

On the day it splits open, and after leaking sour tears, a grapefruit reveals its most vulnerable side. Sweet aromas slowly fill the room. It was almost human, in the way that humanity tends to lurk in the objects we hold in our hands: telephones, knives, shoes, CDs. Domesticity is profoundly mundane. We are surrounded by objects that are meaningful and meaningless and then can't help but to see our lives reflected in their forms.

*Grapefruit Fantasy* features creations from Gérardine Aldamar, Shreshth Khilani, Lucia Garzón, and Nila Devaney, all of whom poetically depict diasporic perspectives of what it means to feel connected to home. These artists are personal in their process but enigmatic in their presentation. What can be

extrapolated from the symbolism in their artworks is a matter of quiet contemplation.

For photographer Gérardine Aldamar, visual redactions allow her to balance revealing personal truths and maintaining privacy. Aldamar's process begins by selecting old family photographs, many of which depict close family members who have since passed away. Through collage and digital manipulation, Aldamar is able to carefully remove content and add additional imagery. The resulting portraits are slightly alien, just a step away from familiar. They become an archival depiction of a family moving through grief.

Aldamar's methodical use of visual cues enables her body of work to tell a consistent story. In the family photos, those who have passed away have their faces and/or bodies removed. The hands, however,

always remain; they are the grounding feature that reinforces the personhood of the subject. Next, Aldamar adds layers of imagery. In most instances this includes an image of the sky and clouds. “Untitled 3” is an exception, here the pattern of the garment worn by a photographed subject is used instead. In “Untitled 3” a woman sits on a bed while holding a landline telephone. She is wearing an ornate dress, which she idly touches with her other hand. Her face is covered by the beautiful fabric.

“Dore (Golden)” is the only photograph where the face of the sole subject within it remains. With great stillness, the photographed woman faces forward and looks into the camera. A warm tone, reminiscent of gold leaf, surrounds the figure. The image contains a saint. Amidst the gold there are dark edges, which

indicate the contents of the original image—a door frame and wood panels on the wall. With Aldmar’s editing, the woman’s body appears to merge into the structures that hold up the home.

Documentation will always intertwine with fiction. Through their multidisciplinary artistic practice, Shreshth Khilani immerses themselves in the murkiness between documenting, fantasizing, and being. For *Grapefruit Fantasy*, Khilani has compiled 15 vignettes (grouped in sets of three) which consist of photography, performance, collage, recipes, prose, and poetry. The vignettes interact comfortably on Instagram’s platform; videos of self and images of food are combined with collage and storytelling, giving the viewer an intimate glimpse into Khilani’s creative practice.

Shifting through lockdown has led to 7 pieces that capture Khilani living in solitude (albeit with a canine companion) and carrying on with their daily routines: going into the kitchen to stir what's cooking on the stove, doing yoga next to their dog as their dog stretches along, practicing violin, looking out the window. These pieces could be considered performance or documentation, the difference between the two even more unclear considering the habitual quality of Khilani's actions.

These snapshots are matched with screenshots of a word document that is in a peer-editing process. Certain sentences are highlighted, though no additional comments are not shown. From these screenshots, a developing story emerges. The narrative describes a could-be couple on an early date. The narrator expresses a

nervousness that is both caused and abated by moments of deep admiration. Their date cooks a meal using “the knife he always carries on him to spatchcock a whole chicken.” Although this dish is not named in the story, Khilani provides their own handwritten recipe for Tandoori Chicken as both a collaged fragment amidst the story text and presented as its own image in another vignette.

Food is a central element of Khilani’s practice. Sharing a meal is synonymous with sharing love, and by giving food such focus in their performance and prose, Khilani is able to explore many kinds of love; romantic, familial, platonic and cultural. In their works, viewers are asked to tap into a sensory experience and from that personal place, open up to new stories.

As an interdisciplinary artist, Garzón's artwork utilizes household materials to construct sculptures, installations, videos, and collages that explore themes of family. Because the artwork consists of recognizable forms, viewers develop immediate associations with each object. Garzón allows for the viewer's own interpretations to guide their understanding of the pieces, which allows the contents of the artwork to exist as contemplative starting points rather than as didactic symbols. The strength of these works stems from Garzón's thoughtfulness around placement, context, and abstraction.

"RISE" is an installation made from found materials, which when placed together create a bedroom. There is a bare mattress, a faux brick wall and wooden posts that hold up a piece of plastic roofing.

The “room” includes a clothesline and various personal objects by the bedside, including a hot water bottle, sandals, and a prayer candle. The mattress has been carved into and the negative space spells out a Spanish phrase, which translated into English reads, “What rises like a palm falls like a coconut, what falls like a coconut rises like a palm.” A water pump lets water drip from a hole in the roofing into a plastic bucket on the floor. The first half of the phrase was commonly said by Garzón’s family in discussions of abusive power in Colombia. The inverse of the phrase has been added to remark upon Garzón’s family’s ability to “rise” again through hardship.

A simple idea can never represent a complex whole and the attempt to prove otherwise is the folly of all monument

designers. At times, the inability to fully understand, to fully see, or to fully make sense of the materiality of the monument is part of the interpretation. While not a monument creator, Garzón's art pieces grapple with similar dynamics. This is especially apparent in the video performance piece "If My Legs Were Longer," where Garzón attempts three tasks: stacking books onto a stool to reach something outside of the video frame, putting on additional pairs of socks in order to fit into a pair of dress shoes, and piercing new holes into a large belt so it can fit properly. Each attempt is filmed separately and put together into a digital triptych.

As the 20 minute video goes on, it becomes clear that Garzón is not aiming to reach success as quickly as possible. Instead, each failure is savored and each

iteration is given an honest test. This Sisyphean effort may be best described using a phrase that is featured in a digital collage by Garzón by combining two quotes from Gloria E. Anzaldúa, “With hands like bootsoles/I can’t seem to stay out of my own way.”

Inspired by murals, painter Nila Devaney creates artworks that illustrate the bond of a community. Devaney combines groups of figures and distinctive settings together in order to create striking tableaux. Though her heavily stylized compositions are not analogous to photography, Devaney’s pieces contain an interesting characteristic found in many candid photos: in every work at least one figure in the group is looking directly back at the viewer.

The oil painting “Red on Water” contains two figures out of six that are looking

towards the viewer. One stands closely to the front of the picture plane, arms stretched above their head while the other lies on a beach towel. The painting depicts a gathering taking place on a beach after the sky has turned deep indigo. The nighttime festivities include drinking, eating, and listening to music. On the right side of the scene, a rain cloud hangs low over one figure and, seemingly, sunlight streams from underneath it. The moon glows overhead. The moon is painted yellow, outlined in blue and surrounded by gold paint. It also has a face and looks at the viewer.

Devaney is an observant artist who is able to fixate on moments of gathering and situate them in her mind as a moment of peace, even if those who are present do not consciously consider themselves as part of

something larger than themselves.

“Warmth Down the Line” captures a bus stop next to a pharmacy, where people are spending the last hour of sunlight. With the exception of a trio of figures in the left corner, who appear to be doing hair and sitting together, everyone else is absorbed in their own world. Still, they are together. By capturing the mundane, Devaney is able to provoke the question, “What if this fleeting moment of harmony were to be prolonged into a perpetual awareness of communal love?”