

**BEING IN-BETWEEN /  
IN-BETWEEN BEING**

**DECEMBER 15, 2020 - JANUARY 15, 2021**

*Being In-Between / In-Between Being* is an online exhibition and virtual event series curated by Jocelyn E. Marshall, organized through the University at Buffalo Department of Art Gallery, and sponsored by the James H. McNulty Chair of English.

The exhibition showcases intermedia works by queer and womxn artists exploring aspects of identity related to 'being in-between.' Working between mediums while existing in-between modes of embodiment elicits a unique textuality that is often-times ignored, absent, or entirely misread in the public sphere.

*Being In-Between / In-Between Being* is archived online at:  
<https://arts-sciences.buffalo.edu/art/research/lower-art-gallery/>

**Artists:** Cassils, Abhipsa Chakraborty, Gabrielle Civil, Sam Moyer-Kardos, Halley Marie Shaw, Julia Rose Sutherland, and Vincent Tiley.

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BEING IN-BETWEEN BEING  
IN-BETWEEN IN-BETWEEN  
BEING IN-BETWEEN BEING  
BEING IN-BETWEEN BEING

# **Table of Contents**

**Foreword: Here / Hear**

**Introduction: Beyond/And the Personal = Political**

**Cassils**

**Abhipsa Chakraborty**

**Gabrielle Civil**

**Sam Moyer-Kardos**

**Halley Marie Shaw**

**Julia Rose Sutherland**

**Vincent Tiley**

**Acknowledgments**

**Exhibition Event Schedule**

**Contributing Writers**

## Foreword: Here / Hear

Anja Foerschner

Western society teaches us how to align and how to refuse, providing us with a set of guidelines dividing our surroundings and our place within it; this is especially true when it comes to identities and definitions of gender and sexuality in relation to intersectional concepts such as, ethnicity, race, or religion, wherein one is understood from multiple contexts. We are taught to categorize ourselves and others according to the schemata existing around (and within) us. However, we are constantly in a state of in-between, attempting to negotiate the personal against the societal and political, as the two of them do not necessarily correspond at all times. It is these charged spaces, in which subjective realities negate known dogma, that produce complex fields of tension through which allegedly inherent structures and divisions can be subverted.

This is the space that *Being In-Between / In-Between Being* is devoted to exploring. The artists in *Being In-Between / In-Between Being* are chosen for their refusal to reproduce easy binaries through their creative processes, identities, and positioning within social and political structures as artists and human beings. They come from a variety of backgrounds and employ differing artistic strategies with which they trouble narrow concepts of gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity, challenging the viewer to do the same.

Instead of attempting to categorize the artists and their work and create a nomenclature with which to facilitate the audience's access to their in-betweenness, the exhibition extolls the queer in all its unruliness, its unexpectedness, its unclassifiability as its main theme and curatorial methodology.

Art history is traditionally defined by inclusion and exclusion, therewith mirroring heteronormative social practices. Which artists are 'worthy' of being exhibited? What media are considered artistic? What practice counts as relevant? All responses to these questions are persistently being formulated by the discipline and submitted to the audience. In doing so, art historical scholarship and curatorial practice subconsciously, but actively, reinforces categorization and canonization, perpetuating value systems and marginalization.

Queer and womxn artists make up a considerable part of the contemporary art scene, yet museums and art historians still grapple with the challenge that 'queer' presents to the institutionalized art world, the normalizing and meaning-making entity that it is. As a result, the number of exhibitions and publications devoted to them remain scarce. What is more, not many attempt to employ a strategy that mirrors the principles underlying these non-canonical forms of art. Too often do we still find exhibitions that attempt to fit queer art into the very norms and categories it actively negates. These exhibitions seek to provide answers where questions are being asked and close fissures that are deliberately left open.

We have to be careful not to attempt to standardize queer art. Instead, we must acknowledge it for what it is and, more importantly, ask ourselves what we can learn from its plurality and extraordinariness. With exhibitions and publications serving as a source of knowledge and communal historical record for many, it is time for the institutionalized art world to deviate from its monolithic ways so that it can impartially reflect the plurality of experiences and realities within our contemporary landscape. Just as the idea of 'queer' negates the idea of permanent and stable identity and instead advocates for multiple possible forms of identification, so must the discipline of art history and its audiences generate inclusive methods and approaches.

In employing a curatorial strategy aimed at troubling categorizations dominating life and art, *Being In-Between* takes an important step. It asks the viewer to reconsider automated knowledge and embedded value systems regarding not only social and personal identities, but equally artistic productions. The complex and challenging works of the artists in this exhibition present the viewer with a variety of non-normative forms of gender and identity, and go on to prove their non-normative forms of creation are cause for spotlighting and celebration. The exhibition does not define but de-centers; in doing so, it puts the viewer into the uneasy place of remaining in-between, which ultimately is the only place that enables us to rethink what we believe to know and change our existing frameworks.

# Introduction: Beyond/And the Personal = Political

Jocelyn E. Marshall

Gray Area.  
Liminal Space.  
Undeterminable.

Components of being ‘in-between’ are oftentimes a part of everyday lives and conversations, but what do they look like? What kinds of strength and resilience do they cultivate? What expansions do they allow for?

In addressing the work of Korean artist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, ethnic studies scholar Elaine H. Kim argues Cha’s “both/and” text blurs distinctions between the individual self and a collective. The power in doing so, Kim explains, is that it ultimately clears “the way for others to re-interpret the past and celebrate many other ‘in-betweens.’”<sup>1</sup> This exhibition began with an inquiry into how one might be able to access the ‘both/and’ of something—a history, a community, a self—by using a set of ‘both/and’ tools and practices. Working between mediums while existing in-between modes of embodiment elicits a unique textuality that is often-times ignored, absent, or entirely misread in the public sphere. What, then, might a ‘both/and’ exploration of ‘in-betweens’ teach us? What happens when we enact it?

If we consider work in the context of lesbian artist Harmony Hammond, art-making is itself precisely where “consciousness is formed,” and, as a result, art pushes beyond the early feminist adage regarding the personal being political; instead, the reshaped consciousness subsequently redefines and transforms culture.<sup>2</sup> In this lens, art-making is an act of creation that ignites inquiry, discovery, and social change. That is, a ‘both/and’ that renders accessible, legible ‘in-betweenness.’

In the particular context of intertextuality, the blurring of mediums and genres serves as a way to contest divisions between art, politics, and society. The ‘inter’ component, specifically, offers a dynamism that exposes the divisions, combinations, and ‘in-betweens.’<sup>3</sup> In *Being In-Between / In-Between Being*, the works of art not only decenter and disrupt social divisions individually and collectively, they also demonstrate the necessity of dynamic artistic practice related to identities threatened by nation-state policies and policing. In other words, the exhibition artworks offer a ‘both/and’ that is concomitant to the survival of the ‘in-betweenness.’

As sexism, racism, misogyny, and heterosexism are interwoven processes embedded in our social fabric <sup>4</sup>, an intertextual approach serves as a solidarity practice in both its breadth of reach and what illuminates through its decentering. No longer is the personal tied to individualistic and atomistic thinking; instead, the texts allow for what some transnational feminists refer to as a mediation between different histories and understandings of the personal, where questions of history, collective memory, and social and structural inequality are welcomed and contested, redefined and transformed. Here, the 'both/and' tool develops into a 'beyond/and,' where intertextual works first address the interwoven processes of oppression and violence, and, second, go on to actively interrogate, resist and rest, (re)create and dream. With this reflexive, pulsating web of mediation and meditation, an 'in-betweenness' is simultaneously rendered and utilized to conduct individual and communal acts of healing and recovery, ritual and performance, intimacy and celebration.

We see celebration and concern in Cassils' *103 Shots* (2016). Straddling between public and private intimacies, embracing out of love and fear, the short film reifies the often-indescribable anxieties and freedoms circulating around queer histories and queer pride. With collisions following each release of air from popped balloons, bodies mirror tensions of joy and pain.

Swirling between open spaces, lines, and layers, Abhipsa Chakraborty's *Dust on Your Feet* and *Maps* position viewers directly within the fluctuations of gender and diasporic movements. As acrylic illuminates, obscures, and complements its own colors and shapes, the resulting images gift an imprint of histories, stories, and bodies across regions, times, and tongues. This intricate multitudinous nature resembles aspects of Gabrielle Civil's *Fugue (Da Montréal)* (2014), where the boundaries of embodiment are ruptured—inviting ancestral connection and new relationships to identity and history, land and movement, ritual and grief. Evoking layers of diasporic displacement, Civil's performance demonstrates how new modes of connecting must be explored through materials both present and absent, that which can be both made of dreams and tangible.

Offering similar concern for connecting work, Sam Moyer-Kardos provides us with brave queer tenderness, an intimacy rendered public, through a disciplined maintenance of self-preserving boundaries. Queer love and queer bodies are exposed explicitly through portraits like *Micah* (2020), where the subject is partially nude and in repose, and with plaster molds *My Fingers Are My Dick* (2016), where golden hands stand-in as awards of pleasure, celebratory towers of queer love.

Flirting with reveal and intimate exposure, Halley Marie Shaw's collage works and poetry performance advocate for the limitless power of invention. With each leg straddle and syrupy drip, Shaw makes palpable the strength of queer femininity, which, like that of ancestors, refuses to be silenced or contained. Instead, all players thrive in the imaginary world Shaw purposefully places them, a "Dirty America" that is both unknowable and known.

Julia Rose Sutherland reminds us that the concept of home is fraught with histories of colonial genocide and fluctuating abilities to heal and repair and create. From the stoic fierceness of *Gesipatl Iga'latl (Pain and Release)* (2019) to the screaming quills of *RIP, Rodney Levi (Which Reads 'FUCK THE POLICE')* (2020), Sutherland illustrates relentlessly how our ghosts of the past are with us in ways both productive and debilitating. We are shown how these ghosts need to be reckoned with, how they need to be fed, and how urgently we need to learn to tend to each other's wounds regardless of their depth.

Vincent Tiley's work expands our understandings of sensorial and textual boundaries, ultimately revealing what such growth affords. His investigation of the storied Indian Yellow adds a heightened understanding of the connections between ourselves, our collective histories, and place and community. The haptic responses, *ACRE* and *Nettles*, further illuminate the mechanisms by which we process unnamable things in our bodies, minds, and spirits—an intimate, unrestricted knowing.

With these works in conversation, this exhibition explores the 'both/and' elements of art and moves viewers further to consume the 'beyond/and' elements of identities and histories related to queer- and womxn-identifying artists and their communities. As bell hooks noted, it is productive to acknowledge the early U.S. feminist claim that the personal is political, as it is a necessary starting point. However, emphasis must always be on cultural transformation, which hooks explains involves "destroying dualism, eradicating systems of domination."<sup>6</sup> Through intertextual practices, these artists demonstrate the ways in which technique and genre can be simultaneously employed and ruptured to both identify and resist systems of oppression. The bravery of this work hopefully catches your fire, holds you close, and encourages dreams of and strategies for new, safe worlds filled with pleasure and joy.



# Cassils

Jocelyn E. Marshall

*i was going to hold your hand in a big activity  
about the intimacy of strangers  
about the strangeness of needing prayer<sup>1</sup>*

From the beginning, we settle into the familiar: smiling while embracing, cautious hands studying hips, and Gran Fury's "Kissing Doesn't Kill" (1989) campaign imagery alluding to collective history, going on to become all the more resonant with the Queer Nation typography. A black-and-white lens obscures the 2016 San Francisco PRIDE context slightly, though bare skin and affectionate intimacy still signal the annual celebratory public joy. Yet, something is off.

And then "POP."

The balloon's snap is sobering. The cement room of the foley sound studio is illuminated, and the undergirding elements of fear and danger are hurled to the surface with one sharp sound.

POP.

Abdomens tense, rubber flexes, and bodies collide as pressure is released.

POP. POPPOP. POPPOPPOPP. POP.

Did you hold your breath here? Did we exhale together?

For each gunshot at the 2016 Pulse nightclub shooting, Cassils offers 103 embraces: one for each life lost or irreparably altered. Inspired by a survivor's testimony about mistaking gunshots for fireworks or balloons popping, the film extends this muddling to the oft-contested realms of public and private. Through the process of first beginning with familiar nodes of joy and queerness that frequently receive threats of violence, and then moving onto presencing that violence amidst intimate public celebration, Cassils renders visible the perpetual tensions of queer love and safety.

These tensions have become the glue that binds much of the queer community for continued survival and perseverance. With this glue, through both joy and pain, frustration and resilience, we embrace ourselves, each other, and our histories, at least 103 times over.

Indeed, *Kissing Doesn't Kill: Greed and Indifference Do*, and intimacy amongst strangers might be one of our most precious and radical strategies, still. Fear of the un-normal can be a source of power,<sup>2</sup> and Cassils' *103 Shots* demonstrates what strength is possible when derived from the rejection of silence, of refusing gunshots and ancestors alike to remain static ghosts of our past.



Top & Bottom: Cassils, *103 Shots* (2016), 1-channel video work with sound, 2:35, film stills courtesy of the artist.

## Abhipsa Chakraborty

sarah jm kolberg

Abhipsa Chakraborty's 2020 work *Dust on Your Feet* features a central figure surrounded by swirling and spiraling lines of black and brown acrylic against the creamy canvas. The title serves as an organizing frame to guide our interpretation of the work, hinting at a reading of the abstracted form as female and the swirling lines as winds and dust.

The work recalls that of the Italian Futurists, whose interest in speed drove them to depict motion as a series of fragmented moments presented simultaneously. The individual lines can be read as representing Chakraborty's investment in dismantling patriarchal systems—each marking an incremental step toward equality. The angle in which the subject's body is posed—bent backwards at the knees by the oppressive winds—echoes the precarity with which womxn, queers, and people of color negotiate white, patriarchal spaces.

Chakraborty's commitment to disrupting patriarchal constructs can also be seen in the abstract work *Maps* (2020). Abstract Expressionism was widely understood as the direct and unmediated articulation of the artist's interiority. Yet, as with many terms, heteronormative culture defined what "artist" meant; in the 1940s and '50s, it meant heterosexual white men, excluding womxn, queers, and people of color. Chakraborty's gesture toward this lineage is a pointed and timely one.

The dense ground of expressionistic black brushstrokes is overlaid with similarly gestural drags, smudges, and circles in shades of red. A close look reveals that some circles appear to be handmade, while others seem to have been made by a cylindrical object, mimetically reproducing the gestural mark. This realization undermines the claim that identity and gesture are discursively synonymous. By making manifest that ideology informs different means of mark making, one is led to understand that language itself is a tool of power.

The work's title encourages us to read these tonal variations as indicating discrete territories. Yet, unlike a traditional map in which territories are neatly contained within boundaries, here they flow into and overlap one another. This echoes the lived reality of politically defined borders, such as that between Mexico and the United States, and the 1947 Partition of India, Chakraborty's homeland.

Chakraborty's work endeavors to undermine dominant culture's ability to define and police meaning, and to expose the invented narratives of those institutional powers. This is the heart of her objective: reject the "naturalized" and "self-evident"; open oneself to new pathways and possibilities; and reveal new ways of making and reading "maps."



Abhipsa Chakraborty, *Maps*, 2020 , Acrylic on Canvas, 18" x 20",  
Image courtesy of the Artist.

## Gabrielle Civil

Jocelyn E. Marshall

Through a combination of organic and inorganic objects, Gabrielle Civil's *Fugue (Da Montréal)* elicits the polyphonic qualities of accessing ancestral voices, diasporic exploration, and urgent reckoning. The name of the performance, *Fugue*, likewise points to multiple textures and uses as it evokes both a musical composition and a psychological state that involves blurred consciousness and understandings of temporality. A part of a trilogy responding to the catastrophic 2010 Haiti earthquake, this performance and the two previous fugues undergird powerful acts of collective discovery to reveal and transfer both loss and recovery. In leading up to this *Fugue*'s concluding (un/re)burying spectacle, Civil palpably centers tensions between home and displacement, accessibility and legibility, and grief and healing.

But first, we listen.

Whimsical music plays as Civil reveals herself from behind a conch shell. Gradually, with each movement, we hear the shuffling of dirt, the grinding, the smoothing, the caving. This emphasis on sound and touch resembles that of Keijaun Thomas' performance *The Poetics of Trespassing* (2014), which was performed only months after *Fugue*, where patrons entered the performance space by walking across saltine crackers. Viewing from outside the red power cord, presence is heard in *Fugue*. Celebratory drumming sounds as heels slide, fingers carve in dirt, cord slithers and slaps skin. "Cut ups" from Dany Laferrière's novel *An Aroma of Coffee* (translated by David Homel) lead us to a tube television submerged in earth, to a reminder "we're not truly dead until there's no one left / on earth to remember our name."

It is easy to privilege the visual components of performance art, but *Fugue* advocates for close attentiveness to sound and language, to ancestral spirits and their stories. Viewers are challenged to become keen listeners, and the enclosed circle of spectating becomes an intimate conversation. As listening is "a transformative and revolutionary resource that requires quieting down and tuning in," Civil reminds us presence is not merely an account of being seen, visibly witnessed. It is also a testimony, a presence heard, a revolution of engaged listening, where transformation can begin with quieting down and tuning in, plugging in and positioning our connected bodies across places, times, and histories.



Gabrielle Civil, *Fugue (Da Montréal)* (2014), filmed performance with sound, 13:14, performance stills courtesy of the artist and Starr Rien.



Gabrielle Civil, *Fugue (Da Montréal)* (2014), filmed performance with sound, 13:14, performance stills courtesy of the artist and Starr Rien.

## Sam Moyer-Kardos

Benjamin Kersten

Tattoos, tummies, and touch in Sam Moyer-Kardos' paintings draw us into an intimate world, and plaster fingers extend into our space, if not our bodies. In *Quinn and Dennis*, one figure's hand grasps the other's knee, perhaps gently urging their hips open. In *Untitled (Coca-Cola)*, one figure's hand touches two thighs, pinky finger outstretched in a caring gesture. In *Micah*, Micah's hand rests on their chest, and one foot is tucked behind the other ankle, alerting us to another gesture that recurs in Moyer-Kardos' paintings. This repertoire of touch brings us to the space between subject and object, encouraging us to dwell for a moment on our relations to our own bodies and to other bodies. At the same time, amidst violence toward and scrutiny of trans and queer people from nearly all facets of society, Moyer-Kardos' work carves out a space where touch, love, a laugh, or perhaps a gentle snooze, can linger freely.

In Moyer-Kardos' paintings and sculpture, the frame's fragmentation of the body, the attentiveness to folds of skin and fabric, and the delicacy of touch ask for close looking, or rather, close feeling. Yet these works cannot help but open onto motifs of queer desire (the Coke of Frank O'Hara and Andy Warhol in which writer and theorist José Esteban Muñoz located a glimpse of utopia), the quandary of the phallus in psychoanalysis, and the history of art. Most prominently, *Big Packer Energy* remixes Gustave Courbet's *L'Origine du monde* [*The Origin of the World*]. Moyer-Kardos' version uses humor, via a reference to social media discourse, to push beyond Courbet's rooting of the world in sexual difference. What sort of political imagination does this body, as a network of subject and object, of social media discourse and the history of art, make possible?



Sam Moyer Kardos, *Untitled (Coca-Cola)*, 2014, Acrylic on Canvas, 60" x 48",  
Image courtesy of the Artist.



Sam Moyer Kardos, *Big Packer Energy*, 2020, Oil on Canvas, 12" x 8",  
Image courtesy of the Artist.



## Halley Marie Shaw (HMS)

Jocelyn E. Marshall

*Breaking silence about an experience can break the chains of the code of silence.*

*Describing the once indescribable can dismantle the power of taboo . . .  
BOTTOM LINE, IF PEOPLE DON'T SAY WHAT THEY BELIEVE,  
THOSE IDEAS AND FEELINGS GET LOST.  
IF THEY ARE LOST OFTEN ENOUGH,  
THOSE IDEAS AND FEELINGS NEVER RETURN.<sup>1</sup>*

The evocative slipperiness of Halley Marie Shaw's poem "Dirty America" and *Vessel* series of collage works produce a multiplicity of sounds, sights, and feelings.

"Served up. Striped straw. Supposed innocence."

Read or heard quickly, one could digest "Served up. *Stripped raw*. Supposed innocence."

And gazing quickly at *House Mouse*, you might miss the interwoven direction: "Hold this up to your ear."

This visual and linguistic play reflects the place from which they are derived: the unrestricted imagination of HMS and her persistent worldmaking. Senses are turned upside down and challenged, language and meaning can be juxtaposed, and unwavering vulnerability is applauded. A strong hand and heart firmly guide each reveal and utterance.

As HMS explains, "Vessel" is a fictional music venue that serves as a workplace and sanctuary for the heroines of her story. A "Gen-X gaudy glory," Vessel relies on word-of-mouth promotion and analog collage flyers to invite guests and promote events. In constructing these flyers, the heroine's use ephemera to hold up as mirrors, and then they guide HMS on how to be a better human. In dialogue with these heroines, in dialogue with a world we can only dream of, HMS's work reminds us how often queer communities "must literally construct the houses they will be born into."<sup>5</sup> Amidst tensions of capitalist modes of production and consumption alongside patriarchal heteronormative understandings of morality, HMS and her heroines expose themselves to reveal the dirt and shame, hope and sweetness.

A "Simple syrup solution. / An indulgence. What I cannot taste."

## “Dirty America” (2020)

### Halley Marie Shaw

I would be sweet even to you. Believe me.  
So, so sweet.  
A float fit for a steady date, you know.  
Served up. Striped straw. Supposed innocence.

Make you melt all the way down. You'd see carnation and cherry in technicolor as  
Lawrence Welk lulled you to sleep. Promise.

I'd be that treat that you chose to sneak into the midnight show in your army  
jacket and beaten Levi's.  
Something that you took from the corner store when you came in for smokes.

Well-lit by the pinball machine.  
No cops around.  
How could you resist, right?

I'd be a comforting complement to cider if you wanted to put on a mask. Take  
collections.

Just remember that even though you're cute, doesn't mean that no one thought  
twice before they stuck razorblades inside.

I 'd be so sweet.  
Every earth mama would come after me with her neon pitchfork.  
Sweet topic of articles that warn sternly about what I'd be doing to everyone  
these days.  
That sweet no amount of water could wash away.

Being sweet. Being sick. Weighing heavily on your healthy conscience.  
What if you kept twisting, turning, fitting, crossing,  
Dripping in sweat?  
I would be dripping in Dirty America. Would you still really want me?

When no one is looking, you'd spit me out  
Just how you like it spat back into your mouth in the back of the cheap seat  
theater.  
Can't get it from the concession stand.  
Can't bring it to the confessional booth.  
You play communion. Take the wafer.  
Anything to forget you can't make anyone cry out for God.

You'd get what you wanted. Simple syrup solution.  
An indulgence. What I cannot taste.

Actually, I wouldn't be.  
I strive to be clean.  
Whole.  
Starving.

## Julia Rose Sutherland

Brandon Giessmann

Rituals are an important tool used to ground us in a moment. They function to fortify feelings of pride and provide a space wherein feelings like immense grief can be condensed into concrete gestures. Julia Rose Sutherland's (Calgary, Canada) artistic practice plucks these threads of history while acknowledging a reality that continues to be neglected, altered, and reshaped to the detriment of Indigenous communities.

In the performance *Gesipatl Iga'latl (Pain and Release)*, Sutherland inserts porcupine quills into her own unflinching flesh following the Sign of the Cross. Her bleached gown melds with the surrounding plains and is gradually stained by her blood, eventually dripping onto the soil in the vast landscape in which she performs. Her presence there works in opposition to previous depictions of the Canadian wilderness by colonial artists in the 19th and 20th centuries, who portrayed these regions as sublime and uninhabited, therefore justifying the conquest to claim them.

Quills are a traditional material used by the Mi'kmaq people and provide sharp outward protection and in this way they become a metaphor for Indigenous cultural resistance. Sutherland repeatedly jabs herself with quills and while doing so gestures in a way to evoke the Sundance. In this gesturing and evocation Sutherland semiotically links her body, her blood, her pain to a universal, ancestral, and communal pain.

Signifying violence both personal and generational, Sutherland's blood represents the harm imposed through systematic racism while working to address larger issues that permeate communities which have been repeatedly deemed disposable. *Gesipatl Iga'latl* points toward legacies of colonial violence, and Sutherland bleeds a call to action, one that demands the systems responsible for such harm, including the thousands of cases involving missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across Canada. However, Sutherland's performance does not focus solely on dissolution; instead, *Gesipatl Iga'latl* ultimately pays homage to the beauty and resilience of indigenous peoples in the face of genocide.



Julia Rose Sutherland, *Gesipatl Iga'latl (Pain and Release)* (2019), filmed performance with sound, 10:00, performance still courtesy of the artist.



Julia Rose Sutherland, *RIP, Rodney Levi (Which Reads 'FUCK THE POLICE')*, 2020, Part 1 of 3-Part Series, Gawiei/Porcupine quillwork (embroidery) on paper, 9" x 12" (12" x 16" framed), Image courtesy of the Artist.

## Vincent Tiley

Dana Tyrrell

From afar they resemble Color Field paintings; the persimmon of Rothko's watery brushstrokes, the milky dashes of a late de Kooning, the harvest-brown scumbling of Krasner, stain speaks here. It is not watered down acrylic or distilled oil paints which invigorate Vincent Tiley's *Indian Yellow* (2017-18) series, but piss. Rather than producing a simulacra of mid-century Abstract Expressionist work, Tiley's material choices within the *Indian Yellow* series tacks closer to that of Andre Serrano, whose *Piss Christ* ignited the culture wars of the late-1980's and early 1990's. Tiley's intent diverges from Serrano in that these golden moments are meant to deepen the viewer's ties with mythology, community, and queer ancestry. As is the case with a jellyfish sting, piss is the salve.

Over a period of four months, Tiley collected the piss of compatriots, collaborators, and sundry others in Bushwick and Fire Island. He then distilled the urine into pigment and turned that pigment into paint--a process which materializes and queers the fable of Indian Yellow being a product of cow piss. Tiley's work of collecting piss frames a queer dimensionality of communal interrelatedness while pointing to subcultures within the LGBTQ+ community (hankey codes, piss play, water sports) and myths buttressing Queer history.

The artist's work in *Being In-Between / In-Between Being* capitalizes on the tension between his chosen materials and the discordant energy within works such as *ACRE* and *Nettles*. Of these pieces Tiley offers "*ACRE* and *Nettles* are both haptic responses to the landscape of a farm in Minnesota where they were made. Instead of making an image of what a field or a patch of stinging nettles looks like I wanted to make prints about what they feel like."<sup>1</sup> The tension between looking and feeling radiates from Tiley's artwork within this exhibition even without foreknowledge of their material components. To be pushed and pulled by a work of art is to be made uneasy, similar to subsumed co-minglings of longing and repulsion embedded within Queer desire.

*Being In-Between / In-Between Being* also demonstrates the shift Tiley's *Indian Yellow* series makes from the two dimensional to the three, mapping gold across handkerchiefs, and shifting the viewers standing from voyeur to participant. In this we are being courted. As part of this exhibition, *Indian Yellow 1-5, 7* signify bodies which elide the eye. By focusing not upon the body as presence, Tiley's pentimentoed, boiling works signal a presence just beyond reach. It is the acrid smell of a gay bar's bathroom, the midnight sidewalk, so many bodies in the wind; Tiley foregrounds his practice in this methodology and communal mythos to bridge the flow of time from a lost generation of queer artists to the present cohort.



L: Vincent Tiley, *Indian Yellow No. 1 (Discovering Phosphorus)*, 2017  
The Origins of Color, in Collaboration with Bryson Rand, Oil on Canvas, 12" x 9", Photograph by Bryson Rand, Image courtesy of the Artist



R: Vincent Tiley, *Nettles*, 2018  
Edition of 8, 2 AP  
Silkscreen on paper with gold flocking  
19" x 12.5"  
Image courtesy of the Artist.

## Acknowledgments

*Being In-Between / In-Between Being* has evolved into and out of many layers, and I am grateful to all who have supported the project at its various stages. Who knew diving in and enlivening ‘gray areas’ could be so expansive, individually and collectively? I would like to thank a few participants here, though the backbone of the show is composed of many more vertebrae.

First, I would like to express sincere gratitude for Mark Snyder, who not only invested in the initial proposal of this show, but also went on to assist with adapting the in-person plan to a virtual model. Frankly, without his support, *Being In-Between / In-Between Being* would never have been able to come alive in 2020, after all.

Behind the proposal, there were roughly four years of thinking, and I give special thanks to Myung Mi Kim, James H. McNulty Chair of English at the University at Buffalo, for never hesitating to support the exhibition. I owe my strong interest in and concern for the politics of intertextual practice to her thoughtful feedback and creative challenges. This exhibition’s curatorial decisions would have simply been amiss without her years of mentorship and guidance.

For illuminating this vision and conversation, I warmly thank all of the participating artists: Cassils, Abhipsa Chakraborty, Gabrielle Civil, Sam Moyer-Kardos, Halley Marie Shaw, Julia Rose Sutherland, and Vincent Tiley. Their flexibility and continued excitement for the exhibition in spite of the pandemic hurdles aided in reigniting my own flame for the project multiple times, and for that I am forever grateful. I especially thank Gabrielle Civil for her continued involvement in and support of projects I routinely wish to include her wonderful work.

Extending this show’s vision and enhancing the conversation, contributors to the catalogue deserve high praise! They rolled with tight deadlines, took generous care with their pieces, and often left me in awe by their insights and engagement. The thesis of the exhibition has truly been expanded into an exploration of new concerns and different kinds of joy thanks to the work of Anja Foerschner, Brandon Giessmann, Benjamin Kersten, Sarah Jm Kolberg, and Dana Tyrrell.

Framing much of the gears and planning for the exhibition were insights from Jonathan D. Katz, whom I warmly thank for his consistently comprehensive advice and guidance. Another special thanks to catalogue designer and editor Dana Tyrrell, whose dedication to the project was invaluable.

Last, I give many thanks to SUNY Buffalo's Department of Art for providing the virtual venue, as well as to the Gender Institute at SUNY Buffalo for assistance in promoting the exhibition and events.

Thank you, everyone, who made this exhibition and event series possible.



## Exhibition Event Schedule

### **Opening Reception with Artist Talk:**

**Tuesday, December 15, 2020 at 7pm EST**

“Protesting Through Traditional Craft” with Julia Rose Sutherland

### **Film Screening:**

**Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at 7pm EST**

*103 Shots* (2016) by Cassils

### **Artist Talk:**

**Friday, December 18, 2020 at 7pm EST**

“Big Packer Energy” with Sam Moyer-Kardos

### **Artist Talk:**

**Friday, January 8, 2021 at 7pm EST**

“The Origins of Color” with Vincent Tiley

### **Filmed Performance Screening:**

**Wednesday, January 13, 2021 at 7pm EST**

*Fugue (Da Montréal)* (2014) by Gabrielle Civil

### **Artist Talk:**

**Friday, January 15, 2021 at 7pm EST**

“Séances” with Gabrielle Civil

## Contributing Writers

**Anja Foerschner** is an art historian and curator with a specialization in performance art, feminist art, and art from the regions of former Yugoslavia. Originally trained as a visual artist, she holds a Master's degree in Art Pedagogy, Art History, and Philosophy (2008) and a PhD in art history from Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich (2011). In 2019, she founded ECC Performance Art, an online teaching and research platform for performance art and theory. Among her current projects are a research project on the documentation and archiving strategies of feminist performance artists from the 1960s to the present and a book on female agency in the arts of former Yugoslavia since the 1970s.

**Brandon Giessmann** is a Canadian visual artist and writer who explores trauma, identity, and memory. He received his BFA from the Alberta University of the Arts in 2018 and his MFA at SUNY: University at Buffalo in New York in 2020. His interdisciplinary practice often uses performance, photography, and installation to bridge generational gaps in knowledge and experience of the closet and genocide, consider the effects of the ongoing AIDS crisis, and reflect upon the role that institutions play in the conservation and presentation of queer.

**Benjamin Kersten** (he/him) is an MA/PhD Student in Art History at the University of California, Los Angeles. His interests include art and politics, nationalisms, Yiddish culture, race, and sexuality. Outside of coursework, he serves as an editor for GrayLit, a digital periodical on cultural work that connects Palestinian and Jewish histories to collective liberation, and organizes with Jewish Voice for Peace at UCLA.

**sarah jm kolberg** is a PhD candidate in Visual Studies and an adjunct instructor in the Department of Media Study at the University at Buffalo. She holds an MA in Visual Studies, a joint MA in English and Film, and an MFA in Film. She specializes in the American and French post-WWII avant garde, with additional areas of focus in psychoanalytic theory, film noir, narratology, and queer theory. In 2014 she co-curated a major exhibition on the queer origins of the reemergence of text in post-war American art.

**Jocelyn E. Marshall** is an English PhD candidate at SUNY Buffalo. Her scholarship focuses on 20th-21st-century U.S. queer and womxn writers and artists, researching the relationships between intertextual practice, displaced positionality, and traumatic experience. Currently, Jocelyn serves on the College Art Association's Committee on Women in the Arts, is on the Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ History Project's Board of Directors, and is co-editing a volume on trauma-informed pedagogy (Emerald Publishing, 2021).

**Dana Tyrrell** is an artist, curator, and writer from Buffalo, NY. His writing has appeared in previous publications for the University at Buffalo, along with Cornelia Magazine, Buffalo Rising, and Peach Mag, among others. Curatorial projects include the Burchfield Penney Art Center (2021), the Castellani Art Museum (2018), among many others. His artwork can be found in public and private collections throughout the northeastern United States and southern Ontario.

# Notes

## Introduction

- <sup>1</sup> Kim, Elaine H. "Poised on the In-Between: A Korean American's Reflections on Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's Dictée." *Writing Self, Writing Nation: A Collection of Essays on Dictée by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha*. ed. Elaine H. Kim and Norma Alarcón. Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1994, 23.
- <sup>2</sup> Hammond, Harmony. "Class Notes." *Heresies*. 1.3 (Fall 1977), 36.
- <sup>3</sup> *Intermedialities: Philosophy, Arts, Politics*. ed. Henk Oosterling and Ewa Plonowska Ziarek. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011.
- <sup>4</sup> Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003, 3.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 191, 209.
- <sup>6</sup> hooks, bell. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. 2nd Ed. Cambridge: South End Press, 1984; 2000, 165.

## Cassils

- <sup>1</sup> Gumbs, Alexis Pauline. "Pulse." *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 3.3. Fall 2016, 96.
- <sup>2</sup> Getsy, David J. "Introduction: Queer Intolerability and its Attachments." *Queer Documents of Contemporary Art Series*. ed. David J. Getsy. London: Whitechapel Gallery, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2016, 15.

## Gabrielle Civil

- <sup>1</sup> Excerpted from full performance score provided by the artist March 2020.
- <sup>2</sup> Gumbs, Alexis Pauline. *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals*. Emergent Strategy Series No. 2. Chico: AK Press, 2020, 15.

## Halley Marie Shaw (HMS)

- <sup>1</sup> Wojnarowicz, David. *Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991, 153.
- <sup>2</sup> Blake, Nayland. "Curating 'In a Different Light'" (1995). *Queer Documents of Contemporary Art Series*. ed. David J. Getsy. London: Whitechapel Gallery, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2016, 120.

## Vincent Tiley

- <sup>1</sup> Indicated in email response with curator, March 2020.  
For further reading of Tiley's *Indian Yellow* series, more information and context can be found in "The Origins of Color," which is published with Bryson Rand by Raw Meat Collective.

