

My health is sponsored by the Anthropocene (...) If I can only role play, then I shall be a cyborg.

A line from the video *Cybernetic hands playing in the mud* articulates Anouk Verviers's reflection on her chronic pain and its entanglement with kinship and empowerment on the premise of Anthropocene and feminist cyborg theory. Composed of four sections of narrations unfolding in front of a spinning historical medical illustration of an ovary with endometriosis lesions, the video is never a statement of self-care. Instead, it outlines a thinking process of unpacking the archival women's family history and re-imaging cyborg bodies with grounding sustainable and organic materials to fulfill the next step of community care.

Walking through the plastic curtain, the viewer comes across the cyclic space-time. Happenings are built upon layers of traces. The mud is everywhere as the perceptible tracks of the continually durational performance Building, destroying, and rebuilding cob columns as high as our bodies. The composed electronic music and the subtle coral neon lights reinforce the sci-fi immersive scenario. However, its solid visual contrast of wooden structures and tools immediately balances the futuristic aura. The temperature of hands, every step on the mud, and the interactive motions of the performers construct the cob columns. As the title suggests, the performance reflects upon empowerment through repetitive work, the cyclic process of building, collapsing, and remaking. It is a ceremony of collaborative care and interdependency. A slow practice demonstrates the threshold of energy and respect for bodies.

"For not only do relations involve care, care is itself relational." ¹ The performance and the durational filming documents transform the meaning of stamina and further embodies the care on - not my body - but our bodies. In the three-hour duration, the women performers rely on each other. They labour, and they rest. Within the space, they refuse to take advantage of the flourishing underpinned by significant levels of pain, struggle, and exploitation of women and nature throughout history. They support each other, side by side to embrace fatigue. Embedded in cross-generational pain and exhaustion, the cycle and the movements inscribe a proclamation of care and regeneration.

This connection cannot be broken.

Words by Yueh-Ning Lee, July 2023

[1] María Puig de la Bellacasa, 'Nothing Comes Without Its World': Thinking with Care.' *The Sociological Review* 2012 60:2, 197-216