

Ferments, Family, Kinship, Home

Kimberly Ho & Diana Bang, Samuel Kiehoon Lee,
E Edreva, Paul Wong, TJ Shin, Jamie Ross,
Leo Williams, Max Horwich, Ashley Jane Lewis,
Katya Rozanova, & Emily Saltz
Curated by Lauren Gabrielle Fournier

Fermentation is a slow process of transformation by microbes like bacteria and yeast that requires the factors of time, space, and care. As a biochemical process, it embodies preservation and change simultaneously, which makes it a ripe metaphor for a range of concepts. It was this tension that first had me approaching feminism through fermentation in the ongoing *Fermenting Feminism* (2017–present), with my asking what should be preserved from histories, and what needs to be transformed as we move toward more just and reparative futures?

Through queer kinship, multilingual and extra-rational archives, and trans-species becoming, the artists in this program reimagine what constitutes family, belonging, and home through the radically patient practices of fermentation and knowledge-sharing from their respective lives.

In *How To Make Kimchi According to my Kun-Umma*, we follow documentarian Samuel Kiehoon Lee's Kun-Umma ("Big Mama") or aunt Bong Ja Lee in the process of making kimchi, which she explains is central to every meal in Korea, while also getting a glimpse into the rapport between the artist and his aunt. Paul Wong's *Mother's Cupboard* records the artist's mother and Chinese-Canadian elder, Suk-Fong, as she shows her son her collection of Chinese medicines, herbs, and ingredients while detailing their uses.

What is lost in translation? E Edreva's *Cooking with Grandma* emerges from the artist's experience trying to read family recipes. While she can read Bulgarian as printed text, she cannot discern it in handwriting, and so she must use Google Translate as a technological aid. With Google translation on "pause," she moves for a period outside of the register of legibility and into the haptic.

"I am looking for a new form," reads the text in TJ Shin's *M is for Memoir*. If language itself ferments, it also has to find vessels within, to take shape over time. As language and grammar ferment, material bubbles. Shin's intimate observations of the land on which they're working come through in their art, made in residence at Wave Hill in the Bronx, at a time during the pandemic when they were also volunteering with local composting initiatives.

This residency of Shin's closely followed their Gut Feelings residency/exhibition at Recess Session in Brooklyn, where Shin practiced Korean Natural Farming (JADAM) to ferment lactic acid and inject it into the soil of a greenhouse in the gallery, to respond to the loss of native intestinal gut bacteria that Asian immigrants to the US experience within the first year of arrival.

A slow circularity of movement orients the viewer in Kimberly Ho's and Diana Bang's *In fermentation*. Ferment can refer to being worked up, which is what Ho and Bang explore here. Disorderliness comes in when a drinking vessel falls, smashing to the ground.

Jamie Ross's work is part of his ongoing project on the 606 Club in California, a secret drinking spot for LGBTQ+ that was breached by police in a very public raid in 1914. Ross's process includes ongoing conversations with queer elders, land-based "psychic sensing" at the site in California, and placing the spit of queer elders into vessels from the 606 to try and revivify the historical yeasts as a way of making visible the embodied histories of queer life and death.

New Mexico-based artist collaborators and partners E Edreva and Leo Williams' *Family Jewels* brings a queer and trans approach to who or what can constitute one's children—including worms of vermicompost, and the living cultures in yogurt and kefir. After all, these are the living beings that the artists tenderly care for each day—the future in which they've invested.

In *Bread Symphony: Sonified Sourdough*, collaborators Max Horwich, Ashley Jane Lewis, Katya Rozanova, and Emily Saltz create a speculative sourdough choir—a transspecies composition that makes audible the distinct lifecycles of the microbes that exist in a sourdough starter. Performed at Slow Movement Computing and the NYC Electroacoustic Improvisation Summit, the work asks audiences to listen deeply and attune to a gradually unfolding song.

— Lauren Gabrielle Fournier

Tuesday, June 28

Streaming from 11AM–11PM on the Images Website
81 MIN + Q&A

This online screening will be presented with optional Closed Captions



In fermentation

Kimberly Ho & Diana Bang

CANADA | 2022 | DIGITAL | 3 MIN | ENGLISH

In fermentation is an experimental short film that explores the disorderly cycle of rest and unrest. Within the absurd charms of contradictions, we jostle and swing between states of turbulence and relaxation towards alchemical transformation.

This work was commissioned by fu-GEN Theatre Company for the NAC's Transformation Project. This project showcases works from the country's most innovative artists, responding to a provocation by playwright David Yee: "What would it take to transform our society for the betterment of all?"



How to Make Kimchi According to My Kun-Umma

Samuel Kiehoon Lee

CANADA | 2002 | DIGITAL | 18 MIN 11 SEC | KOREAN/ENGLISH (WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES)

Fun, Family, and Food are the focus of this witty yet informative look into Korean culture. Bong Ja Lee is the filmmaker's Kun-Umma (auntie) and she makes for a delightful subject in this documentary short. The film delivers not only a recipe for kimchi, but also tells the story of an immigrant woman juggling with being a grandmother, a leader in the Korean-Canadian community, and an aunt to her pestering nephew attempting to document her life.

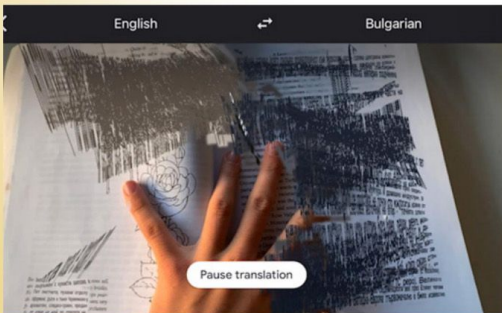
Co-presented with

Whippersnapper

Content Notes:

This program contains mentions of alcohol and intoxication, and discussion of family-making.





Cooking with Grandma
E Edreva

USA | 2022 | DIGITAL | 5 MIN | NO DIALOGUE

Cooking with Grandma demonstrates how a severance from ancestral language is also a severance from familial and cultural foods. The video moves between English and Bulgarian using Google Translate, translating a published Bulgarian cookbook written in English and a family recipe-book handwritten by my grandma. Since I can only read typed Bulgarian, this work asks what it means for my cells to contain the memories of generations of family cooking, but for me to need (faulty) technological mediation in reading their recipes.



Mother's Cupboard
Paul Wong

CANADA | 2020 | DIGITAL | 13 MIN | TOISANESE (WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES)

Suk-Fong Wong, a Chinese-Canadian elder, intimately takes us through her treasured collections of Chinese medicines, herbs, and ingredients found in her cupboards.

Recorded in 2012, Suk-Fong speaks in her first language, Toisanese (Cantonese), and describes what some of her homemade elixirs and compounds are used for. This includes "loik doy dew", a deer bone alcohol-based elixir used for adding to soups. Most of the ingredients shown can be readily found in Chinese herbal stores.



M for Memoir
TJ Shin

US | 2020 | DIGITAL | 14 MIN | ENGLISH

The "M" in M-theory that unifies all superstring theory stands for "membrane", "mystery", "magic", and "mother". *M for Memoir* follows a single leaf mould microorganism waking up from dormancy and returning back to the soil, to find a new host, back to its mother. The fermenter—the artist—facilitates a community of indigenous leaf mould—created from decomposed leaves—embodying the role of the witch, the scientist, and the alchemist, and from it, looks for possibilities of animacy and deep time.



There's Room Enough in Paradise
Jamie Ross

CANADA | 2022 | DIGITAL | 5 MIN | ENGLISH

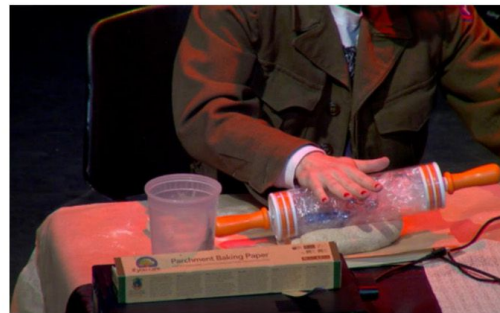
There's Room Enough in Paradise documents the teaching of faggot folk song across the generations. Three episodes of an ongoing oral history project undertaken by artist Jamie Ross on communal rural land projects in North America at seasonal ritual gatherings before the COVID-19 pandemic, the short video features auto-ethnographic material of faggot elder friends teaching younger queers songs from the Stonewall uprising and leftist Gay Liberation folk songs from the 1960s and 1970s.



Family Jewels
E Edreva & Leo Williams

USA | 2018 | DIGITAL | 7 MIN | NO DIALOGUE

Family Jewels depicts fermentation as a queer parenting practice. In the video, a queer couple tenderly nourishes the microscopic life forms that nourish them. The work is a response to "biological" arguments that demand the existence of the gender binary and of sexual reproduction as family-building requirements. As a couple who exists outside of those ideas, we seek to show, celebrate, and cradle life forms that wriggle out of boxed-in conceptions of gender and reproduction.



Bread Symphony: Sonified Sourdough
Max Horwich, Ashley Jane Lewis, Katya Rozanova, & Emily Saltz

CANADA | 2021 | DIGITAL | 14 MIN | ENGLISH

Bread Symphony is an active cross-species collaboration meant for material and spiritual nourishment. Seeing bread-making as a form of engaging dialogically with other species, the collective behind this work aims to document and make audible the lifecycle of the organisms that ferment the bread as we accompany these oft-unperceived organisms in sonic unison. *Bread Symphony* allows participants to collectively listen, respond, and produce sound that forms a new part of this emergent more-than-human symphony.

IMAGES FESTIVAL

S L O W E D I T I O N