



ARCTIVISM: AN EXHIBITION

CATALOGUE

COVER ART L-R:
GOODW.Y.N
MELENANEGRA
TABLE
THIS PAGE:
MARTA VELA



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INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the HRD Hub began supporting activists and artists across the world responding to the outbreak of Covid-19 and its implications for human rights defenders, activism, and shrinking civic and political space. 26 projects across 21 countries were funded.

In **ARCTIVISM: AN EXHIBITION** we showcase some of the most powerful artworks from women artist-activists who participated in Arctivism. The exhibition formed part of York International Women's Week 2021. Illustrations, spoken word, theatre, photography and more give us a glimpse of how women from El Salvador to India, Latvia to Mexico, Brazil to South Africa, the USA to Trinidad and Tobago to experienced the pandemic.

We invite you to think about care, a theme which threads through all of these pieces, in its different manifestations. What does it mean to care for ourselves, for our communities, for those we know and those we don't? How do we show that we care? What does care have to do with activism, and viceversa?

This page: VIKA ALVAREZ
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CARE ON THE
FRONTLINES

LA CACHADA TEATRO
(EL SALVADOR)

La Cachada Teatro is a Salvadoran theatre company with almost 10 years experience telling stories of violence, abuse and resilience, proving with their plays and theatre workshops that art is essential for social transformation.

Unmasking Our Stories was created for Arctivism. It is a project in search of strengthening spaces for citizen participation and the defense of human rights. Through their art, La Cachada Teatro expose a reality usually ignored both before and during the Covid-19 crisis, collecting the testimonies of Salvadorans residing in stigmatised communities of El Salvador, where freedom is restricted, not only by the virus, but also by the armed forces and presidential mandates that put the lives of innocent people at risk, with the pretext of controlling the pandemic. Unmasking Our Stories will make visible, at first hand, how Government decisions affect the residents of communities, conditioning their health and well being.

We hear the stories of Lesly, Fernanda and Mercedes - stories told by a single actress, but which draw together the experiences of many women. These are stories about the women on the frontline of caregiving in the pandemic, often lacking support or resources themselves, and making sacrifices to be there for others.

<http://cachadateatro.com/>



WHO CARES FOR
SURVIVORS OF
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

BORDERLINES
(TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO)

Borderlines Spoken Word Poetry are Trinidadian performance poets that push the boundaries of creative orality. Here, Shimiah Lewis, Yanna Dyett and Sineque Saunders deliver a powerful performance on gender-based violence that thoroughly interrogates the realness of the challenges of 'the silent pandemic'.

Gender-based violence has increased exponentially around the world since the start of the pandemic. The social distancing policies implemented during Covid-19 have exacerbated the danger for many women as they find themselves isolated with their abusers with support systems disrupted, cut off or saturated.

This performance challenges us to think about boundaries of care. When do we step in to care for a neighbour, a friend, a colleague when we suspect they're in danger? When do we prioritise our compassion for ourselves over our compassion for an abusive partner? What does empowering care for survivors look like?

<https://www.facebook.com/lifeasaperformancepoet/>



VALUING OUR
EXPERIENCES, VALUING
OUR SELVES

MEMORY IS A WEAPON
(SOUTH AFRICA)
DUNA (WORLDWIDE)

Why do our own experiences matter, why do we need platforms to tell them? If we don't tell our own stories, what happens to them? Telling our stories can empower ourselves and future generations. Two projects, Memory is a Weapon and DUNA, created democratic, open spaces / platforms for women artist activists to share their work and their experiences during lockdown.

MEMORY IS A WEAPON invited Black female artists from across the world to re-imagine new futures during and post-COVID-19. Through performances, spoken word and digital outputs they draw together a series of powerful stories, providing a space to share and reflect on the crisis, considering meaningful ways forward.

We feature the work of Mara Menzies, Ayanda Nhlangothi, Courtney Stoddart.

<https://www.facebook.com/memoryisaweapon>

DUNA is a platform for sharing practices and poetics. This project aims to create a network using virtual space as a democratic universe, without borders and with endless possibilities, by inviting artists from around the world to take over Duna's Instagram and share their work. In each Instagram takeover, participants get to know each other and, in addition to sharing experiences and references, are able to exchange feedback about the others' work, as a generous way to encourage mutual growth.

We feature the work of Marta Vela (Spain - @marta__vela), Goodw.y.n (USA - @goodw.y.n9), Ana Paula Miranda (Brazil - @casadecriacaomiranda), Somya Dhiman (India - @somyadhiman), Anastasia Starikova (Latvia - @starikovanastasia, @skyperproject).

<https://www.instagram.com/projectduna>



POLITICISED
COLLECTIVE AND SELF
CARE

LAS ILUMINISTAS
(MEXICO)

Las Iluministas invited feminist artist-activists in Mexico to document their experiences during Covid-19. Several themes emerged from the artists, one of which was politicised self and collective care. This is essential for the resilience of feminist activism in Mexico. Artists use their work not only as a therapeutic activity in self-care for themselves, but also as a way to emphasise the fundamental importance of self-care to their compañeras, thus simultaneously practising collective care. The featured artworks shine some light on how some contemporary feminist artist activists in Mexico have experienced, politicised and weaponised self and collective care during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We feature the work of Vika Álvarez (@museodesam), Frinee Lima (@fr8n3, Karen Namas (@live.your.vulva), Karen Lizbeth Fernández (@____k____art) and Melenanegra (@brenmelenanegra)

www.lasiluministas.art



EVERYDAY CARE AND
COMPASSION

COMPASSION CONTAGION
(INDIA)

In its battle against Covid-19 India is witnessing a colossal humanitarian crisis. The lockdown has left thousands of people jobless and starving; many were forced to migrate back to the safety of their villages. But in the midst of this 'slow death of democracy' we are witnessing the rise of ordinary active citizens across the country and their everyday acts of resilience and compassion.

This human perseverance, which is building solidarities between common people and activists, artists, students, community leaders, government representatives, health workers, lawyers, warrants representation, because history will remember this moment as a turning point for citizenship action. We feature the artwork of Vidya Gopal, Anarya, and Anushree Agarwal.

<https://www.compassion-contagion.com/>



VISIT THE EXHIBITION:

hrdhub.org/arctivism-exhibition

WITH THANKS TO ALL OF THE ARTISTS AND ACTIVISTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN ARCTIVISM AND IN THIS EXHIBITION.

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