

Megafauna *(these desperate earthly forms)*



REAL
ART WAYS

June 19, 2025 -
September 7, 2025

Ezra Moth

About the Exhibit

My work teeters on the edge of speculation and functionality, between science fiction and practicality, and it always deals with the intersection of ecology and queer liberation. It is not medium specific and has been presented in the form of sculptures, speculative agriculture interventions, and performance artworks. Largely, I hope to present thoughtful and radical alternatives to the climate catastrophe, centering nonbinary and nonhuman perspectives in these future visualizations.

My materials are often living organisms: plants, algae, fungi, and bacteria. Part mad scientist and part drag persona, my art practice ricochets from sublime hopefulness to postapocalyptic despair, between humor and profundity. I often begin with a specific problem: unsustainable industrial agriculture practices, pharmaceutical companies' monopolization of access to hormones, or water pollution – and from there, my storytelling, sculptures, and installations offer hypothetical and fantastical solutions.

I work in a community biology lab, hybridizing fennel plants for use in hormone replacement therapy. Alongside its strong estrogenic properties, fennel is also a host plant for native swallowtail caterpillars. These tall herbaceous bodies and their metamorphosing residents had me imagining a future where gender is not regulated by policy or monopolized by pharmaceutical companies. Could I grow a garden of hormones in my backyard, and with those gardens, could my trans friends harvest and synthesize their own gender?

Megafauna presents the process of that research: concentrated phytoestrogen extracted from the mutant plants created in my laboratory. Refrigerated and surrounded by traces of the scientific process, these vials of liquid are connected via a metaphorical umbilicus to a vast bioplastic form that inhabits the gallery space. This thing is neither vessel nor human nor animal. It is a specter that faces toward the present violence against trans bodies. A monstrous amalgamation of this fear: a symbiotic sludge of gelatine and seaweed and fennel and flesh.



About the Artist

Ezra Moth is an interdisciplinary artist whose work engages with ecology, queer identity, and the Anthropocene. Immersed in fantasy and dystopian futures, their installations contrive narratives through the lens of eco-feminism. Having studied sustainable agriculture and sculpture at UCONN, and performance art at Goldsmiths, University of London, their work spans both scientific curiosities and dreamlike utopias. Their installations and performances have been presented internationally in exhibitions and residencies such as the Thessaloniki Queer Arts Festival in Greece, Ortegay Y Gasset projects in Gowanus, RIXC center for new media culture in Latvia, Joya Arte + Ecologia in Spain, and the Queens Botanical Garden. They are currently based between Tolland, CT and Brooklyn, NY.

For purchase inquiries, please contact: Peter Albano, Visual Arts Manager, palbano@realartways.org



Courtesy of Peter Brown Photography

Essay by Etti Yaniv

A shimmering, massive, tent-like form unfurls at the center of the Real Art Ways gallery—wet-looking, luminous, and pulsing with life. This is Ezra Moth's *Megafauna (these desperate earthly forms)*, an installation that anchors the space with its grand presence. Its surface glows with layered greens, yellows, and reds, glistening like a body in motion—at once alluring and menacing. Made of glossy bioplastic folds, it suspends from the ceiling by thick ropes, twisting toward the floor. Tubes snake from a glass refrigeration lab unit into the main structure, suggesting a closed-loop system of circulation. The scene evokes an organism in a living lab.

The central form—smooth and partially translucent material—resembles a creature from science fiction: a monstrous alien organism. Its skin appears stretched and inhabited, as if something is forming beneath it. The form is grotesque, unknowable, and spectacular. Some of the installation leans toward drag aesthetics: A giant, soft pink glove—resembling a prompt from a drag costume—curls forward on the floor. Hyperbolic and vulnerable, it punctuates the absurd system with lightness. Theatricality pulses through every detail—the bioplastic structure doubles as costume, character, and membrane. Color, scent, and sound build a lush environment, offering no stable vantage point, only proximity and response.

The installation evokes the uneasy reaction to trans bodies, the violence against them, and the antagonism toward the science of gender-affirming technology. Yet within the environment, the space feels like a quiet refuge. The space envelops you through all your senses. It smells organic, and the softly bubbling water from a vessel fountain heightens the contemplative atmosphere in this intimate interiority.

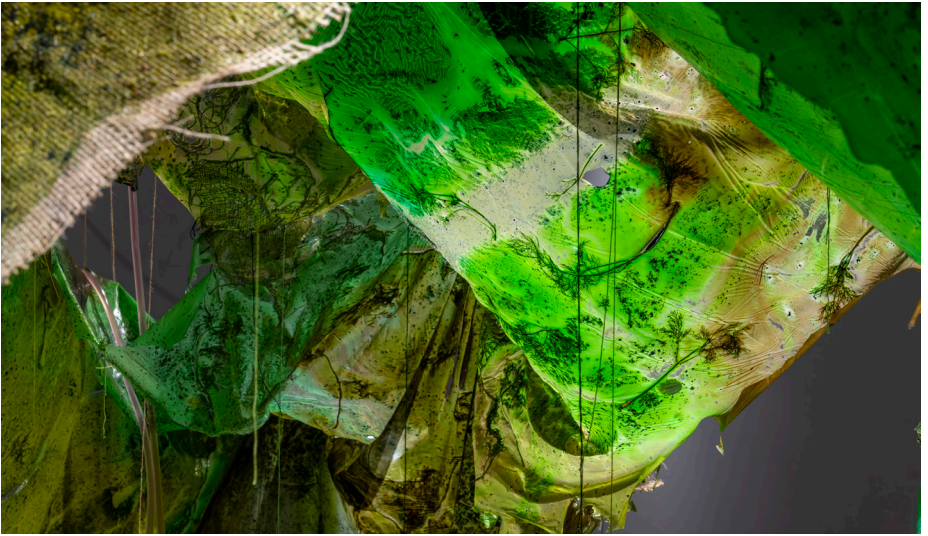
At the back wall, a small painting of an Eastern black swallowtail butterfly (*Papilio polyxenes*) emerges as you navigate the space. At first glance, it appears to be a familiar metaphor for transformation. But through research, Moth discovered a deeper connection. This butterfly species uses fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) as a host plant for its caterpillars. Black swallowtail butterflies can also exhibit sexual dimorphism, displaying both male and female traits simultaneously or across developmental phases. Thus, the butterfly becomes a potent metaphor for the installation as a whole, linking natural processes to material choices, and ecological processes to bodily transformation.

Mega fauna exudes presence without finality. It lives in flux, integrating across systems and vocabularies—lab equipment, hormone chemistry, sculptural processes, and living matter interweave in ways that feel both deliberate and unresolved. Within its folds, burlap acts like connective tissue or a nerve edge; a cooling unit reads as scientific apparatus and theatrical gesture. Everything follows a shared logic of experimentation, composed through ongoing exchange and revision.



Bilateral Gynandromorph, Eastern Tiger Swallow, acrylic on panel, 2025

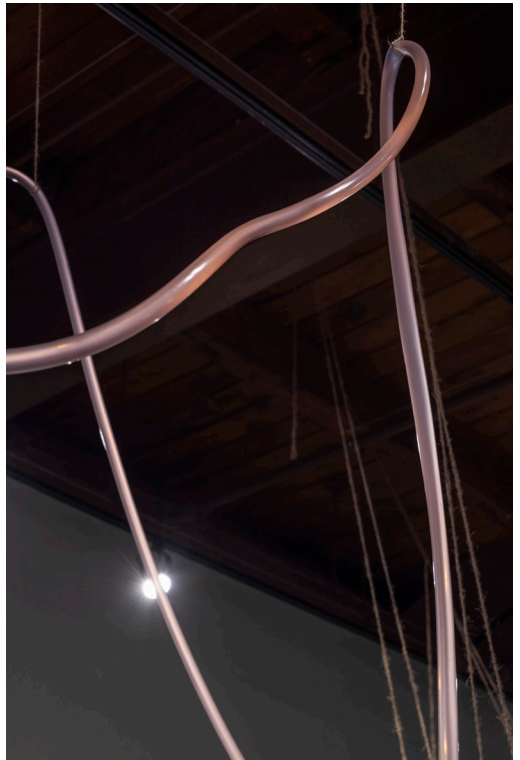
Courtesy of John Groo Photography



Detail of *Megafuana*, Courtesy of John Groo Photography

Moth's materials are often organic and include living organisms such as fennel seeds, algae, fungi, and bacteria. The bioplastic sculpture at the center is concocted out of beef gelatin, vegetable glycerin, seaweed-derived dyes, and seeds. The lab refrigerator on the gallery's left wall contains concentrated phytoestrogens extracted from mutant plants developed in Moth's community biology lab in Brooklyn. In that ongoing experiment, Moth has been modifying female plants to increase estrogen production. For Moth, these refrigerated vials connect metaphorically to the sculpture via an umbilical logic.

The amorphous form at the center represents a monstrous amalgamation of societal fear projected onto trans bodies, as described by Moth, "a symbiotic sludge of gelatine and seaweed and fennel and flesh." Moth describes their practice as "ricocheting from sublime hopefulness to postapocalyptic despair, between humor and profundity." Their process begins with

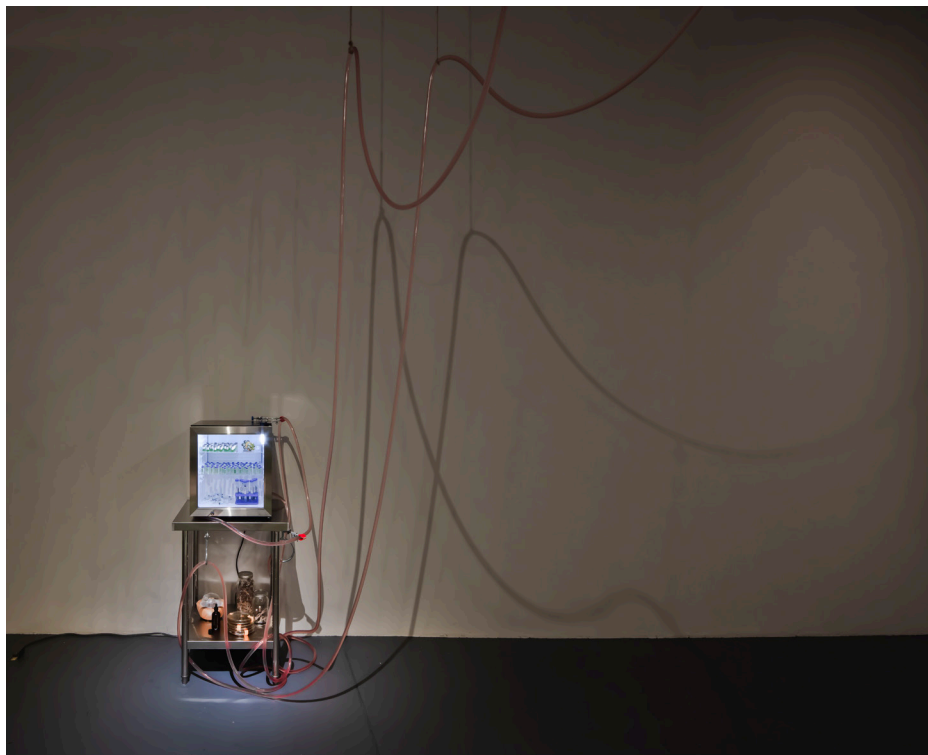


Courtesy of John Groo Photography

specific concerns—unsustainable agriculture, pharmaceutical monopolies on hormone access, water pollution—and transforms into storytelling, sculpture, and installation that propose speculative futures.

The installation resonates deeply with Donna Haraway's concept of tentacular thinking—an approach grounded in entanglement and interconnection that transcends binaries. It's a way of seeing the world as a web of relationships, where nothing exists in isolation. Like Haraway, Moth urges us to understand the complexities of our interdependence with other beings. Ezra Moth's work enacts that philosophy in real time. Tubes, vessels, skins, and textures extend and respond. The materials ask to be sensed. Bioplastic glows. Textiles press through the surface. Liquid pulses. *Megafauna* breathes with energy, holding space for possibilities still taking shape.

Ezra Moth builds a world where softness and rigor meet, where science and performance merge, and where bodies and materials transform without explanation. In *Megafauna*, the desperate earthly forms offer a vivid, sensory space for imagining what a transforming identity might become. Moth's imaginary future—where individuals grow fennel in their backyard and brew gender-tea rather than rely on limiting medical systems—raises ethical questions that linger long after the experience ends.



Courtesy of John Groo Photography



Real Art Ways is a contemporary arts organization with a record of linking artists, innovation and community. Programs include visual arts, with exhibitions, public art projects, and artist presentations; cinema, with independent and international films; music; performance; literary events; community and educational **programming**.



56 Arbor Street
Hartford, CT 06106
www.realartways.org

Support for Real Art Ways Visual Arts Programs provided by:

The New England Foundation for the Arts through the New England Arts Resilience Fund, the Department of Economic and Community Development Office of the Arts, the Greater Hartford Arts Council's United Arts Campaign, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Travelers Foundation, J. Walton Bissell Foundation, Sandy and Howard Fromson, and Real Art Ways' members.