Tura Oliveira
What A Glory to Be So Euphoric and Weak
Curated by C. Finley
August 26 – September 29, 2022
Thursday–Sunday,
1–7 PM
Opening reception: Friday, August 26, 6-8 PM
Closing reception: Thursday, September 29, 6-8 PM

New York, NY, August 4, 2021 – La MaMa Galleria is honored to present Tura Oliveira. What a Glory to Be So Euphoric and Weak. The exhibition will be on view at 47 Great Jones Street, New York, NY (between Bowery and Lafayette St. – please note that the address is different from that of the La MaMa Theater), from August 26 to September 29, 2022, Thursday Sunday 1-7 PM. The opening reception will be held on Friday, August 26, from 6-9 PM, performances begin at 8pm.

What A Glory to Be So Euphoric and Weak, curated by C. Finley, is an installation and the setting for a performance of the same name. The show is the first to meld Oliveira’s performance work fully with her textile practice. The performance (based on the Brazilian folkloric dance Bumba, Meu Boi) is a multimedia collaboration with the performers, and centers around the death and resurrection of an ox. The majority of the works in the show are figurative textiles and biomorphic soft sculptures exploring two intertwining narratives: one a kind of creation myth, and the other a dystopian sci-fi love story. A wall-sized entryway made from reclaimed cotton fabric marks the entrance to the show. In this work, the use of bed sheets, tablecloths, duvet covers, and pillowcases entangles the cosmic imagery with friends’ intimate domestic sites of communion and touch. In this monumental textile and in other works, cotton, silk, and silk velvet are dyed and over-dyed, appliquéd, and otherwise imbued with the images of lovers and monsters, cosmic phenomena and alien plant life. At the center of the space are the remnants of the performance: costumes, masks, and props.

Dyed silk works are stretched in space like flayed skins, and cocoon-like sculptures made from hand-dyed silk velvet beckon the viewer with outstretched tentacles. An ox (a castrated bull) appears throughout the work recast as a mother, her death and resurrection a metaphor for the resiliency of Latin American leftist movements. Viewers are greeted in the foyer by a monumental soft sculpture of a mythic snake (another figure from Bumba, Meu Boi) that devours everything in its path.

Figurative cyanotypes sketch out a recurring narrative in Oliveira’s work: lovers struggling to connect across planes of existence, matter, and time; figures dissolve into smoke, leaves, and shadows, and resolve back again. Throughout the space, figures and materials move through cycles of absorption, dissolving, purging, and metamorphosis: Eros is the melter of limbs, Aphrodite was born from castration. The title of the show (modified lyrics from the Mariah Carey song Heartbreaker) holds clues to the artist’s interest in the erotic and the vital self. For Oliveira, giving up oneself to erotic love and to the infiniteness of the universe are one and the same.
What A Glory to Be So Euphoric and Weak is presented by La MaMa Galleria. Generous funding for the exhibition is provided by an anonymous benefactor and the NYC City Artist Corps grant.

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Tura Oliveira is an interdisciplinary artist and performer based in Brooklyn. She attended the Rhode Island School of Design and is currently an MFA candidate at Yale. She has received awards, residencies, and fellowships from organizations including Yaddo, BRIC, AIR Gallery, Ars Nova, and the Tides Institute. She has had solo exhibitions at spaces including Geary Contemporary, BRIC, Wave Hill, The Java Project, and Disclaimer Gallery. She was a 2019 Van Lier Fellow at Wave Hill, and a 2020 NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellow. In 2023, she will be the Abbey Awards Fellow at the British School at Rome. Her work uses textiles, video, installation, and performance to explore labor, science fiction, and queer futurity. Her performances use original music, handmade sets and costumes, drag, and re-performance, with text drawn from popular culture, and idiosyncratic research. Her current work centers around intertwining sci-fi narratives in a queer, utopian future, using textiles and immersive installation to transform these narratives into an expansive and interconnected mythology for a future earth.

ABOUT THE CURATOR
Founder and Curator of the Every Woman Biennial: C. Finley, based in New York City and Rome, is known for her elaborate paintings and intense use of color, monumental murals, multi-disciplinary collaborations, and her activism through urban art interventions, including her acclaimed Wallpapered Dumpsters. Initiating the Whitney Houston Biennial: I’m Every Woman 2014, followed by the 2017 Whitney Houston Biennial: Greatest Love Of All, Finley’s goal with the 2019 and 2021 iterations of the newly named Every Woman Biennial was to expand the Biennial, starting with LA and London, creating a model to be replicated worldwide in 2023.

https://www.iamfinley.com/

ABOUT LAMAMA GALLERIA
Founded in 1984, La Galleria is a nonprofit gallery committed to nurturing experimentation in the visual arts. La Galleria encourages an active dialogue between new media, performance, the plastic and visual arts, curatorial projects, and educational initiatives. It serves the East Village community by offering diverse programming to an inter-generational audience, and expanding the parameters of a traditional gallery space. As a non-profit, La Galleria is able to provide artists and curators with unique exhibition opportunities that are largely out of reach in a commercial gallery setting. https://www.lamama.org/programs/la-mama-galleria

For press inquiries, images and interview requests, please contact the gallery at lamamagalleria@gmail.com

Images L-R: Tura Oliveira, photos by Sophie Schwartz