

● Contemporary Art Writing Daily

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Carolyn Lazard
Cinema 1, Cinema 2, 2020
Fire
Infinite duration

[Two identical small black boxes sit directly on the floor, plugged into electrical sockets on the wall. On their top, identical configurations of logs appear burning in flames. Through small slits in the boxes, wires and electrical components are visible.]

"Heat as a replacement for warmth." A band-aid to stand in for mother's compassion. "a world we must continually attenuate." We design a "humanity" and it reappears in alien forms. You can't redesign warmth; you design its substitute. Technologies of the human. Of "care." The Journal of Technologies of Care. Because we don't, or can't, care. Aliens emerge. Colby Chamberlain channels Marta Russell: the Americans with Disabilities Act that G.H.W. Bush "signed into law to trim welfare rolls." Neoliberal care, freedom for the "uncompensated labor necessary to reproduce oneself day after day." Adorno channels Tocqueville: "tyranny leaves the body free and sets to work directly on the soul. The ruler no longer says: 'Either you think as I do or you die.' He says: 'You are free not to think as I do; your life, your property – all that you shall keep. But from this day on you will be a stranger among us.'" Care made equivalent to function. Efficacy equivalent to its efficiency.

So much art currently deploys and compositionally medical/institutional aesthetics but rarely cares for its material conditions. And so what happens when Guber sinks are stripped of their touch and we are left with a stainless version- scientifically designed to shed the human. A world that won't purify on its own. It is all alien.