

Cover Art | Untitled Artist Statement

Pato Hebert

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The cover image comes from the *Lingering* project, a large body of work that addresses the COVID-19 condition of long hauling, a state of ongoing symptoms and challenges that persist well after the initial 4-6 weeks of acute infection. People enduring Long COVID are colloquially known as long-haulers. I first became ill early in the pandemic (March, 2020) and I continue to be a long-hauler over four years later. The impacts of the virus linger in my body and being. This is a frustrating process that I call the COVIDoldrums. As part of my slow efforts to recover, I have worked with an infectious disease specialist, pulmonologist, gastroenterologist, neurologist, naturopath and acupuncturist.

Regular walks in Los Angeles' Elysian Park became integral to my gradual recovery process. Although exertion and exercise can be counter-productive for many long-haulers, I found these gentle walks to be a lifesaver. They helped me to slowly rebuild my lung capacity and strengthen my spirit. As part of this gentle walking practice, I utilized my mobile phone to make pictures.

Elysian Park is a hilly beacon of six hundred acres located right in the heart of the city. Free and accessible during daylight hours, its trails, breezes, and embrace have been even more vital to the city's wellness practices during the pandemic. This special place has been integral to my process of healing and creativity. It nuanced my sense of time — from the geological and topographical time embodied by the bedrock to seasonal shifts in temperatures, flowers, and migrating birds, to the ephemera of fallen PPE littering the landscape. These different scales of time unfold as I have stumbled to comprehend the unevenness of the chronically ill body, whose clock so seldom seems to have any regularity of schedule.

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The raw, expansive park also offers the gift of images. Reminders of the pandemic are everywhere. The park is marked by people's protection and affection, their pleasure and care. My *Lingering* series of photographs emerged from the first 19 months of the pandemic. The images depict the virus's impact on our lives, our impact on the park, and the persistence of the park's land and more than human beings as vibrant forces. The images are printed as archival pigment prints on silk charmeuse with an undulating, organic hemmed edge.

Cover image by Pato Hebert

"Untitled" from the *Lingering* series

Archival pigment print on silk charmeuse

2020–21

12 3/4" x 9 3/4" x 1/8"

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Author Bio

Pato Hebert is an artist, teacher and organizer. His work probes the challenges and possibilities of interconnectedness. His creative projects have been presented at the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo in Quito, Beton7 in Athens, the Ballarat International Foto Biennale, the Songzhuang International Photo Biennale, and IHLIA LGBT Heritage in Amsterdam. He works across a wide range of media including photography, sculpture, installation, text, design and performance. Hebert has worked in HIV prevention initiatives with queer communities of color since 1994. These grassroots efforts at local and transnational levels engage social movements and community organizations to develop innovative approaches to HIV mobilization, programs and justice. He is also a COVID-19 long hauler, living with the ongoing impacts of the coronavirus since March of 2020 and publicly addressing the pandemic through creativity and community building. *Lingering*, his solo exhibition about long COVID, debuted at Pitzer College in 2022 and was curated by Ruti Talmor. His writing about COVID has appeared in *Lastgaspism: Art and Survival in the Age of Pandemic* (eds. Romero, A., Tucker, D., Wang, D.), *The Long COVID Survival Guide: How to Take Care of Yourself and What Comes Next* (ed: Fiona Lowenstein) and *The Long COVID Reader: Writing and Poetry from 45 Long Haulers* (ed: Ladd, King and McMahon). Hebert serves as Chair and is an Associate Arts Professor in the Department of Art & Public Policy at Tisch School of the Arts, New York University, where his students have thrice nominated him for the David Payne-Carter Award for Teaching Excellence.