

KARA MSHINDA  
ALL HANDS HOLD



All Hands Hold is an ongoing photography-based ethnography that focuses on how human hands perform and signify identity and gender expression. This project was originally inspired by my research interests in collaborative portrait photography and Philadelphia Ballroom culture.





# METHODS



COLLABORATIVE  
PHOTOGRAPHY



VERNACULAR  
PHOTOGRAPHY



INTERVIEWS





Participants included friends, students, colleagues, and family who identify as women, LGBTQ+, Non Binary, feminine presenting, and/or femme.



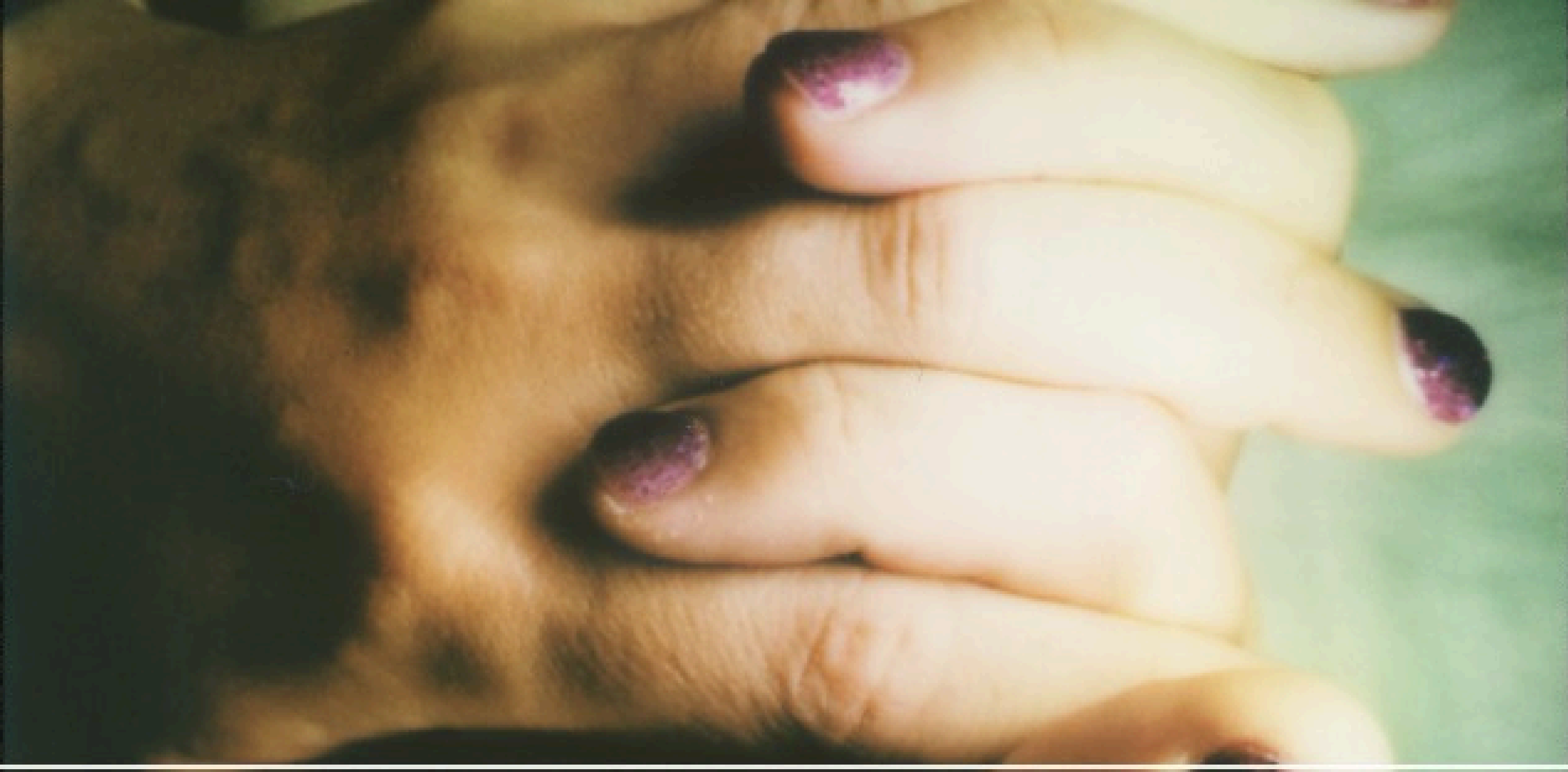
Individuals were asked to describe their hands and what their hands means to them.

Jere

My hands are strong. My hands are dainty. My nails have polish; my knuckles have hair. My hands have cowered in fear, and raised a fist in defiance. My hands have cared for others my whole life, and they care for me today. My hands hold hope for tomorrow. They are my tools. My hands speak with me, and for me. My hands push away, and pull nearer. I'm grateful for the opportunity to consider my hands in this way, and to see them reflected back thru Kara's impeccable eyes.







My experience with this project was one of introspection and gender euphoria.





*Deza (Quadtych), 2022*

(Polaroid Color i-Type Film – Black Frame Edition)  
3.5in x 4.2in each, 14in x 4.2in



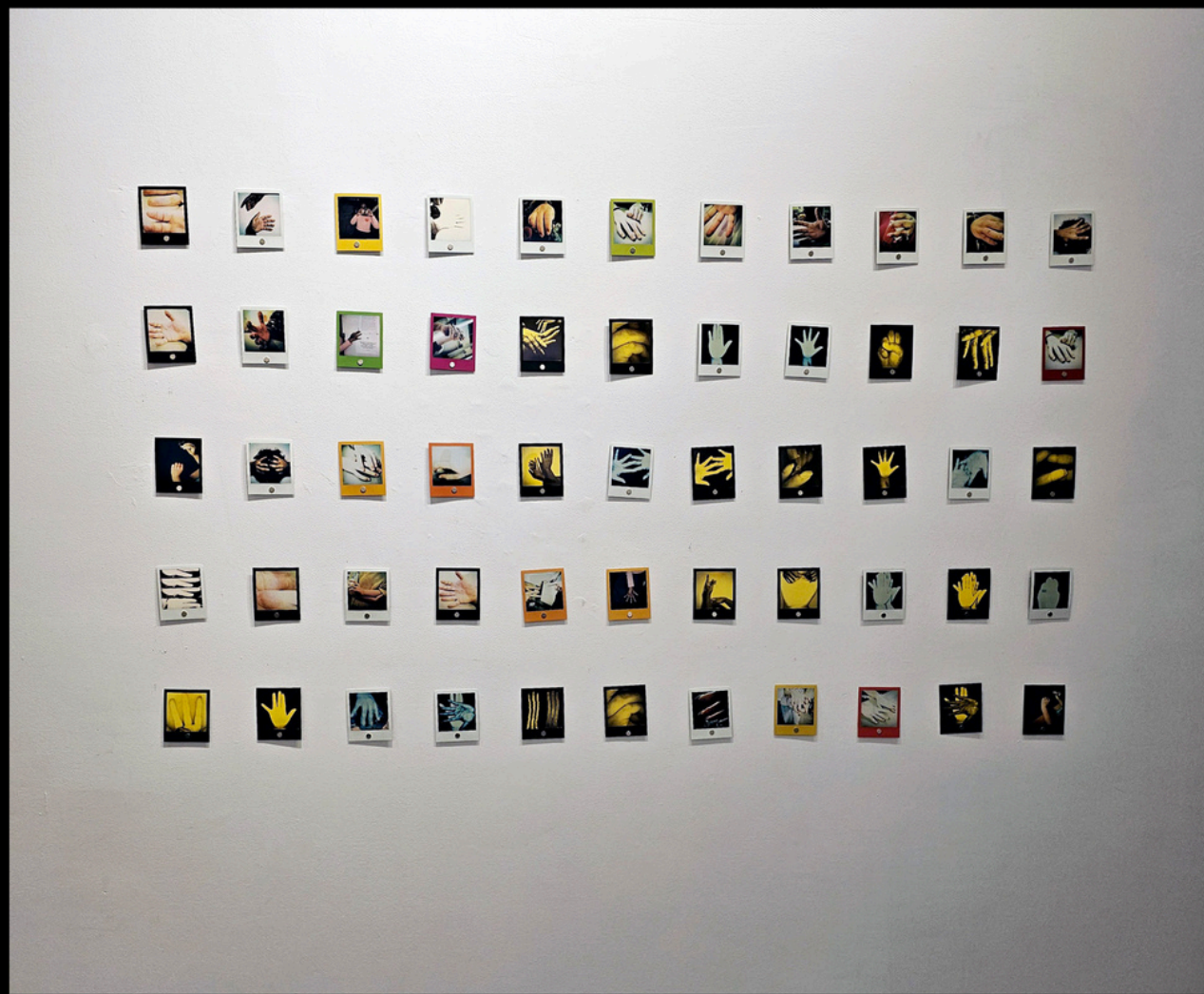
Hands, performance, and identity all become one when I think of my life and the connection they have to it. I can see it manifest from watching a relative or friend use their hands in a theatrical way to tell a story, performing liturgical dances at the church, and in my own work now as an artist. It's a way of passing down stories in various ways.





From a workshop with students on vernacular photography





Installation views of All Hands Hold  
Polaroid hand portraits