



LUV 'til it hurts

### **Luv artist statement:**

A pandemic, too effectively, draws our kind together, as much as it drives us apart. Our composite identities and intersectionalities be damned, HIV/AIDS, in the late 70s early 80s crash-landed into our global commons—perhaps altering forever the very notion of what touch and desire can mean or should mean. HIV/AIDS attendant stigma, driven in part by how a pathogen's stealthy gestation wrapped the prospect of a certain, gruesome, and untimely death around the orbits of our pleasure centers, and pleasure-seeking behavior, altered our collective imagination of what kinds of public privacy disclosure(s) concerning our sexual and gender identities, preferences and choices should govern when and how we use our own bodies in the pursuit of desire.

While the fear of HIV infection and transmission built bionic armors around extant homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, sex, sex work, and substance use criminalization, living with HIV/AIDS (perhaps like no other pandemic) generates novel urgent incentives for the infected and affected to reimagine personal and societal identity formation projects in service of more just, more kind, more inclusive, more human, more habitable presents and futures for themselves, their communities, and the world. Survival and well-being force an interrogation of identities and intersections many either refused exist and/or those many claimed could not be as fragile, fractured, febrile, fraught, as they actually are.

Luv 'til it Hurts draws on a global canon of established and emerging artists, and HIV/AIDS activists regardless their sero-status to land us at these tenuous frontiers of identity and desire. Here we taste the numbing, life-altering urgencies HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS stigma doles to individuals and communities around the world. Too, these immersive installations and performance ask for a call and a response as artists and publics bear witness to the premonitions and outlines of the prospective futures, stark choices can eke out of the act of surviving a plague. By using as its raw materials the rudiments of sight, structure, and sound this mobile recombinant collection of visual, conceptual, multidisciplinary and performance artists invites publics to feel what it could mean to live at an intersection where the black, the gay, the trans, the addict, the white, the latinx, the heterosexual, the bisexual, the Asian, the non-binary, the muslim, the north African, the cis-woman, the sub-Saharan, the Brazilian, the Taiwanese, the Venezolano, the northern and eastern European, the rich, the abandoned, and the poor pile in and by their quilted density alone create the preconditions to portals offering up glimpses and premonitions of who we might become if we allow ourselves to let go of the crutches that divide us and fall in.

*Brad Walrond for LUV*

An artist-led project on HIV & Stigma