

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

For Immediate Release

THE ALDRICH CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM LAUNCHES ALDRICH CARE BOX LOANING ART TO THE PUBLIC TO ENJOY AT HOME

Ridgefield, CT (January 2021)—The *Aldrich Care Box* is a year-long traveling exhibition unbound to a physical space. A unique collaboration between The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum's Curatorial and Education Departments, Director of Education Namulen Bayarsaihan and Senior Curator Amy Smith-Stewart, have commissioned five artists—Ilana Harris-Babou, Clarity Haynes, Athena LaTocha, Curtis Talwst Santiago, and James Allister Sprang—to create a series of objects that examine themes of care, grief, intimacy, and healing through a diverse range of materials, methods, and approaches. The *Aldrich Care Boxes* will be available for loan out to the public January 31 to December 31, 2021 from The Museum's Front Desk. Learn more at thealdrich.org/exhibitions/aldrich-care-box.



Ilana Harris-Babou
Wellness Kit #2, 2020
Courtesy of the artist
Photo: Ilana Harris-Babou

During the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, this project provides one-of-a-kind access to a tangible art experience outside the boundaries of the Museum's walls. The public is invited to borrow one of five identical *Aldrich Care Boxes* and privately interact with the contents within a setting of their own desire for up to a week. Thus, participants of all ages will be afforded an opportunity to be a part of a distinctively participatory event contrary to the traditionally hands-off museum environment.

The *Aldrich Care Box* is both a crate and a viewing space, turning any site into a gallery experience. There are many examples of art objects on the move throughout art history: the shrines, portable altars, and relics of the Medieval era; Marcel Duchamp's *Box in a Valises (From or by Marcel Duchamp or Rose Sélavy)*, 1935-41; and the Fluxus Boxes from the 1960s-70s, which housed multiples made by artists with the intention of circulation and handling. The objects made for this project will be nestled together in a branded box, forever connected to each other and their shared encounters with the public.

The *Aldrich Care Box* will be available to borrow from the Museum's Front Desk during regular museum hours and by appointment when the Museum is closed. The Ridgefield Library will be partnering with the Museum, consulting on lending practices for the duration of the project. The *Aldrich Care Boxes* will follow Connecticut state COVID-19 lending guidelines. When a *Box* is returned, it will "rest" for at least three days before being lent out again. One *Box* will be on view in The Aldrich's Atrium throughout the duration of the project, January 31 to December 31, 2021. For more information on how to check-out an *Aldrich Care Box*, please visit: thealdrich.org/exhibitions/aldrich-care-box

Each *Aldrich Care Box* contains objects created by five artists:

Ilana Harris-Babou creates sculptures, installations, videos, and collages that confront our image-obsessed consumerism with abject humor. Harris-Babou has made for each *Aldrich Care Box* a series of small sculptures scaled for the hand from her ongoing body of work, *Beauty Products*, 2020-present. Harris-Babou was born in 1991 in Brooklyn, New York, where she currently lives and works.

Clarity Haynes is an artist, writer and educator whose work spans painting, drawing, and social practice. For the *Aldrich Care Box*, Haynes has conceived *Collective Transmission*, 2020-21, a series of participatory works comprised of five 7 x 7 inch spiral-bound books, each with a distinctive multi-media cover created by the artist. Inside each book is a series of prompts that invite reflection and interaction. Like an exquisite corpse, the books' final form will represent a collective vision. Haynes was born in 1971 in McAllen, Texas, and she lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

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Athena LaTocha's monumental works on paper explore the perilous relationship between humanity and the natural world. For the *Aldrich Care Box*, LaTocha will create a work that addresses the direct nature of material substance through process. LaTocha was born in Anchorage, Alaska in 1969 and lives and works in New York City and Peekskill, NY.

Curtis Talwst Santiago's practice spans sculpture, painting, drawing, and performance. For the *Aldrich Care Box*, Talwst Santiago has created five new objects from his ongoing *Infinity* series, 2007-present, a distinctive body of work that consists of meticulously fashioned miniature dioramas crafted from vintage jewelry boxes. Works presented in the *Boxes* depict fictional landscapes, offering the viewer a sublime escape from the collective trauma of this unprecedented moment. Talwst Santiago was born in 1979 in Edmonton, Alberta and lives and works in Munich, Germany.

James Allister Sprang is a multidisciplinary artist working across experimental theater, sound art, performance, photography, poetry, and spoken word. He tells stories informed by Black radical and experimental traditions. Sprang is creating "Puddle Pieces," a small edition of accordion books for the *Aldrich Care Box*, each containing a series of unique cyanotypes. The cyanotype blue references the Middle Passage, Black joy, and the American Blues. Sprang was born in Brooklyn in 1990 and lives and works in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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