

Artist Michael Espinoza – Queer Love

In recent bodies of work, they focus on the tensions of living in an intersectional body. As Michael writes, these tensions are about survival: “We must both be legible to find each other, but also must be covert and sometimes hide to maintain safety. Survival is the key magnetic force that brings queer communities together. I wish to celebrate this and also memorialize the attempts at survival which have left many of our comrades as ancestors.



I first combined textile with its reference image for a very practical reason: the model wanted to remain anonymous. Not wanting to hide the utter beauty of a queer person, I partially covered the Polaroid with the textile copy. This combination satisfied many of my objectives: showing and hiding at the same time, proposing a visual language for queer survival. I make embroideries by scanning the source material and producing an embroidery pattern with the aid of an algorithm specifically designed to see colors and assemble them on a grid. When I hand-embroider the pattern, it transforms me into a sort of human printer, following the instructions determined by a computer. Though this work will undoubtedly convey the

analogue and the hand made, I fundamentally see these works as digital or at least in cooperation with the digital.”

bio

Michael Espinoza (they/them) lives and works in Portland, OR where they are preparing for their inaugural solo show at Strut in San Francisco's Castro District, exhibition for the 2024 Oregon Biennial, and three months in Los Angeles, CA as a 2024 Tom of Finland Foundation artist in residence. Working primarily in textile, mixed media, and photography, Espinoza's current practice recontextualizes fiber media as a ritual, bridging the present and future to Queer Ancestors lost to disease, persecution, closets, and fatal sadness. Their ongoing projects are a collection of photographic embroideries, delving into the realms of queer memory, embodiment, pleasure, community, and joy. *Image courtesy of artist. 2023*