

# THE HIV HOWLER

TRANSMITTING ART+ACTIVISM

THE HIV HOWLER: TRANSMITTING ART + ACTIVISM is a limited edition art newspaper focusing on global grassroots HIV art and cultural production. Artists have and continue to play a fundamental role in shaping broader societal understandings of HIV/AIDS and working within communities most impacted by the virus: queer and trans people, people who use drugs, sex workers, people of colour, indigenous peoples. Together we reflect the immediacy and urgency of global HIV/AIDS dialogues as well as their historical continuities.

CRIMINALISE

TIOM-MEDICAL

CHARLES RYAN LONG  
IN CONVERSATION W/ MICHAELA  
CYRINO + CHRIS JORDAN  
TIMOTHY DU WHITE  
ALEX MCCLELLAND AND ZOË DODD  
CLAIR WALTON + ANDREW MCPHAIL  
ANDREW ZEALLEY

PLUS THE ARCHIVES OF AIDS ACTION NOW! + THE GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER HISTORICAL SOCIETY + ANTHEA BLACK AND JESSICA WHITBREAD + THE HIV HOWLER ADVISORY

# Infecting Postal

## Andrew Zealley

### Editorial

ANTHEA BLACK + JESSICA WHITBREAD  
WITH THE HIV HOWLER ADVISORY

## Decriminalizing the Status Symbol

Charles Long and Chris Jordan

## Charles Long and Micaela Cyrino In Conversation

## We are never the victims

Timothy DuWhite

## Andrew McPhail

INTERVIEWED BY THEODORE KERR

## Thoughts on an Anarchist Response to Hepatitis C & HIV

Alex McLelland and Zoe Dodd

## Clair Walton

INTERVIEWED BY ANTHEA BLACK

PLUS WORKS FROM THE ARCHIVES OF AIDS ACTION NOW!  
+ THE GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Contributors

“the definition, evaluation, [...] comprehension [and management and investment] of [HIV/AIDS takes] place within [biopolitical and neoliberal] space and circuits. This [control] [production] of [sexual] practices, which once delimited who had the legitimacy to say what was [love] [desire] has vanished” (Canclini 4).

Canclini, Néstor García. *Art Beyond Itself: Anthropology for a Society without a Storyline*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.

“[T]he [HIV-positive seroconversion] becomes a [tactical] gift: it provides a means through which queer [negativity] could be [reimagined]” (Ahmed 88).

Ahmed, Sarah. *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Andrew Zealley, *Infecting Postal*, 2018.

# Charles Ryan Long and Micaela Cyrino



As Black folk we have always practiced ways of resistance, and we have this in our DNA.

**CHARLES RYAN LONG:** Hello Micaela, I want to start our conversation. First it seems important to introduce myself. My name is Charles Ryan Long; I am an activist and creator in Chicago.

**MICAELA CYRINO:** Hello good morning. We can talk through here and then do the translation.

**CRL:** Perfect. First it's great to meet you virtually. I was so excited and inspired by *el cuerpo vih*. Let's start by talking about your background. Where did you grow up? Do you have siblings?

**MC:** I am from São Paulo/ Brazil I grew up in a shelter for children with HIV. I lived there from 6 to 18 years old. I have three brothers but just me and the youngest live with HIV.

**CRL:** Thank you for that I think it's good to put your history in a context before we dive immediately into your artistic practice. So, after leaving your home you went to art school... what influences did you get from (the shelter) that made you want to study art? And costumes?

**MC:** At the shelter I was already taking some art class-

es. During my childhood I had classes of painting and dance. When I finished high school I started studying fashion design. I didn't conclude it but then I changed to visual arts.

**CRL:** OK dance theatre, that makes a lot of sense having seen the video "cura" ("heal"), there is an extreme aesthetic calm that resembles a stage performance. In your statement you talk about getting your references from college... Who are some of these people?

**MC:** Rosalina Laulino, Coci Fusco, Bispo do Rosário...

**CRL:** What would you say that their work speaks to within you and what has been their influence specifically in your practice?

**MC:** All the people I cited are Black. The work speaks of memory, of the violence, of resistance.

**CRL:** As a proud Black person, it's wonderful to hear you choose some artists that reflect your lived experience.

**MC:** Yes...

**CRL:** So, let's talk about these ideas of resistance, violence and memory... In which ways do these ideas

enter as topics for your work and, more precisely, what does it mean in the context of working as a Black seropositive artist?

**MC:** In my performance I speak a lot about the violence suffered by the Black body. Specifically for being a woman and seropositive. Physical violence and physical and mental health are left aside. Obstetrical violence and carelessness with the body. There is an institutional racism that claims the Black women are more resistant to pain. And that make the doctors treat them as a stronger body. They don't give us anesthetics or act violently in their medical procedures. I too, like these artists, speak of the memory of slavery in our bodies. And the need for healing.

**CRL:** That piece/play about black bodies (specifically the women's) submitted to medical crimes is so powerful and has been in my mind lately. Are you familiar with the atrocities of J Marion Sims (considered to be the "father of modern gynecology" he tortured Black women slaves)?

**MC:** Yes...

**CRL:** I always think it is important to remember the



There is an institutional racism that claims that Black women are more resistant to pain... that makes doctors treat them as a stronger body. They don't give us anesthetics, or act violently in their medical procedures. I speak of the memory of slavery in our bodies. And the need for healing.

stories of how AmeriKKKa was founded on violence against Black bodies not only in the context of slavery, but in all spheres of our lives and I think the answer (or lack of it) to the HIV epidemic in black communities throughout the whole history of the virus is another kind of apartheid that has been enacted on Black people. But as you said as Black folk we have always practiced ways of resistance and we have a little bit of this in our DNA and it looks like this remaining resistance is what you are calling on in that video...

I wonder if we could talk through it a little bit. What kind of ancestral knowledge were you calling on in this piece/play? More di-

rectly you use many medication (flowers), you burn something in the beginning and you're wearing white throughout the video. Are these connected to any ancestral practices?

MC: The healing through herbs is ancestral, I bring it in my work and I use white to counter the red from the writing. White is the color of cleansing and mutation.

CRL: Did you create the costume in the video?

MC: I made the costumes. I sew. I studied costume design in my teenage years and eventually I worked in cinema and movies.

CRL: Are there any other

ways you bring your ancestors to your work?

MC: I believe that my ancestors are somehow with me. In my all actions and in all my decisions. It wouldn't be any different in my work.

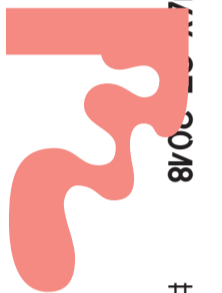
CRL: I also believe that I walk with my ancestors, but, as I believe, I used to refer to them as my angels. This is related to the number of people that I have lost in general, more specifically with the virus... like these people that I love, it must be these orienting hands that I feel it keeps me going. In the video description, it says that the performance developed over a number of days, right? How did it change throughout the duration?

MC: That is beautiful. A performance came up in an artistic residence in Quito/ Ecuador. I lived with other artists for 15 days. I created this performance over there. I presented it for the first time in the Museo de Arte Contemporanea de Quito (Museum of Contemporary Art of Quito). I have been presenting it in many places ever since. I feel healed after each presentation. I feel lighter after performing.

CRL: You said you feel "healed" after the performance... What heals you? Is it a sensation? Is it in your spirit, mind, body? Does it have a color?

MC: It's a lightness. Of body and spirit.

CRL: OK last question... you said you feel a feeling of lightness, as the performer





Micaela Cyrino, CURA, Acción Performática Residencia Artística "Positiva - El Cuerpo Vih" Quito -Ecuador. 2015



I believe that my ancestors are with me, in my all actions and in all my decisions.

of your work. I want to know what do you hope your spectators to take home with them?

MC: I feel that I access people. That somehow they access my anxieties.

CRL: Okay, unfortunately we have to end this interview. It has been a wonderful pleasure to speak to you and I hope this is the first of many conversations.

