

G A S W O R K S

Pedro Neves Marques: It Bites Back

11 April – 16 June 2019



2016 saw the rise of the Zika virus epidemic. In Brazil and elsewhere, terror in the face of viral infection was expressed in the language of military invasion. The immune system became a battlefield and the mosquito carrying the virus was declared an enemy of the nation. In parallel, the country experienced a resurgence of reactionary politics that led to the election of Jair Bolsonaro, an outspoken admirer of the military dictatorship. Drawing attention to how nature and culture mirror and reshape one another, these two apparently disconnected events serve as point of departure for this exhibition by artist, filmmaker and writer Pedro Neves Marques in collaboration with London-based music producer HAUT.

It Bites Back features new and existing works based on a laboratory in São Paulo that breeds genetically-engineered mosquitoes. Used as a living insecticide, transgenic male mosquitoes are designed to mate with females and reduce the insect's population by passing a lethal gene on to their offspring. Ranging from analogue film to sound installation, digital animation and poetry, Neves Marques' exhibition interrogates the laboratory as a place that defines the biopolitics of the 21st Century.

It Bites Back examines the trauma of biological warfare against the backdrop of epidemics and the increasingly palpable threat against queer lives in Brazil and elsewhere. In the exhibition, body fluids and sex hormones are revealed as agents of power that operate with extraordinary force in our lives at the molecular level. Drawing inspiration from the literary traditions of horror and science fiction, Neves Marques invites the viewer to speculate on the future of love, care and intimacy in the midst of the current rise of authoritarian politics.

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The exhibition revolves around the film installation *A Mordida (The Bite)*, a diptych comprising two short films from 2018, separately titled *Sex as Care* and *The Gender of the Lab*. In them, polyamorous encounters and the intimacy of queer lives run parallel to the scientific production of gender in sterile laboratory environments. In a twist on popular tropes associated with pulp genres such as weird fiction and gothic horror, *A Mordida* investigates contemporary expressions of terror and moral panic in the face of viral infection. It also explores alternate forms of living together, exemplifying modest hope in a time of rising fascism and militarization.

The films are presented alongside a multi-channel sound installation featuring an eerie, dark ambient soundscape by HAUT. For Gasworks, the two film projections are synchronised with the dim lighting of the space, choreographing the movement of audiences across the galleries. In *A Mordida*, documentary footage and fictional scenes are interspersed with a selection of poems from Neves Marques' upcoming book *Sex as Care and Other Viral Poems*, fragments of which will be presented in a public reading at Gasworks.

It Bites Back is punctuated by digital animations. One is displayed in a ceiling-mounted flat screen, while the others exist online. In the gallery foyer, *Aedes aegypti* (2017) is a hyperrealistic render of the infamous mosquito, which is a vector for diseases including Zika and dengue. The audience is granted a glimpse of the transgenic male specimen as it mates with a female and feeds on human blood. In dialogue with this work, a newly commissioned series of animations will be released through Gasworks' online platforms as a viral intervention.

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Related Events

Public Reading: Sex as Care and Other Viral Poems

Saturday 15 June, 4-5pm

To mark the closing of *It Bites Back* Pedro Neves Marques will read a selection of poems from his upcoming book *Sex as Care and Other Viral Poems*.

In the book, polyamorous encounters and the intimacy of queer lives run parallel to the history of modern science. In his words, '*these viral poems were my own, personal way of projecting politics onto nature and culture. I felt the need for intimacy. The reasons were multiple. I could easily answer it with my own emotional exhaustion - and, much more importantly, of those around me when in Brazil - as well as with my own feelings towards gender, fluidity and feminism.*'

All events are free to attend, no booking required. Seats will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

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Biographies

Pedro Neves Marques is a New York-based artist born in Lisbon. Recent exhibitions and screenings include: Pérez Art Museum of Miami; Anthology Film Archives, Sculpture Center and e-flux, New York; Jeu de Paume and Kadist Art Foundation, Paris; Tate Modern and Serpentine Galleries, London; Sursock Art Museum, Beirut; Times Museum, Guangzhou; Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon. In 2017, he published his second short-fiction book, *Morrer na América* (Dying in America). Together with fellow artist Mariana Silva, he is the founder of *inhabitants*, an online video channel for exploratory video and documentary reporting.

HAUT is a music producer, sound researcher and former psychiatrist working across the fields of experimental electronic music, affect and embodied music cognition. He is currently undertaking a MA in music at Goldsmiths, University of London.

Production Credits

A Mordida (The Bite):

Written and directed by Pedro Neves Marques

With Ana Flávia Cavalcanti, Alina Dorzbacher, Kelner Macedo, Luiz Felipe Lucas, Diogo Hayashi, and Pamela Escolástico

Produced by Pedro Neves Marques and Catarina de Sousa

Director of Photography: Marta Simões

Sound: Tales Manfrinato

Art Direction: Diogo Hayashi

VFX: João Cáceres Costa

With poems by Pedro Neves Marques

Musical composition and sound installation, *A Mordida*, by HAUT, 2018.

Neves Marques' exhibition follows on from his residency at Gasworks in 2018. *A Mordida* was originally commissioned by the Pérez Art Museum of Miami (PAMM).

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Limited Edition Print – Sex as Care

To accompany the exhibition, Pedro Neves Marques has generously created a limited edition print exclusively for Gasworks, which is on display in our foyer. The proceeds from the sale of these works directly support our programme enabling us to support emerging artists to research, develop, make and present new work.

Available from Gasworks' online shop gasworks.org.uk/shop

Pedro Neves Marques

Sex as Care, 2019

Silkscreen on Somerset Satin White | 15gsm

42 x 59.4cm, unframed

Edition of 30

Exhibition supported by:

Catherine Petitgas and Gasworks' Exhibition Supporters.