

COMPANY

De Por Vida

Curated by Ken Castaneda

January 22 - February 27, 2021

Alina Perez, Bony Ramirez, Diana Sofia Lozano, Felipe Baeza, Frieda Toranzo Jaeger, José De Jesus Rodriguez, Oscar Nñ, Raúl de Nieves, Rose Salane, Ruben Ulises Rodriguez Montoya, Sanchez Kane, Sergio Miguel, Troy Michie

De Por Vida, "For Life" brings together the work of thirteen artists whose works portray cycles of life, death and legacy. The artists in this exhibition excel in their respective mediums, continuing the work of those who have passed before us, as well as paving the way for new communities and histories to exist.

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A vibrating ray of light fills a dark room, two glass eyes stare back at you and ask if it's your first time here. The space has remained the same temperature the entire time, your body,—bubbling, has just begun to understand what senses are and you are experiencing all of them at the same time. The corridor smells familiar as you're wheeled past glass panes; pain fills your bones as you begin to move your body. A phantom limb weighs you down and tells you, "In time you will have everything you ever wanted, but for now just lay here, and let me take care of you." Frightened but assured, you sit back and begin the first day of the rest of your life. What comes after learning basic human functions is entirely up to you. What words you choose to say late at night to yourself in an empty room, what worlds you choose to create, what hands you choose to hold, what lies you choose to spread, what fights you choose to pick, they're all yours. Some days feel so familiar, and you can still feel that phantom limb holding you close.

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"I've died once before," my father says as he shows me the scar on his chest. We're back in the corridor, our bodies are bubbling but growing colder, his senses begin to fail him and the limb returns and slowly dims the light. He stares back at himself before he is blinded by an unrecognizable hue of blue light, as if a crystal has evaporated into millions of particles. Suddenly the labor of his hands has vanished, the weight endured by his feet is cast away, true peace - the peace we seek our entire lives, is hugging him. In the background of the realm, voices call to him and reel him back to earth. The pain surges through his entire body, reactivating those senses, those two glass eyes, the heart that has loved, and he begins the first day of his second life. Celebration!

I kiss my mom at midnight on the 26th, and groggily she says, "I don't want to grow another year older, this year doesn't count for me." I say ok and tuck her into bed and close the door behind me. The house is full of roses, about four dozen we got her for her birthday, all withering slowly. In recent times they've begun selling eternal roses, ones that outlive others. But, they're fixed-forced to live in the same environment for an extended life span. The ones that die, die beautifully and are always remembered for being so.

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My father tells me, "you're doing the things that I couldn't do, or haven't been able to do." These words lift me up and weigh me down. From that point on you have to take into consideration everything you do moving forward with the life you have, the life you were given. It's no longer just about you anymore. His second chance at this life is me. I am the phantom limb pressing softly against his heart. With the swipe of a cross, I carve my promise into his skin, and step forward into this second chance to do things differently.

- Ken Castaneda