coco Fusco; and an MA from Union Theological Seminary. He has received mentorship in art in everyday life from Linda Mary Montano, a historic figure in the performance art field. Montano and Estévez Rafal have also collaborated on several performances. Publications include Pleased to Meet You, One Person at a Time, Life as Material for Art and Vice Versa (editor), and For Art’s Sake. He has curated exhibitions and programs for El Museo del Barrio; the Institute for Art, Religion and Social Justice at Union Theological Seminary; Art in Odd Places; Cuchifritos; the Center for Book Arts; and Longwood Art Gallery/Bronx Council on the Arts, New York; and for the Filmoteca de Andalucía, Córdoba, Spain. Estévez Rafal is the founding director of The Mangú Museum (pronounced man-goo). He was born in Santiago de los Treinta Caballeros, Dominican Republic. In 2011, he was baptized as a Bronxite; a citizen of the Bronx.

**JP-Anne Judy Giera** is an interdisciplinary artist and curator. Classically trained as an actor, they hold an MFA in Theatre from the prestigious Actors Studio Drama School at Pace University, however their work began to move towards visual art during the year they spent studying at Pratt Institute. JP-Anne’s art interest exists at the praxis of painting and performance. Their work output includes, but isn’t limited to, painting, drawing, performance, video, zines, printmaking and installation, but seemingly exists betwixt and between all of these media, much as their identity as a transgender non-binary identified person exists betwixt and between common cultural norms regarding gender, sexuality, and appearance. As an artist, their work has been exhibited throughout the New York City area. As a curator, JP-Anne has curated projects for the LGBT Community Center and SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders). They served as the 2017 Curatorial Intern at White Columns and are the current Curatorial Fellow at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts Project Space. JP-Anne is pursuing an MFA in Art at Lehman College/CUNY. Her studio is in the Bronx and she resides in Crown Heights, Brooklyn with her two cats.
ARTIST BIOS

**Nao Bustamante** is an internationally known artist, originally from California; she now resides in Los Angeles. Bustamante's precocious work encompasses performance art, video installation, visual art, filmmaking, and writing. The *New York Times* says, "She has a knack for using her body." Bustamante has presented in galleries, museums, universities and underground sites all around the world. In 2001 she received the prestigious Anonymous Was a Woman fellowship, and in 2007 named a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow, as well as a Lambent Fellow. In 2008 She received the Chace Legacy award in Film (in conjunction with Kodak and HBO). In 2014/15 Bustamante was the Queer Artist in Residence at UC Riverside and in 2015 she was a UC MEXUS Scholar in Residence in preparation for a solo exhibit at Vincent Price Art Museum in Los Angeles. Bustamante’s video work is in the Kadist Collection.

**Billy X. Curmano** is an award winning artist/adventurer and former McKnight Foundation Interdisciplinary Art Fellow. He was trained as a painter and sculptor. His works have found their way to MoMA, among other prestigious collections. Curmano came to music through the back door using soundscapes in “live art” and is probably best known for edgy performances. His more eccentric pieces include a 3-day live burial, a 2,000 plus mile Mississippi River Swim, a 40-day Death Valley Desert Fast and a sojourn to the Arctic Circle on public transport. He’s won awards for performance and film as well as for a solo CD. Curmano has toured every way imaginable including 6,200 miles and 15 cities in 45 days on a Greyhound Bus and intrigued audiences from the Dalai Lama’s World Festival of Sacred Music in Los Angeles to New York City's famed Franklin Furnace. Journalists have dubbed him the court jester of Southern Minnesota.

**Irina Danilova** is an experimental visual and performance artist of life-long and serial projects, curator, founder of *59 Seconds Video Festival* and Executive Director of *Project 59 Inc.* Born and raised in Kharkov, Ukraine, she lived in Moscow, and since 1994 lives and works in New York. Danilova has an MFA from the School of Visual Arts (1996) and teaches art at CUNY. In 1995, she started *Project 59*, using a random number as a lens of perception and a universal motive for exploration. Originally conceived as a one-year project, "95 as bread and butter, 59 as butter and bread — the same", the project has generated an ongoing sequence of artworks. Within *Project 59* Danilova examines the mechanism of perception and outermost range of creative approaches.

**Beatrice Glow** tells stories that lie in the shadows of colonialism through installations and experiential technologies. She has been named Artist-in-Residence at the Asian/Pacific/American Institute at NYU, Honolulu Biennial artist, Wave Hill Van Lier Fellow, Joan Mitchell Foundation Emerging Artist Finalist, Hemispheric Institute Council Member, Franklin Furnace Fund grantee and Fulbright Scholar. Solo exhibitions include “Aromérica Parfumeur” with Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Chile; *Lenapeway* and *The Wayfinding Project* at NYU; *Rhunhattan* at Wave Hill; and “Floating Library” on the Hudson River. She is featured in Duke University Press’ Cultural Politics 13.2, and wrote *What is Chino? Memories and Imaginaries of Asian Latin America* for post at MoMA.

New York-based **Ivan Monforte** was born in Merida, Yucatán, Mexico. He received a B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1996, and an M.F.A. from New York University in 2004. He has shown at The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Longwood Art Gallery, The Queens Museum, El Museo del Barrio, Artists Space as part of PERFORMA05, Elizabeth Foundation Gallery, Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art, La MaMa Galleria, and Socrates Sculpture Park. He is the recipient of a UCLA Art Council Award, a Lambent Fellowship in the Arts from the Tides Foundation, an Art Matters grant for research in Samoa, and a fellowship to attend Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. He has participated in residencies at Sidestreet Projects, Lower East Side Printshop, Center for Book Arts, and Smack Mellon.

**Linda Mary Montano** is a seminal figure in contemporary performance art and her work since the mid-1960s has been critical in the development of video by, for, and about women. Attempting to dissolve the boundaries between art and life, Montano continues to actively explore her art/life through shared experience, role adoption, and intricate life altering ceremonies, some of which last for seven or more years. Montano's artwork is starkly autobiographical and often concerned with personal and spiritual transformation. Montano's influence is wide-ranging – she has been featured at museums including The New Museum in New York, MOCA San Francisco, and ICA in London.

**Praxis (Delia & Brainard Carey)** is a two person collaborative that was formed in 2000 and was first featured in 2001 in PS1/MOMA’s Greater New York show. In 2002 they were in the Whitney Biennial for their visual art and a series of performative actions. They are a husband and wife team. After numerous other exhibitions: Reina Sofia,
MoMA, Whitney solo show in 2007, they began a new artist project — building an institution, MONA, (The Museum of Non-Visible Art). MONA has been interviewing artists, curators, and writers from all over the world, as part of an artist-built institution and a social practice. Over 600 interviews have been conducted to date.

**Beth Stephens**, Ph.D., has been a filmmaker, performance artist, activist and educator for three decades. Stephens is the Founding Director of E.A.R.T.H. Lab at UC Santa Cruz where she is the Department Chair and a Professor of Art. In the last five years she has produced two feature documentary films, and has exhibited installations and done performance art in galleries, museums and in public space. **Annie Sprinkle** has been creating multimedia projects about sexuality for four decades. She made adult films and B movies from 1974 to 1994, then earned a Ph.D. in Human Sexuality. She bridged into art and toured theater pieces about her life and work in sex to many countries. Her newest book, which she co-authored with Beth Stephens, *Explorer’s Guide to Planet Orgasm—For Every Body*, is all about orgasm. Together Stephens and Sprinkle are founders of the “ecosex movement” where they aim to make the environmental movement more sexy, fun, and diverse. They were official documenta 14 artists (2017) where their new film, “*Water Makes Us Wet—An Ecosexual Adventure*” premiered, along with a visual art exhibit and gave *Ecosex Walking Tour performances*. Currently they’re completing a book about their 18 years of collaboration, *Assuming the Ecosexual Position* for University of Minnesota Press. They are in love with each other, and with the Earth.

**Martha Wilson** is a pioneering feminist artist and gallery director, who over the past four decades created innovative photographic and video works that explore her female subjectivity through role-playing, costume transformations, and “invasions” of other people’s personae. She began making these videos and photo/text works in the early 1970s while in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and further developed her performative and video-based practice after moving in 1974 to New York City, embarking on a long career that would see her gain attention across the U.S. for her provocative appearances and works. In 1976 she also founded and continues to direct *Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.*, whose mission is to present, preserve, interpret, proselytize and advocate on behalf of avant-garde art – especially forms that may be vulnerable due to institutional neglect, cultural bias, their ephemeral nature, or politically unpopular content.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

**GMHC**

Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) is the world's first HIV/AIDS service organization. GMHC is on the front lines providing services to over 13,000 people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Programs include: testing, prevention, nutrition, legal, supportive housing, mental health and substance use services. GMHC also advocates for stronger public policies at the local, state and federal levels with the goal of ending AIDS as an epidemic. For more information, visit http://www.gmhc.org.

**Reimagine End of Life**

Reimagine End of Life is a community-wide exploration of death and celebration of life through creativity and conversation taking place in New York and San Francisco in 2018. Drawing on the arts, spirituality, healthcare, and design, we create weeklong series of events that break down taboos and bring diverse communities together in wonder, preparation, and remembrance. http://letsreimagine.org/