

JESS T. DUGAN

American, born Biloxi, MS, 1986

VANESSA FABBRE

American, born San Jose, CA, 1978

Gloria, Chicago, IL, 2016 from the portfolio *To Survive on This Shore: Photographs and Interviews with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Older Adults, 2018*

Inkjet print on paper, 20 × 16 inches

Block Friends of Art Fund purchase, 2019.2.1e-f

To Survive on This Shore: Photographs and Interviews with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Older Adults is a collaborative project between photographer Jess T. Dugan and social work professor Vanessa Fabbre. It consists of sensitive portraits of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals in their fifties, sixties, seventies, and eighties, paired with excerpts from interviews in which they discuss their experiences. The portfolio, which was developed specifically for university art museums, presents twelve photograph and text pairings drawn from the larger series.

The project stemmed from Dugan and Fabbre's previous work with trans communities, and a desire to highlight a population that is often not seen. Over a period of five years, Dugan and Fabbre traveled across the United States photographing and interviewing people in rural and urban communities and from a variety of ethnic and class backgrounds. The development of their pool of sitters started with Dugan and Fabbre's ties to organizations that serve the LGBTQ community, and grew through word-of-mouth recommendations.

With many trans-related media stories focused on the violence and discrimination that trans people face, Dugan noted that they had a growing "...awareness that younger trans people don't have a lot of images of older trans people to look to for validation."¹ The pair wanted to preserve the stories of these pathbreaking generations. Fabbre, for her part, was inspired by the potential for art to reach a broader audience than the academic channels through which she usually disseminates her work.

All photographs in the series are shot in or near the sitters' homes, with the subjects' full collaborative participation. Each photograph is paired with a text sheet with an excerpt from the subject's interview. The photograph functions as its own composition, even though both text and photo are always meant to be exhibited together. Dugan and Fabbre are working to deposit the full interview transcripts in archives across the United States so that these stories will be preserved for and accessible to future generations.

—Janet Dees

Steven and Lisa Munster Tananbaum Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

1 Karen Irvine, "An Interview with Jess T. Dugan and Vanessa Fabbre," in Jess T. Dugan and Vanessa Fabbre, *To Survive on This Shore: Photographs and Interviews with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Older Adults* (Berlin: Kerher Verlag, 2018), 150.