



Exhibition Guide

**The Condition of
Being Addressable**

June 18–September 4, 2022

The Condition of Being Addressable brings together an international and intergenerational roster of twenty-five artists whose work explores bodies in exposure and the ever-evolving performance of language. The participating artists situate the body as a site of address—one to name, to call, to speak toward, to challenge, to redress. They question how the exchange between viewer and subject impacts the social and physical movements of bodies and how they are seen in the world. Further, in their respective practices, each artist interrogates power relations as experienced through the dynamics of race, gender, and sexuality, the limits of spoken and written language to articulate these experiences, and the agency of constructing a self-image.

The exhibition borrows its title from a passage in Claudia Rankine’s critically acclaimed 2014 book, *Citizen: An American Lyric*, in which the poet and essayist outlines the ways in which written or spoken language can frame and impact perception and lived experience, particularly for marginalized subjects. Part poetics, part cultural criticism, Rankine’s “lyric” is an urgent meditation on race, language, the body, and the pain of both invisibility and hypervisibility, as well as the labor of representation.

Featuring works in painting, photography, sculpture, video, and installation from the 1970s to the present, *The Condition of Being Addressable* centers diverse disciplines and perspectives in a rich creative conversation rooted in the legacies of Black, feminist, post-colonial, and queer theory. Not organized chronologically or thematically, this exhibition triggers a discursive journey across time, space, and site, in an intersectional dialogue between artists hailing from different generations and sensibilities that offers up electrifying propositions about a mutual futurity.

The Condition of Being Addressable is organized by guest curators Marcelle Joseph, independent curator, and Legacy Russell, Executive Director and Chief Curator, The Kitchen, New York, with Caroline Ellen Liou, Curatorial Assistant, ICA LA.

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ICA LA is supported by its Curator’s Council, Fieldwork, and 1717 Collective.

Not long ago you were in a room where someone asks the philosopher Judith Butler what makes language hurtful. You can feel everyone lean in. “Our very being exposes us to the address of another,” she answers. “We suffer from the condition of being addressable.”

— Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric*, 2014

HANNAH BLACK

(b. 1981, United Kingdom;
based in New York City)



My Bodies, 2014

HD video with sound, TRT: 3:30 min.

Courtesy the artist and Arcadia Missa, London

Hannah Black explores a wide variety of themes, including communism, feminism, Afro-Pessimist theory, and pop music—often through an autobiographical lens—culminating in video, text, and performances. For the video *My Bodies* (2014), Black started with a Google image search for CEOs, using the results to create what feels like a slideshow depicting suited corporate figures overlaid with music samples from Black female pop music stars, such as Rihanna, Beyoncé, and Aaliyah.

The second part of the video is a poem presented in title cards that appear over images of subterranean caves. Positing the possibility of reincarnation, the poem starts, “If you die with your arms around a red skinned dog / bathed in the light of your laptop,” and postulates, “If you came back . . . would you have the body of a woman again? Or a woman of color?” Black describes the work as “a critique of the white-feminist conception of the body, the heritage from the ’60s and ’70s which involves the affirmation of white nudity, displaying the agency of white naked bodies.” By juxtaposing disparate representations of authority, Black’s piece pushes the viewer to consider agency, visibility, and power.

JUDY CHICAGO

(b. 1939, United States; based in Belen, New Mexico)



Immolation (from the series *Women and Smoke*), 1978
(reprinted 2018)

Archival pigment print

Smoke Bodies (from the series *Women and Smoke*),
1972 (reprinted 2018)

Archival pigment print

Both works courtesy the artist and Jessica Silverman,
San Francisco

Judy Chicago has been a pioneering force in feminist art for six decades. In her role as an art educator in the late 1960s, she realized that existing college art curricula were entirely shaped by male artists and developed the first feminist art program in the United States, first in 1970 at California State College, Fresno, and then at the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, in 1971. This new curricula provided opportunities for students to read women writers, explore the work of women artists, and make art about female subjectivity based on group consciousness-raising sessions.

As an artist, Chicago's multidisciplinary practice, spanning painting, textile arts, sculpture, installation, and performance, celebrates the multiplicity of female identity. In 1968, after an apprenticeship with a pyrotechnics company, Chicago began working with fireworks and flares in site-specific interventions titled *Atmospheres* that attempted to transform and soften the landscape, introducing a feminine impulse into the environment at a time when the southern California art scene was almost entirely male-dominated. These feminized environmental works stand in stark contrast to artworks from the Land Art movement made by male artists, such as Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970), that literally gouge into the earth, colonizing it as creative "open space."

Collaborative firework performances followed, like those captured in *Smoke Bodies* (1972), featuring painted female bodies and matching colored smoke plumes set against the stark Californian desert landscape. Chicago's sister work in this exhibition, *Immolation* (1972), also from the 1971–72 *Women and Smoke* series, focuses on the re-creation of early women-centered activities, like the kindling of fire or the worship of goddess figures.

ARIA DEAN

(b. 1993, United States;
based in New York City)



Dummy Cam (icon), 2019

Dummy camera

Courtesy the artist, Château Shatto, Los Angeles; and
Greene Naftali, New York

Aria Dean is a critic, artist, and curator whose work interrogates the complicated relationship between Blackness and the internet. Dean asks how Black affect and Black bodies circulate through digital culture, where they are both violently consumed and resoundingly celebrated. Dean's *dummy cam (icon)* (2019) is a readymade in the form of a fake surveillance camera that poses a watchful "eye" over all who come and go within its scope. Dean's titling of the work pushes back at the idea of representation and the way that technological tools can become extensions of our physical selves that "read" us as we read them, in an exhaustive loop unique to the current era of surveillance and mechanical reproduction.

ANAÏS DUPLAN

(b. 1992, Haiti;
based in New York City)



The Lovers Are the Audience Who Watch, 2019

Video, TRT: 3:00:00 min.

Courtesy the artist

Anaïs Duplan is a trans* poet, curator, and artist. Duplan's work explores history and its relation to the present moment, and his videos examine the role of narrative construction in the formation of discrete personal identities.

Borrowing its title from a line of poetry by interdisciplinary artist Juliana Huxtable, *The Lovers Are the Audience Who Watch* (2019) is, in the artist's words, a "durational video-poem." The sequence is constructed from found footage, largely from music videos and art documentaries in which a central figure ("the artist") is watched by an adoring audience. Duplan compiled this found footage through the process of "datamoshing," which requires the strategic destruction of video files so that each frame breaks through the next. According to the artist, the file destruction in this work operates as, "a kind of breaking [through of] the boundaries of self—breaking between object and its representation, creating these forcible or violent moments of becoming or re-becoming."

CASPAR HEINEMANN

(b. 1994, United Kingdom;
based in London and Berlin)

Study for a Study of Final Things, 2020

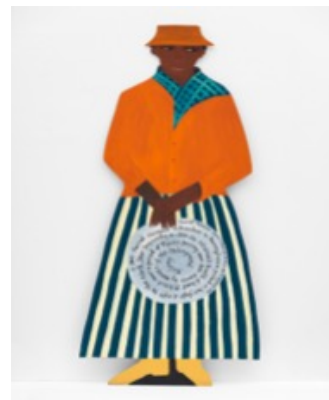
Sound, TRT: 26:54 min.

Courtesy the artist

Caspar Heinemann is an artist, writer, and poet whose research interests include mythologies, critical mysticism, experimental poetics, countercultural aesthetics, and queer biosemiotics. The sound piece included here—a poem written in Heinemann’s signature free-form avant-garde style and spoken by the artist—alludes to his lived experience as, in the artist’s words, a “transsexual-identified transsexual” whose biggest flaw is his “masochistic attachment to the possibility of really any subculture that will have [him].” Equal parts touching, confessional, and irreverent, *Study for a Study of Final Things* (2020) examines trans selfhood within our heteronormative society, dreaming of radical change “before the sun explodes.”

LUBAINA HIMID CBE

(b. 1954, Tanzania; based in
Lancashire, United Kingdom)



Harriet Tubman, 1995

Acrylic on wood

Rennie Collection, Vancouver

Lubaina Himid is an artist, curator, and educator who creates drawings, paintings, sculptures, and textiles. As a pioneer of the British Black Arts Movement in the 1980s and 1990s, Himid has been challenging and undermining patriarchal systems while championing marginalized histories for over three decades. Her works critique colonial history, racism, and institutional invisibility and often celebrate the creativity and resourcefulness of Black people, and in particular, Black women. Frequently focusing on the minutiae of daily life, Himid’s works are often vibrantly colored, graphic, and lush with references from history painting to eighteenth-century British satirical cartoons.

While Himid’s practice is grounded in painting, the artist also makes sculptures that resemble theatrical set design pieces, such as *Harriet Tubman* (1995) on display in this exhibition. These sculptures interrogate the invisibility of people of color in art and the media and highlight the cultural contributions of Black subjects in the United Kingdom and the wider African diaspora. Here, the pioneering efforts of the Black abolitionist and political activist Harriet Tubman (1822–1913) are celebrated in a joyous wooden sculpture that calls attention to the heroine’s contribution to American history, having freed over three hundred enslaved people using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad.

E. JANE

(b. 1990, United States;
based in Philadelphia)



Mhysa: Just A Girl, 2016–2017
Installation and Official Music Video (5:25 min.)

Maxine, 2020
Neon

Both works courtesy the artist

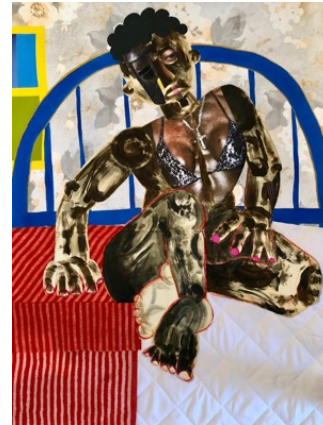
E. Jane is a conceptual artist and musician whose work incorporates digital images, video, text, performance, sculpture, installation, and sound design. Inspired by Black liberation and womanist praxis, E. Jane's work explores safety, futurity, and subjugated bodies in popular culture and networked media.

A central facet of the artist's practice lies in their performance persona, MHYSA, an underground pop star for the cyber resistance. MHYSA operates both in E. Jane's *Lavendra/Recovery* (2015–ongoing), an iterative multimedia installation, and out in the world with the wide-release of her music, which E. Jane considers a work of art in and of itself.

For the work *Maxine* (2020), E. Jane honors Maxine Waters, the Black female American politician serving as the US Representative for California's 43rd congressional district who chaired the Congressional Black Caucus from 1997 to 1999. Waters, an enduring advocate against police brutality spanning decades, was a prominent voice in the 1992 LA uprising in response to the beating of Rodney King.

CLOTILDE JIMÉNEZ

(b. 1990, United States;
based in Mexico City)



La Cama, 2018
Mixed media collage on paper
The Hott Collection, New York

Clotilde Jiménez interrogates the borderlines of race, gender, and sexuality through his own intersectional lens as a Black Hispanic queer male. Jiménez constantly reconstructs his subjects and playfully mashes up, inverts, and complicates gender signifiers, such that sumo wrestlers wear high heels and male-presenting bodies sport voluptuous breasts. These depictions question the performance of gender identity and the hybridity of identity, creating new subjects that are oblivious to society's gender norms and new discourses that imagine the post-gender queer body as a material site for new meaning.

MIATTA KAWINZI

(b. 1987, United States;
based in New York City)



sweat/tears/sea, 2017

Video installation, TRT: 6:14 min.

Courtesy the artist

Miatta Kawinzi is a Liberian-Kenyan multidisciplinary artist whose practice centers site, movement, and bodily affect as core to Black queer storytelling. Working with sculptural sound and video installation, still and moving images, the voice and body, language, and site-responsive sculpture, Kawinzi re-conceives the self, identity, and culture through abstraction and poetics. Kawinzi's video *sweat/tears/sea* (2017) juxtaposes abstracted text and sound with imagery of water, land, and the artist herself. The work begins with a question: "how much can you hold?"—a haunting echo and backdrop to what follows. The work is an exploration of what can be expressed with words and what is beyond the limits of language.

MARY KELLY

(b. 1941, United States;
based in Los Angeles)



Beirut, 1970, 2017

Compressed lint

Courtesy the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York

Mary Kelly is a conceptual artist, feminist, educator, and writer whose large-scale narrative installations and theoretical writings address questions of sexuality, identity, and historical memory. The work in this exhibition, *Beirut, 1970* (2017), is from her series of compressed-lint renderings of letters she received from friends in the early 1970s. The title references Kelly's time in Beirut, when she was heavily ensconced in leftist intellectual circles and read revolutionary French philosophy by the likes of Jean-Paul Sartre, whose name is referenced in this "lint letter" alongside that of his wife, the feminist writer Simone de Beauvoir.

Probing the concept of "women's work," Kelly uses her laundry room as her matrix and lint from her clothes dryer as her medium. The lint becomes the artist's pigment and acts as a fleeting reminder of the never-ending rhythms of women's domestic labor. The legibility of these handwritten letters is not of paramount importance to the artist, as she likens the fuzziness of the lint to our inability to recall moments from our past, in direct opposition to our current age of high-resolution digital imagery.

LYNN HERSHMAN LEESON

(b. 1941, United States;
based in San Francisco)



In *Home Front* (1993-2011), completed one year after the first reality television program aired on MTV, the viewer peers through the bay window of a dollhouse-size home to watch a video of the house's residents, an unhappily married couple, arguing over the stereotypical division of labor in a heterosexual marriage (i.e., breadwinner husband and stay-at-home mother). The narrative arc of the video culminates in an act of domestic violence, forcing the viewer to become a voyeur or participant in this spectacle as well as to question gender roles and the safety of the marital home.

Roberta Construction Chart #1, 1975

Archival digital print and dye transfer

Courtesy the artist; Bridget Donahue, New York;
Waldburger Wouters, Brussels; ShanghART, China;
and Altman Siegel, San Francisco, CA

Home Front, 1993–2011

Video, dollhouse, paint, custom electronics

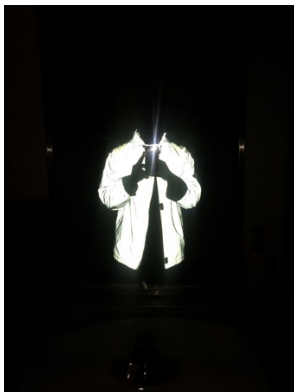
Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue, New York

Lynn Hershman Leeson is an artist and filmmaker whose pioneering use of technological media continually tests the boundaries between real and virtual identities and questions gender, identity politics, and selfhood.

For her best-known work, Hershman Leeson inhabited an alternative persona for five years (1973–78). The fictional Roberta Breitmore led her “real life” in “real time,” complete with a bank account and driver’s license, and had her own history, voice, posture, style of dress, personality, and neuroses. Heavily made-up and wearing a wig and glasses, Breitmore would go out and meet people through personal ads, see a therapist, and interview for jobs. *Roberta Construction Chart #1* (1975)—an intimate, ghoulish diagrammed photograph of Breitmore’s face and torso—shows how to make Breitmore up with Revlon “Peach Blush” cheek color, “Date Mate” scarlet lipstick, and a “\$7.98 three-piece dress.” This work portrays the human subject fabricated through regulatory registration, institutional structures, and digital media, blurring the line between fact and fiction and revealing how appearances can deceive.

TIONA NEKKIA MCCLODDEN

(b. 1981, United States;
based in North Philadelphia)



The Backlight [5.10.2016], 2016
Digital C-print on Hahnemuhle Fine Art Baryta
Courtesy the artist

Tiona Nekkia McClodden is a visual artist, filmmaker, and curator whose work interrogates understandings of time, memory, and intersubjectivities within Black communities. McClodden's series *The Backlight* (2016) is directly inspired by her research into Ana Mendieta's *Silueta Works in Mexico* series (1973–77). McClodden photographs herself wearing a retroreflective jacket and then creates sculptures with the jackets, providing the artist "the opportunity to confront my own silhouette. To walk with it in both day and night. To pronounce my Blackness."

As with Mendieta's work, McClodden's silhouette becomes as much about absence as it is about presence, visualizing the process of becoming, being, and ceasing to exist altogether. In her self-portraiture, McClodden takes on the vernacular of the selfie, nodding to the ongoing dialogue of representations of Black people and Black embodiment as traveling through, and beyond, the internet.

ANA MENDIETA

(b. 1948, Cuba;
d. 1985, New York City)



Silueta Works in Mexico, 1973–1977 (estate print 1991)
Color photograph
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles;
Purchase with a grant provided by The Judith
Rothschild Foundation

Untitled (Facial Hair Transplants), 1972
Suite of seven estate color photographs
The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC;
Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co., New York

Ana Mendieta was a Cuban-born, American-raised interdisciplinary artist whose work explores the relationship between the female body and nature. Mendieta's practice foregrounds an intersectional conception of identity, in which race, gender, age, and class operate simultaneously.

Mendieta's series of photographic works titled *Silueta Works in Mexico* (1973–77) documents the artist's carving of her own figure into the earth in a variety of natural settings. Featuring a body in abstraction, the series explores tropes of femininity, rebirth, feminist deification, and a matrilineal connection to the land, engaging systemic histories of female erasure and gender violence. In Mendieta's *Untitled (Facial Hair Transplant)* (1972)—also in the exhibition—the artist rebukes the construct of gender while gesturing toward the highly gendered and performative rituals of beautification, self-maintenance, and body modification. Across both works, Mendieta pushes the limits of presence and absence, engaging ideas of agency, empowerment, and autonomy while also underscoring the vulnerability of a female-identifying brown body undergoing change.

AD MINOLITI

(b. 1980, Argentina;
based in Buenos Aires)



Aquelarre no binario / Non-binary coven, 2022
Site-specific mural

Panda mural, 2019
Latex on wall

Queer Deco, 2019
Print on canvas, unique

Queer Deco (Villa Spies), 2019
Print on canvas, unique

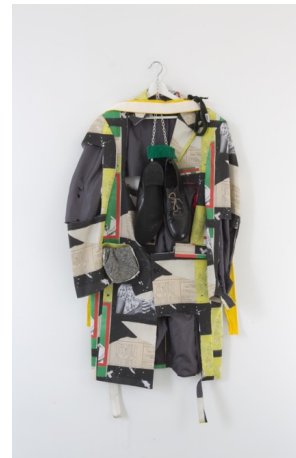
All works courtesy the artist and Galería Agustina Ferreyra, San Juan

Ad Minoliti creates vividly colorful paintings and installations that employ geometric shapes as abstracted representations of physical forms. Spatial relationships of these configurations unfold across a topography of queer intimacy, employing feminist and queer theory to generate alternative interpretations of painting, design, architecture, art history, and visual language.

In the artist's Queer Deco series—represented here with two prints (both 2019) contained within a mural, entitled *Panda* (2019)—Minoliti engages ideas of world-making, rethinking the history of Modernism and its relationship to a canonized canvas and, by extension, an exclusionary white box. Using graphic forms, a vibrant color palette, playful framing devices, and contrasting aesthetics, the artist re-interprets visual identities and post-humanist landscapes to, as Minoliti says, “project fantasy onto shapes.”

TROY MONTES MICHIE

(b. 1985, United States;
based in New York City)



Tacuche #3, 2018
Shoes, glitter, clothing fragments, chain and hanger
with zoot suit jacket
Collection of Raphael Castoriano

Troy Montes Michie works across collage, painting, installation and sculpture, exploring the construction of identity through the lens of race, gender, sexuality, intimacy, and interplays of power. The artist credits his upbringing in El Paso, Texas—a border town where Mexican and American cultures collide and hyphenate—as foundational to the genesis of his collage practice. The layering found within Michie's work interrogates the reading of imagery across archival and contemporary visual culture, considering the intersection between things seen and unseen, and how to navigate the tenuous line between the two.

In recent years, Michie's research into the cultural significance of the zoot suit—the broad-shouldered suit often worn by Black, Italian, and Latino men in the United States in the 1940s—and the garment's history that culminated in the Zoot Suit Riots in 1943 in Los Angeles, has informed his series of textile works. Michie observes, “As queer people, when you move around the city, there is a sense of camouflage that happens as protection.”

TOYIN OJIH ODUTOLA

(b. 1985, Nigeria;
based in New York City)



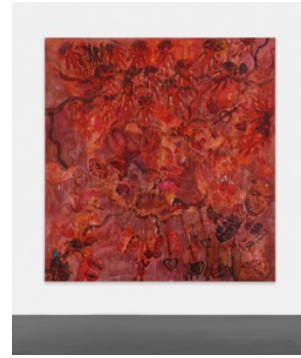
The Second Hour, 2018

Charcoal, pastel, and pencil on paper
Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

Toyin Ojih Odutola is a Nigerian-born, American visual artist known for her vivid multimedia drawings and works on paper. Odutola's complex renderings of the figure in representations of individuals and families engage fictional histories and rally the tradition of African/American portrait-making. Interested in how Black subjects have been represented within the canon of western portraiture, Odutola draws connections between the materials she uses (black ink, charcoal, and pastels) and an ongoing dialogue addressing Blackness—what Blackness is perceived to look like and how Black imagery circulates over time. Odutola has said, “I am weaving something that I hope is not necessarily about text, which is like a safety net for me, but rather about a visual language with cues that words cannot provide.”

ATHENA PAPADOPOULOS

(b. 1988, Canada; based in London)



A Rupturing Cesspit Boogie Woogie, 2016

Hair dye, lipstick, nail polish, bleach, image transfers, thread and pins on bedsheet
Collection of Stefan Simchowit

Athena Papadopoulou makes densely layered sculptures and works on canvas that blend elements of fictional narrative and autobiography with film, literary, and pop culture references. Papadopoulou utilizes techniques including collage, drawing, and sewing, eschewing paint in favor of materials such as red wine, nail polish, and lipstick in combination with family photographs, magazine clippings, fabrics, and found objects. Her works examine a young woman's desire for revelry and indulgence, as well as the trappings of rebellion and their appropriation by mainstream commercial culture. Papadopoulou's sculptures and paintings function as saturated explorations of the layered nature of female experience—celebrating and violating the female body in equal measure—in a form of subversive feminism or perverse misogyny.

IMRAN PERRETTA

(b. 1988, United Kingdom;
based in London)



brother to brother, 2017
HD video, TRT: 7:36 min.

Courtesy the artist; Commissioned by Jerwood Arts, London

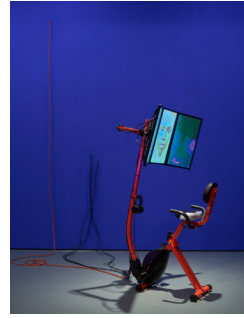
Imran Perretta addresses biopower, marginality, and the construction of cultural histories through sound, performance, poetry, and moving image. Perretta's video *brother to brother* (2017) is based on the artist's personal experience of being searched by a customs officer at a London airport upon returning home from a residency in Bangladesh.

Using two distinct modes, the work presents the sovereign gaze of power and the hyper surveillance of the Middle Eastern or South Asian brown male body within an imperialist conception of the nation state. The first principal space in the video is a place of detention, interrogation, and close observation, featuring the artist perched on a tiny stool, naked and hooded, in an institutionally lit, pale green room permeated by an ominous droning soundscape. This stark and harrowing setting closely resembles press images of prisoner torture and abuse in the Abu Ghraib prison during the early stages of the Iraq War, a time that coincided with the artist's coming of age as an adolescent.

The second space depicted in the work features drone footage lifted from tourist material with an overlay of poetic text, interspersed with intermittent sightings of the hooded figure of the artist in soft focus. This sequence highlights the one-sided perspective of military drone technology; although panoramic in its scope, the footage is only for the benefit of the powers that be, becoming a weaponized imperial eye of sorts. As Perretta says, "I am most dedicated to challenging the nation state and the way in which it oppresses its most marginal citizens. I am one of them, so my interest is not so much 'subject matter' but 'subjectivity,' and how it is articulated politically."

SONDRA PERRY

(b.1986, United States;
based in Perth Amboy, New Jersey)



Graft and Ash for a Three Monitor Workstation, 2016
Video (TRT: 9:05 min.), bicycle workstation
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles;
Purchase with funds provided by the Emerging Art Fund

Sondra Perry explores the relationship between Black personhood, Black (dis)embodiment, and the Black body. Through a practice spanning sculpture, video, installation, and new media, Perry investigates the Black body as a machine and technology as an acutely racialized and gendered proxy and prosthetic. Included in the exhibition is *Graft and Ash for a Three Monitor Workstation* (2016), a bicycle workstation that brings the viewer face-to-face with the artist's avatar. The piece performs as an electric mirror and an impossible machine—a body without a body present that keeps shapeshifting as computational, viral, and memetic. Perry reveals how conceptions around Blackness are emblematic of the paradoxical fears of an anti-Black imagination harboring horror and anxiety at the prospect of being contaminated, transformed, or confronted by an alien "other."

TSCHABALALA SELF

(b. 1990, United States; based in New Haven, Connecticut)



Half Full, 2022

Acrylic, flashe, assorted fabric, painted fabric, painted paper and thread on canvas
Collection of Jesse Williams

Tschabalala Self builds a singular style from the syncretic use of painting, printmaking, and collage in an exploration of gender and race. While Self has noted that the figures she portrays are often fictional, the presence of each is intended to interrogate the act of looking itself. This voyeurism reaches backward into the annals of art history and the canon of painting and portrait-making, centering bodies that, in the artist's words, have historically been made "exalted and abject" through their representations across visual culture. As Self has said, "The fantasies and attitudes surrounding the Black female body are both accepted and rejected within my practice, and through this disorientation, new possibilities arise."

LORNA SIMPSON

(b. 1960, United States; based in Brooklyn)



Gestures / Reenactments, 1985

Six silver gelatin prints, seven engraved text plaques, unique

From the collection of Raymond Leary

Lorna Simpson is a photographer and multimedia artist whose career spans four decades. Simpson's work conceptually traverses gender, sexuality, race, agency, and representation. Employing visual and linguistic repetition as an architecture and a strategy within her work, the artist often pairs words and images in dynamic combinations, establishing mutually synergistic and dissonant relationships, as well as newly proposed counternarratives.

In *Gestures / Reenactments* (1985), Simpson features six unique gestures performed by a male-presenting body whose face is just beyond the frame. Positioned beneath the images are seven poetic refrains that can be read in any order, variation, and tone to a dense multitude of interpretations. The texts propose movement, style, and gesture as a gendered signifier of kinship and inheritance ("sometimes Sam stands like his mother") as well as that which can be donned, projected, and performed as fantasy alter-ego or racialized avatar ("and on Saturday when Calvin pretended / that he was that famous football player / he could get into any club or / anywhere he wanted").

SIN WAI KIN

(b. 1991, Canada; based in London)



Act 1, Part 1 of A View from Elsewhere: Tell me everything you saw, and what you think it means, 2018
Video, TRT: 5:38 min.

Courtesy the artist

Sin Wai Kin (formerly known as Victoria Sin) employs speculative fiction within drag performance, film, writing, and print to subvert historical and societal norms surrounding gender, sexuality, and race. Sin's high-femme drag practice emerged from their interest in male drag performance and their subsequent desire to explore societal attitudes toward gender binaries and identity construction through the performance of exaggerated femininity, as a drag queen born female. Sin, a non-binary artist, uses drag as a tool to challenge expectations imposed on femme identities and to explore the ways gender ideals support race and gender-based power structures. Sin's practice increasingly involves looking at storytelling as a collective way of narrating the marginalized experience, using science fiction written by Samuel R. Delany, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Octavia Butler to examine how identity is not only represented, but also created and reinforced, through language and naming.

DIAMOND STINGILY

(b. 1990, United States; based in New York City)



Kaas (Punishment), 2019

Kanekalon hair, conduit, hooks, hardware
Courtesy the artist and Queer Thoughts, New York

Diamond Stingily explores memory and identity through a practice that often revolves around the framework of childhood, particularly Black girlhood. Having grown up frequenting her mother's hair salon in West Chicago, Stingily uses braids as an exploration of the politics of Black women's hair, the histories and aesthetics of Black beauty, and how they have been both celebrated and exploited over time.

Within Stingily's practice, complex strands of critique and engagement come together—an entanglement of questions tied to surveillance and movement, structures of power, the insidiousness of institutionalized violence, and the modes of protection enacted by Black women as a means of building a collective future. As Stingily says, "I think there's a gaze with Black people, where people are watching us and wondering what's our next move."

JESSICA VAUGHN

(b. 1983, United States;
based in New York City)



After Willis (rubbed, used, and moved) #012, 2022
36 individual pairs of used machine fabricated
public transit train seats (Chicago Transit Authority
1998–2011)
Courtesy the artist

Jessica Vaughn reconsiders the language and legacy of the Duchampian “readymade” by bringing new imagination to found materials in her sculptural and installation-based practice. Vaughn’s *After Willis (rubbed, used and moved) #012* (2022), part of an ongoing series, repurposes seats from the Chicago Transit Authority. By presenting them in a grid affixed to the wall, the artist challenges their original function and disorients the viewer.

The work’s title refers to the superintendent of the Chicago public school system in the 1950s and 1960s, Benjamin C. Willis. An avid supporter of the “neighborhood school,” Willis enabled the overcrowding of segregated Black public schools on the city’s South Side. In 1961, he approved a plan that permitted students to transfer to schools in different neighborhoods, but did not provide transportation, creating an automatic barrier for most Black pupils. Vaughn’s presentation evokes the violence layered into ordinary objects, underscoring how everyday sites of movement and exchange are raced and classed.

ZADIE XA

(b. 1983, Canada; based in London)



Fish Scales and Poisonous Darts, 2016
Synthetic hair, leather, hand sewn and machine stitched fabric
Private collection

Zadie Xa explores her experiences within the Korean diaspora in her multidisciplinary artistic practice that is positioned at the intersection of art, fashion, and design. Her work often features garments, including cloaks and masks, used for live performance and within installation and moving image.

Fishscales and Poisonous Darts (2016) is an early textile work made before Xa’s first-ever performance at the Serpentine Gallery in 2016. This scarlet-red fiber work, which could be worn as a jacket, is festooned with black and fluorescent green synthetic hair and features yin and yang symbols, as well as household kitchen knives sewn onto the fabric, referencing both the artist’s diasporic identity and implements used in Korean shamanic rituals. Xa evokes questions of “shape-shifting” and the role fashion plays within an immigrant experience of assimilation and social, cultural, and economic mobility. In the artist’s words, “fashion [lends itself to the] ability to present aspirations, and in performing that aspiration, you too may evoke the agency that that clothing allows.”