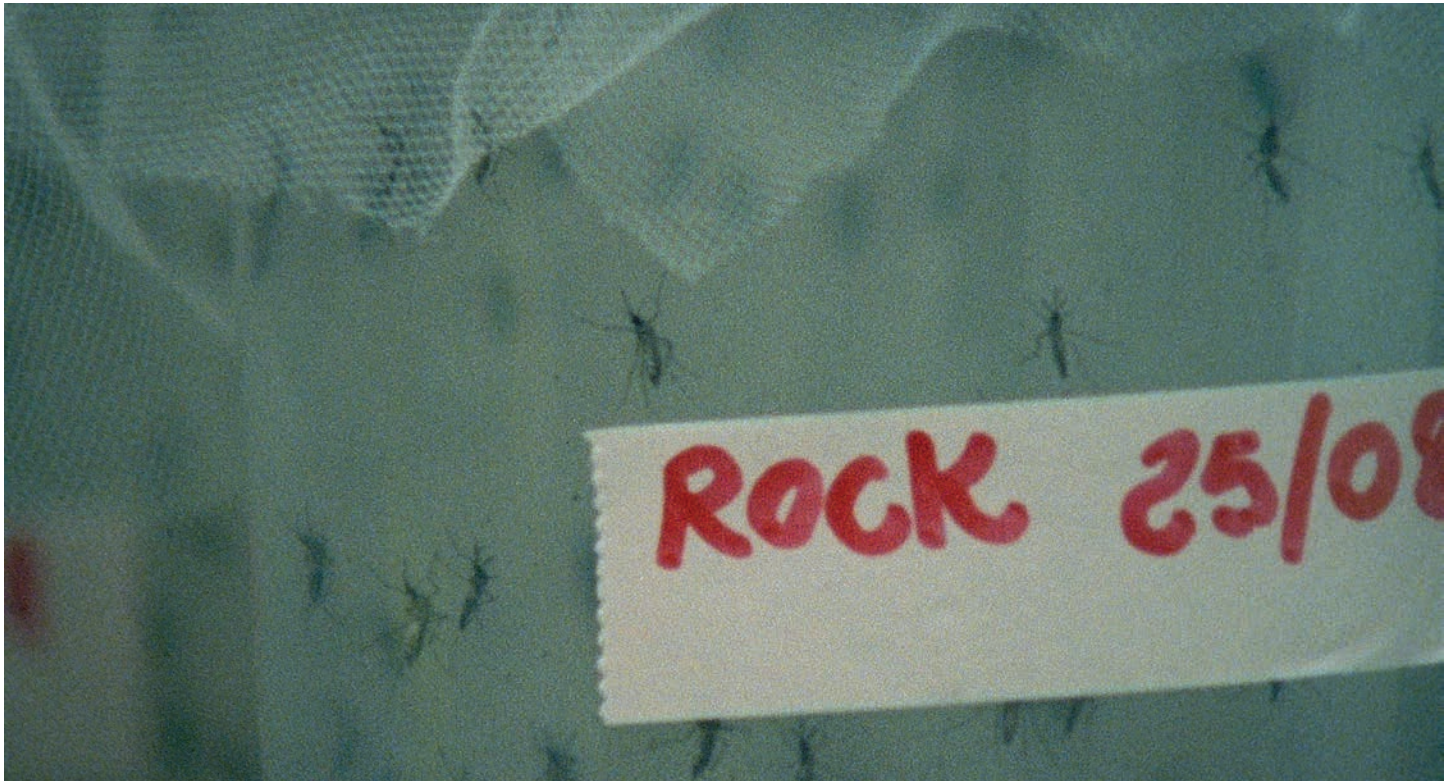


Pedro Neves Marques

English



A Mordida (The Bite)



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Drawing from the fields of anthropology and ecology, New York-based artist Pedro Neves Marques employs science fiction and speculative storytelling to create works ranging from fictional dramas to theoretical films and writings. For his first solo museum exhibition in the United States, Neves Marques further extends his interests into science, technology, and gender to present an open narrative addressing gender militarization and its transgression. The exhibition encompasses an audio-visual installation featuring the premiere of three new films commissioned by PAMM, digital animations, and a sound piece produced by London-based musician Fraencis, sounds which add a mysterious and unnerving ambient tone to the gallery space.

As visitors enter the gallery, they first encounter *Aedes aegypti* (2017)—a computer-generated animation of the Zika virus carrier mosquito. Resting on skin while filling its body with drawn blood, the insect emerges from a thin chemical cloud reminiscent of misty fog in a horror film. Building suspense of the unknown, this work hints at the exhibition's overall post-natural themes.

The Gender of the Laboratory (2018) is a fictional drama that unfolds at a laboratory for genetically modified mosquitos in São Paulo. Employing the qualities of *cinéma vérité*—a documentary filmmaking style that conveys a sense of candid realism—this work brings the viewer into the lab as a witness to transgenic manipulation. In his words, Neves Marques seeks to construct his films “through a mesh of layers,” creating

contradictions and “tension in the abrupt jump cuts between . . . two apparently distinct narratives.”¹ Poems written by the artist interrupt the scenes, allowing for moments of both clarity and ambiguity. Images are overlaid with the unsynchronized voiceovers, creating abstract correlations between imagery and audio.

Considering the laboratory as a place where life and nature can be controlled and redefined, Neves Marques looks at the genetic manipulation of the insect to explore the role of gender in the history of science. In the film, lethal genes are injected into the male mosquito, which is then released into nature to mate. The offspring, carrying the lethal gene, will not survive to reach adulthood, thus breaking the pattern of disease transmission. This process grants the male full control of and domination over the female's reproduction system, emphasizing the heteronormativity of the laboratory and its assault on reproductive autonomy.

The short film *Se o mosquito pode matar, ele não pode nascer* (If the Mosquito Can Kill, It Can't Be Born, 2018) serves as a transition between films *The Gender of the Laboratory* and *Sex as Care* (2018). Beginning with images of a highway, the scenery shifts to a natural landscape and introduces characters who also appear in *Sex as Care*, including a transgender woman who is flipping through anatomy books and looking at images that suggest the possibility of male pregnancy. This moment reflects the scenes in the laboratory, questioning the ethics and feasibility of manipulating life.

¹ Pedro Neves Marques, “Where to sit at the dinner table?,” interview by Paulo Tavares, Vdrome, <http://www.vdrome.org/pedro-neves-marques-where-to-sit-at-the-dinner-table>



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Through the films' narratives Neves Marques touches on the spread of intolerant conservative politics in Brazil, which has reached a new level with the rise of President-elect Jair Bolsonaro. During his twenty-seven years in congress, Bolsonaro has declared an aggressive position against the LGBTQ community through many homophobic and hateful statements, such as "I would be incapable of loving a homosexual child. . . . I'd rather have my son die in an accident than show up with some mustachioed guy. For me, he would have died."² Observing how people who identify with alternate forms of sexual expression live in this hostile environment, Neves Marques draws connections—using an imaginary of biology and genetics—between psychological and bodily trauma resulting from biological warfare. If in *The Gender of the Laboratory* the mating of mosquitos is weaponized to spread a lethal gene and control a population, then *Sex as Care*, the opposite is being suggested. One can speculate that the bite, or the disease being fought and controlled in the lab, is perhaps gender fluidity itself, and genetic manipulation a militarized force against nonbinary genders and sexualities.

Whereas the sterile environment of the lab in one film exudes tension and constraint, the organic images of nature and the flesh of human bodies in *Sex as Care* imply a sense of comfort and retreat. Veering between the contested present and an uncertain future, in these films, Neves Marques poetically and abstractly suggests an alternate ecology that preserves a space of feeling, love, acceptance, and all the sensitivities that are needed in times of hostility.

Jennifer Inacio | Assistant Curator



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All images courtesy the artist and Galleria Umberto di Marino, Naples, Italy

- Cover *Aedes aegypti*, 2017. Digital color animation, silent, 1 min., 50 sec.
- 2 *The Gender of the Laboratory*, 2018. Digital color video transferred from Super 16 mm film, with sound, 10 min.
- 3 *Se o mosquito pode matar, ele não pode nascer* (If the Mosquito Can Kill, It Can't Be Born), 2018. Digital color video transferred from Super 16 mm film, with sound, 2 min.
- 4 *Sex as Care*, 2018. Digital color video transferred from Super 16 mm film, with sound, 8 min.

² Jair Bolsonaro quoted in Andrew Fishman, "Jair Bolsonaro is Elected President of Brazil. Read His Extremist, Far-right Positions in His Own Words," *The Intercept*, October 28, 2018, <https://theintercept.com/2018/10/28/jair-bolsonaro-elected-president-brazil/>

Pedro Neves Marques: A Mordida
December 4, 2018–July 28, 2019

Pedro Neves Marques

b. 1984, Lisbon; lives in New York

A Mordida is an audio-visual installation encompassing the works listed below. Unless otherwise noted, all works are courtesy the artist and Galleria Umberto di Marino, Naples, Italy.

A Mordida (The Bite), 2018

By Fraencis, in collaboration with Pedro Neves Marques

Dolby surround sound for 6 speakers and a subwoofer, 20 min.

Courtesy the artists

Aedes aegypti, 2017

Digital color animation, silent, 1 min., 50 sec.

Produced by Pedro Neves Marques and Stenar Projects with the support of Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon

The Gender of the Laboratory, 2018

Digital color video transferred from Super 16 mm film, with sound, 10 min.

Se o mosquito pode matar, ele não pode nascer (If the Mosquito Can Kill, It Can't Be Born), 2018

Digital color video transferred from Super 16 mm film, with sound, 2 min.

Sex as Care, 2018

Digital color video transferred from Super 16 mm film, with sound, 8 min.

Pedro Neves Marques: A Mordida is organized by PAMM Assistant Curator Jennifer Inacio. The exhibition is supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.



Biography

Pedro Neves Marques received an MA in art and politics from Goldsmiths, University of London, and a BA in fine arts from University of Lisbon. He has had solo presentations of his work at Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon; e-flux, New York (with Mariana Silva); and EDP Foundation, Lisbon (with André Romão). His work has been included in group presentations including the 2018 Triennial: *Songs for Sabotage*, New Museum, New York, and at SculptureCenter, New York; Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, New York; Anthology Film Archives, New York; Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris; Kadist Art Foundation, Paris; Tate Modern, London; V-A-C Foundation, Venice; Parco Arte Vivente,

Production credits for *The Gender of the Laboratory*, *Se o mosquito pode matar, ele não pode nascer*, and *Sex as Care*:

Written and directed by Pedro Neves Marques with Ana Flávia Cavalcanti, Alina Dörzbacher, Pamela Escolástico, Kelner Macêdo, Luiz Felipe Lucas, and Diogo Hayashi

Produced by Pedro Neves Marques and Catarina Sousa

Photography direction by Marta Simões

Sound by Tales Manfrinato

Art direction by Diogo Hayashi

Edited by Pedro Neves Marques

Commissioned by Pérez Art Museum Miami

Turin; Casa do Povo, São Paulo; Surssock Museum, Beirut; Times Museum, Guangzhou; Fundación Botín, Santander, Spain; and Serralves Museum, Porto; and Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology (MAAT), Lisbon. Neves Marques is the editor of *The Forest and the School: Where to Sit at the Dinner Table?* (2014), an anthology on Brazilian Antropofagia from an anthropological perspective, and author of two short story collections, most recently *Morrer na América* (2017). He is cofounder of inhabitants-tv.org, an online channel for exploratory video and documentary reporting. He lives and works in New York.



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