

Covid Chronicles

Covid Chronicles was worked on at home during the first twelve week lockdown in 2020. The series comprises twelve paintings that are mixed media on paper, each individual painting is A4 and are shown here together as a single artwork.

During lockdown it was strange and difficult not to have access to my studio, so Covid Chronicles took on the role of a visual diary, with one painting representing a week of lockdown.

The work chronicles an internalised landscape of anxiety and isolation through the labour of intensive mark making, which creates an obsessive 'noise' to drown out fear of the pandemic. It bought back the panic that was prevalent during the height of AIDs and the hostile environment of the 80's. Then, as it is now, the virus is culturally mediated, where bodies become sites of 'battles', 'defence', 'attack', emerging as 'territories' that are 'colonised'. This time, Covid exposing the inequities of class and systemic racism.

The LGBTQ+ communities rely on venues and gatherings to nurture their sense of 'family' and the rules of lockdown paid no heed to our alternative families. This invisibility again resonated with the past, privileging the nuclear family structure and exacerbating the isolation, felt by many in the LGBTQ+ community.

However, whilst Covid Chronicles expressed anxiety and isolation, it also celebrated what creativity can open up and heal. The bleakness of a pandemic maybe the worst of times, but love is its constant companion which brings the best of times and that's as true now, as it was in the era of *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*/Love in the Time of Cholera.

Veronica Slater