

t r a n s f o r m e r

Queer Threads: CURIIOUS SPACES

A multi-venue, socially distanced fiber art experience

September 26 - November 14, 2020

Curatorial Statement

The evolving, traveling exhibition and coffee table book *Queer Threads* celebrates contemporary LGBTQ+ artists who are remixing fiber and textile traditions. This fall, *Queer Threads* collaborates with DC based visual arts organization Transformer to present artists André Terrel Jackson (The Corner at Whitman-Walker) and Zoe Schlacter (Transformer), expanding conversations on the distinctively queer attraction to thread-based art and its ability to craft connections.

As social distancing continues to refine exhibition experiences, audiences will primarily engage with works through each venues' storefront windows. *Queer Threads: CURIIOUS SPACES* embraces this friction created between the softness of fiber and textile and the hardness of glass and surfaces. Given the common urge to touch fiber and textile work, this COVID-19 responsive view—evoking a curio cabinet, retail window, terrarium, circus side show—invites an exhibitionistic/voyeuristic pleasure while questioning the commodification of identity.

In collaboration with Transformer's Executive & Artistic Director Victoria Reis, *Queer Threads* Curator John Chaich and Assistant Curator Ryan Patrick have invited this pair of emerging artists to create site-specific installations, *Zoe Schlacter: Darn* and *André Terrel Jackson: Crowns*. Transformer and The Corner at Whitman Walker each become a diorama revealing influences of design, fashion, painting, photography, and sculpture, while incorporating crochet, sewing, weaving, and decorative crafts. In the thread-based works on view, details are at times finely finished or intentionally raw: this mark of the maker is an aesthetic strategy grounded in individuality beyond homonormativity. Challenging value hierarchies, each of these artists finds agency through the ways that fiber and textile interact with other media.

Likewise, the artists' use of materials more likely found in a hardware store, toy store, or sex shop than a fine art supply store speaks to the resourcefulness of marginalized communities. Playful, critical, confident, and concerned, these artists employ the materiality and gravity of fiber and textile to both express queer content and queer the way art is made and displayed.

The resurgence of fiber crafts in and outside the artworld coincides with the breakdown of gender and sexual binaries in culture at large. Amid the backdrop of the Movement for Black Lives, National Coming Out Day, and the Presidential election this season, *Queer Threads: CURIIOUS SPACES* encourages viewers to find intersectional, intergenerational queer connections across the three exhibitions in a city and moment rife with political uncertainty.

As LGBTQ communities continue to adapt to the current cultural and political climate (and vice versa), work by Jackson and Schlacter react to confined spaces, interact with systems of power, and reflect back on audiences and each other. *Queer Threads: CURIIOUS SPACES* calls on the haptic power of fiber and textile to curiously reveal the textured spaces that queer lives are boldly and sensitively claiming today.

Buy the Book: Explore more LGBTQ fiber and textile artists in *Queer Threads: Crafting Identity and Community*. Designed by Todd Oldham studio and edited by curator John Chaich, the full color artbook highlights the practices and curiosities of 30 artists from around the world through full color spreads and interviews with culture-makers and scholars. Available www.ammobooks.com as well as Amazon.com and other booksellers.