

Keratin Manifesto

1. We are here to enact the Keratin Revolution. We are the answer to the taxonomies imposed by Linnaeus, Darwin, Facebook, nation states and other identity producing machines. The bodies of this revolution are constituted by the fibrous protein called keratin. Keratin is proposed here as a new inter-species political agency. The main component of skin, hair, nails, feathers, beaks, horns, hooves, porcupine quills, spider webs, but also wool, nail polish remover, hair straightener lotions, depilatories, Keratin questions the divisions between human / animal, natural / artificial, dead / undead, surface / depth.

2. We are Mario Merz's stuffed crocodile and Helio Oiticica's living parrot, which have been kidnapped by the permanent collections of contemporary art museums. We are the transgenic apples modified with pig genes that you eat in your fifteen minutes "break" at the office. We are users of the black nail spas run by Koreans in the suburbs of London. We are the ones with "bad hair". We are the AIDS ridden clients of the Salon de belleza [Beauty Parlour], which has become the dying place that Mexican novelist Mario Bellatin describes. We are the Indians, women and maricas ("queers") always represented with a flower in our hair. We are the flower in our hair. We are the birds, ladybugs, butterflies, mariposones: all your offensive colonial Zoography. We are Chilean chronicler Pedro Lemebel's "Tarántulas en el pelo" ("hair tarantulas"). We are a braid made of devil hair, angel hair, and witch hair. We are the inherited hyperkeratosis, which makes your skin dry and scaly making you look like a fish. We are the Cabezonas ("Big Heads") and Niñas Bizarrras ("Kinky Girls") by the artist Susana Talayero. We are Donna Haraway's Inappropriate/d Others. We were still and silent, waiting for our moment.

3. Our time is the keratin era, a pastpresent time yet to come. Exceeding the Anthropocene, we will emerge from our micro-protein chains to found a new intra-alien ecosystem. Ours is not a necessary revolution, it is a revolution for survival.

4. In the Keratin Revolution, the philosophical question of the animal is not thought only with Derrida. Here, the exchange of glances between continental European theory and the domestic cat is replaced by an encounter with Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de

Castro's jaguar. In the Keratin Revolution, the question of the responsiveness of the animal is replaced by an inquiry into difference from specific positions: Chilean anti-Pinochet activist and art collective Las Yeguas del Apocalipsis' [The Mares of the Apocalypse] Pedro Lemebel and Francisco Casas rubbing the back of an old mare with their bare skin; the contact of the skin of a sow with the performative epidermis of Spanish anti-Franco activist and performer Miguel Benlloch; the bloody symbiosis of feathers with the rounded body of Naufus Ramirez-Figueroa.

5. The bodies of the Keratin Revolution are neither simple visual signs nor textual signifiers. We are material-semiotic figures. A theory of subcultural style is insufficient to account for our constitution. Foucault's "technologies of the self" equally fail to explain us. We are not opposed to being interpreted, but we ourselves undertake the reading. We want to take the feminist theories, queer / cuir and post / de-colonial practices out from their precarious shelters in culture, speech and language and put material experience at the front line. The Keratin Revolution will be semiotic-material or there will be no revolution.

6. The Keratin species are not composed of innocent creatures. We know our genealogies and archives. These span the history of capitalism, colonialism, racism, patriarchy, neoliberalism, the politics of HIV and AIDS, art history. We will work on this archive through situated narratives of life-fictions. We will generate our own questions. And respond to them with new questions.

7. Keratin species have been historically rendered as 'surface,' lacking interiority and depth of being. By contrast, we propose to turn the negative notion of surface into a positive and productive one, fully engaging with surface. However, we refuse to simply stay 'on the surface,' rather, we choose to exist in a permanent traffic between surface and depth.

8. We demand an organic revolution of the museum. And by that we are not referring to the Tate decorating the lobbies of its new building with 'natural' plants from the floral industry. What we want is for the animal blood and viscera in Damien Hirst's own collection to ferment until the stench becomes unbearable. We don't want the British Museum to return all mummified corpses to Egypt. We will not accept apologies or reparations. What we want

is for the museum to take out all the bodies in its warehouse and expose them to the sun. Thus we also call for the abolishment of the laws of historiographical knowledge. In the Keratin Revolution, scientific rationality gives way to esoteric knowledge, necrophilia, crochet, the manicuring of fantasy. The Keratin Museum is not the temple of enlightenment; it is a club for radiating bodies.

9. Keratin bodies have neither a room of their own nor a shared room. They have no origin or family. If a parent could be recognised this would be the Mother of the “House of Keratin”: an organisational and affective figure yet to be invented.

10. We recognise ourselves as visually produced and marked bodies. The appearance and boundaries of keratin-bodies are not the skin or the tip of the hair, but rather all techno-organic display devices – including these exhibition walls. However, we do not give up on optical knowledge. Our insect eyes and twilight vision are our best allies.

11. The keratin-text is unstable, precarious. Our handwriting is not in gold nor enters through the blood. This manifesto exists as a continuous process of rewriting.

Aimar Arriola

London, September 2017, from the heart of all networks of neoliberal influence

This is a revised version of The Keratin Manifesto first published in Portuguese and English under the title “Keratin Revolution (Manifesto)” in the journal *Caderno Videobrasil* (Issue 11, Brazil, 2015/2016), guest edited by Miguel A. López. It included visual contributions by artists Miguel Benlloch, Camilo Godoy, Jeleton, La Novia Sirena, R. Marcos Mota, Naufus Ramirez-Figueroa, and Susana Talayero. Original text: English translation from Spanish by Rebecca Close. A second revision of the text was presented as a wall piece in the group exhibition *Hailweed* at Auto Italia, London (12 June - 24 July, 2016).