

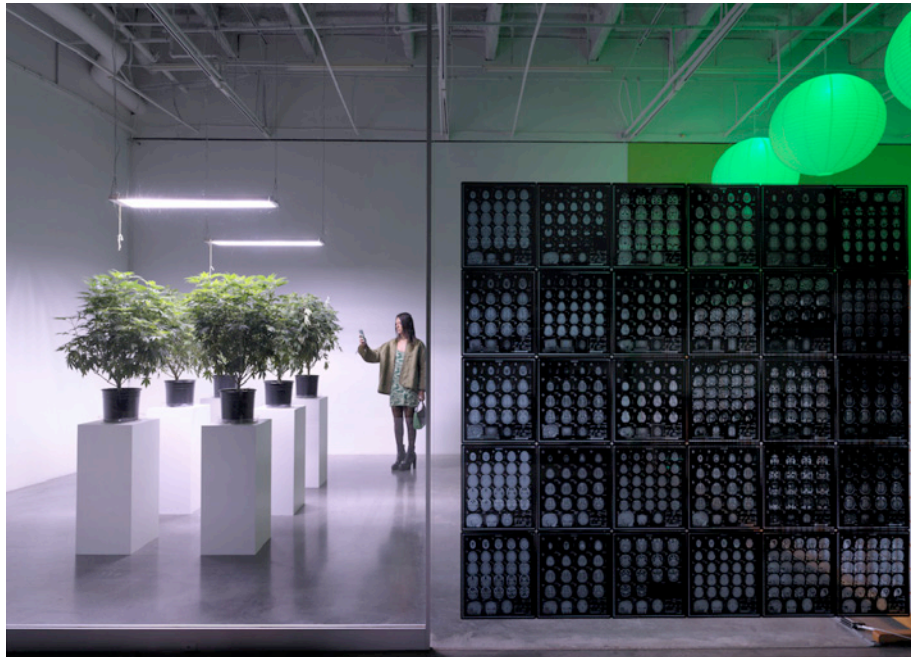
## INTERVIEW

## Puppies Puppies (Jade Guanaro Kuriki-Olivo)

by Jane Ursula Harris

The artist installs a home into the New Museum, merging art and life through readymades, surveillance, and performance.

DECEMBER 15, 2023



Installation view of Puppies Puppies (Jade Guanaro Kuriki-Olivo): Nothing New, New Museum, New York City, 2023. Photo by Dario Lasagni. Images courtesy of New Museum unless otherwise noted.

For years, few knew who the artist Puppies Puppies was. Her age, gender, background, and whether she was an individual or a collective remained a mystery. Both a shield and an alter ego, the moniker was appended with the artist's name (Jade Guanaro Kuriki-Olivo) in 2018 in tandem with her transition, and even then, only parenthetically. In an age of self-exposure and self-invention—IRL and online—in which notions of identity have radically changed, one can understand the impulse to simultaneously reveal and conceal. As her exhibition *Nothing New* (2023) makes clear, that impulse cannot be separated from what it means and how it feels to live in a surveilled body that is policed and othered for being non-cis, non-white, and nonconforming.

For artists, the desire to be seen and the need to retreat from such a harmful, scrutinizing gaze can be very difficult to reconcile. Bravely, and yet with great trepidation, Puppies Puppies navigates this strange territory at the New Museum. Living within the glass walls of the exhibition space, with just a button to make the giant fishbowl suddenly inscrutable, she invites viewers in—literally—to engage with this experience. She extends her performance to real life, offering a monitor with a live feed of her apartment to show how facing one's fears can make the gap between art and life just a little less painful. Mind the gap, *Nothing New* seems to say, but don't avoid it.

That we became friends as a result of this two-hour conversation is proof of this. Bonding over a mutual sense of safety in bed (where we both spend a lot of time), our hermit tendencies, our belief in the spiritual potential of art, and the power of centering community to platform marginalized voices reminded me that the art world can still be that magical place where outliers find one another.

**Jane Ursula Harris**

Two things we share in common are that we both like our weed and we both like our beds.