

MUDAM

Baloise Art Prize 2022

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Tourmaline

Pleasure and Pollinator

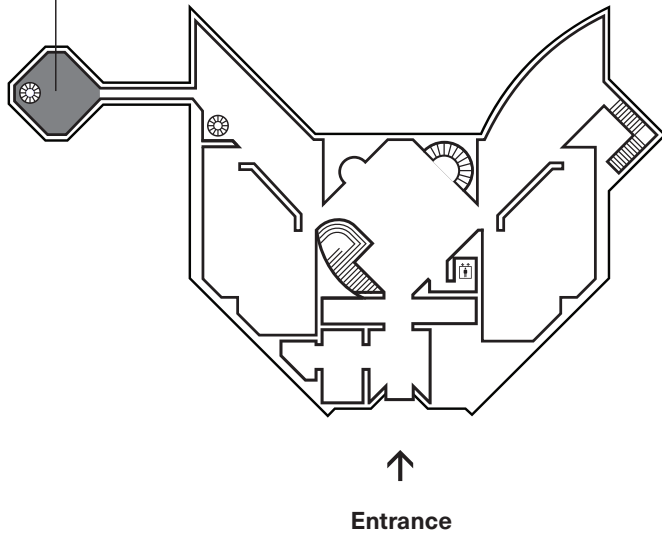
03.03 — 15.10.2023

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MUDAM

Level 0 and -1

Henry J. and Erna D. Leir Pavilion



Level 0

Phantom VIII, 2022

Gelatin silver print

Silver Cloud I, 2022

Gelatin silver print

Silver Wraith, 2022

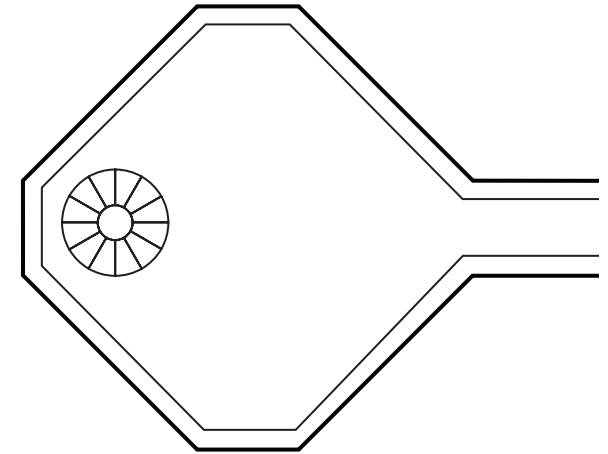
Gelatin silver print

Sweptail, 2022

Gelatin silver print

All works

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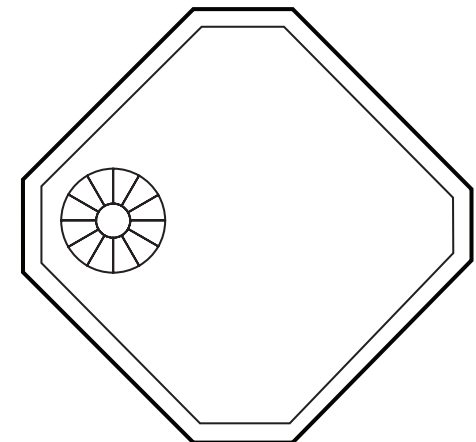
Level -1

Pollinator, 2022

Black and white video, colour, sound, 5 min 8 sec
Collection Mudam Luxembourg
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It's giving Countach, 2022

Digital c-print
Baloise art collection



Tourmaline.

Pleasure and Pollinator

03.03 — 15.10.2023

Curators

Marie-Noëlle Farcy
Assisted by
Line Ajan

The exhibition

Tourmaline is an artist, writer and transgender activist whose video and photographs create elaborately staged scenes honouring living and historical figures of LGBTQIA+ movements and queer culture. In reflecting on their contemporary legacy, she draws on the notion of 'critical fabulation' as developed by scholar Saidiya Hartman (b. 1961, New York). Accordingly, Tourmaline's work is nourished by historical research, critical theory and fiction to show how erasure and amnesia have marked the writing of a hegemonic historical canon. Tourmaline uses found footage and archival material in her films for their empowering potential: giving political agency to those affected by the afterlife of slavery and tracing an imagined genealogy of Black queer figures, of which Tourmaline is an integral part.

Pleasure and Pollinator is the first solo presentation of Tourmaline's work in a European institution and is centred around the video *Pollinator* (2022), which won the Baloise Art Prize and was donated to Mudam by Baloise. The exhibition begins on the ground floor, with a set of four photographs as a prologue to the film that is screened downstairs, where we see the artist dressed in costumes inspired by early twentieth century attire.

Printed in larger-than-life scale, these black-and-white self-portraits are marked by a sensual and meditative atmosphere: we see Tourmaline sitting pensively on the ground, her flowy costume echoing the voluminous tree behind her. In most photographs, she stands majestically in a garden, while in others, she is almost camouflaged amidst the large swaths of her dress's white fabric and plant leaves. Evoking the relations between nature and ornament, but also the representation and visibility of queer and Black bodies, this series pursues the artist's explorations of the history of 'pleasure gardens', that



Tourmaline, *Pollinator*, 2022. Collection Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean. Donation 2022 – Baloise © Tourmaline / Courtesy the artist and Chapter NY

emerged in the United States in the early 1800s. While these places were categorised as 'white-only' (to quote racist advertisements of the time), a few were Black-owned and stood as havens of leisure and resistance. Tourmaline reactualises the idea of pleasure by embracing her own image within luscious gardens. The photographs are marked by a spectral atmosphere, with Tourmaline radiating an otherworldly presence – an

aspect accentuated by the haunting soundtrack broadcast in the space.

The film *Pollinator* opens up like an 'upward spiral,' to quote the artist. It begins with shots of Tourmaline walking through the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and the Edwardian period rooms at the Brooklyn Museum. These are interspersed with archival footage of the memorial of Marsha 'Pay It No Mind'

Johnson (b. 1945, Elizabeth, New Jersey – d. 1992, New York), a performer and figure of the Stonewall uprising for gay rights in 1969 who co-founded Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) with Sylvia Rivera (b. 1951 – d. 2002, New York). A cult figure for the queer community in New York, Marsha P. Johnson appears as the central subject in two other films by Tourmaline: *Lost in the Music* (2017) and *Happy Birthday, Marsha!* (2018), both co-directed with Sasha Wortzel (b. 1983, Fort Myers, Florida).

Here, Johnson's legacy is evoked less through the lens of a narrative progression than as a poetic metaphor. Tourmaline wanders in the garden and brushes against the plants, acting as a 'pollinator' by carrying matter on her clothes. These scenes are interlaced with home videos shot by the artist that show her father singing, laughing and smoking, as well as interviews with friends of Johnson, one of which holds a picture of her smiling. These images are deftly woven in an intricate montage that repeats one leitmotiv: the flower, which appears first on Tourmaline's headdress, then on Johnson's flower-crown, and later is seen floating in the Hudson River during Johnson's memorial. While centring grief, this montage acts as a joyful reminder that Johnson was a nurturing figure for gender non-conforming and trans people in New York: she was, metaphorically speaking, a 'pollinator'. Evoking queer grief, Tourmaline's work nevertheless privileges a celebratory perspective that connects historical queer figures with contemporary Black transgender communities – an approach that recalls what historian Robin D.G. Kelley (b. 1962, New York) defines as 'freedom dreaming'.



Trap Door
An introduction to a Trans* cultural production and politics of visibility.

Tourmaline, Eric A. Stanley, and
Johanna Burton

An image is powerful not necessarily because of anything specific it offers the viewer, but because of everything it apparently also takes away from the viewer.

– Trinh T. Minh-ha, “Beware of Wolf Intervals”

Traps

We are living in a time of trans visibility. Yet we are also living in a time of anti-trans violence. These entwined proclamations—lived in the flesh—frame the conversations, interventions, analyses, and other modes of knowing that are captured in *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*. Consequently, we come to this project with a deep sense of possibility that also exists in an interval of anxiety. All three of us, in different yet sometimes overlapping capacities, and via different yet sometimes overlapping self-identifications, utilize and are imbricated in the production, presentation, and circulation of visual culture. At the same time, we know that when produced within the cosmology of racial capitalism, the promise of “positive representation” ultimately gives little support or protection to many, if not most, trans and gender nonconforming people, particularly those who are low-income and/or of color—the very people whose lives and labor constitute the ground for the figuration of this moment of visibility.

This is the trap of the visual: it offers—or, more accurately, it is frequently offered to us as—the primary path through which trans people might have access to livable lives. Representation is said to remedy

broader acute social crises ranging from poverty to murder to police violence, particularly when representation is taken up as a “teaching tool” that allows those outside our immediate social worlds and identities to glimpse some notion of a shared humanity. To the degree that anyone might consider such potential to exist within representation, one must also grapple and reckon with radical incongruities—as when, for example, our “transgender tipping point” comes to pass at precisely the same political moment when women of color, and trans women of color in particular, are experiencing markedly increased instances of physical violence. Many of the essays, conversations, and dossiers gathered in *Trap Door* attempt to think through this fundamental paradox, attending to implications for the political present and the art historical past, particularly with regard to persisting—if incomplete—legacies of representation.

Perhaps inevitably, such a perspective on representation is deeply rooted in our personal experiences, which render the questions at hand less “contemporary” than historically insistent, and less abstract than emphatically concrete. Indeed, when first approaching this project—considering how art, fashion, and other image-based works more generally function in culture—Tourmaline was immediately reminded of an invaluable lesson learned early on as a community organizer:

that immense transformational and liberatory possibilities arise from what are otherwise sites of oppression or violent extraction—whether the body, labor, land, or spirituality—when individuals have agency in their representation.

Through such a lens, one may recognize more clearly the living stakes for current representations of trans culture, insofar as they are necessarily a kind of extraction and instrumentalization—if not outright recoding—of the artwork and experiences of marginalized peoples and communities. In this regard, the very terms of representation should not be considered apart from public life and its regulation. Consider how Seymour Pine, the New York Police Department officer who led the raids at the Stonewall Inn that preceded the uprising of 1969, would later speak about the city’s moralizing penal code, which he was enforcing on the night of the Stonewall riot. In a 1989 interview, he observed that these statutes, which formed the basis for New York’s anti-cross-dressing laws, specifically targeted people in public spaces; as a result, the laws underscored the power of being together and of fashion’s potential to destabilize the state-sponsored morality underpinning the gender binary and, moreover, the basis for who should or should not appear in public. In other words, to violate the state-sponsored sanctions—to render oneself visible to the state—emphasizes that there is power in coming together in ways that don’t replicate the state’s moral imperatives. Fashion and imagery hold power, which is precisely why the state seeks to regulate and constrain such self-representations to this very day.

The politics of such a turn are not monolithic, however, and if there is one trap in representation’s instrumentalization, so is there another in its figuration and, more precisely, its simplification. This issue has persisted since the very beginnings of the gay and trans movements in the United States. Notably, in the shadow of the gay political landscape that developed after the Stonewall uprising, a group of street queens—including Sylvia Rivera, Marsha P. Johnson, Bubbles Rose Marie, Bambi Lamo, and Andorra Martin—started

organizing together under the name Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR). STAR engaged a particular set of issues generally overlooked by the white middle-class gay movement, whose realization was so encapsulated by the momentous events at Stonewall. Put more bluntly:

although their life, fashion, and labor shared the same constitutional ground on which the entire early gay rights movement was built, poor people, mostly of color, as well as trans people who were sex workers did not find their own issues addressed or accommodated by the larger movement.

The members of STAR gathered enough resources to rent an apartment in the Lower East Side, calling it STAR House. This small, personal act of resistance and refusal created space for those unruly to the demand of assimilation to come together and to support one another. At a time of heightened violence, just by hanging out with and taking care of one another, the members of STAR were doing revolutionary work.

STAR’s example, and the ultimate fate of its endeavor, bridges the gap between representation and reality in stark terms. As writer Arthur Bell outlined at the time in “STAR Trek: Transvestites in the Streets,” published in the *Village Voice*, STAR was evicted from its tenement brownstone when the landlord decided to turn the building into a gay hostel. This was an example, Bell asserted, of how gay New York was being gentrified and whitewashed, while people who were poor or of color were being pushed out of the newly recognized and politically defined nomenclature. Significantly, STAR’s landlord, Mike Umbers, owned a gay bar

on Christopher Street (called Christopher's End) that became commercially successful during the rise of the gay liberation movement. In fact, Umbers later became a sponsor of the 1973 Gay Pride rally—the infamous and first “nonpolitical” iteration—during which Rivera broke out onstage to remind people about their gay brothers and sisters who were still in jail, despite the progress being made in the larger cultural context. At least in part, *Trap Door* aspires to similarly resist resolution.

Doors

Being mindful of how representation can be and is used to restrict the possibilities of trans people flourishing in hostile worlds, we persist. This anthology takes seriously the fact that representations do not simply re-present an already existing reality but are also doors into making new futures possible. Indeed, the terms of representation require novel critical attention today precisely because of their formative and transformative power. Put simply,

if we do not attend to representation and work collectively to bring new visual grammars into existence (while remembering and unearthing suppressed ones), then we will remain caught in the traps of the past.

Trap Door utilizes the most expansive examples of art and visual culture we can imagine. Resistant to the canonization of trans art (although we have included many artists who might appear in such a project), we want to radically undo the boundaries of cultural production so that the category can come to include modes of self-fashioning, making, doing, and being that fall outside the properly

“artistic.” Partly this approach arises from our own divergent creative practices, which include artistic, activist, critical, and curatorial endeavors. Yet our individual approaches should be taken to underline our collective desire for a different visual grammar.

For example, Eric's film *Homotopia* (2006) and its sequel, *Criminal Queers* (2016), codirected with Chris E. Vargas, respond to conversations in trans/queer contemporary politics and utilize camp and humor to unfold difficult and knotty issues. *Homotopia* is a radical queer critique of the institution of gay marriage. As both a theoretical commitment and a material limit, it was made with no budget and no grants. All the actors on-screen were friends, lovers, or exes who worked collectively, writing their own scripts and developing their characters. *Criminal Queers* was, in turn, a kind of response to questions audiences would pose at screenings of *Homotopia*. People would often ask, “If we shouldn't put all our time and energy into gay marriage, then what should we fight for?” While not wanting to be overly prescriptive, Eric and Chris suggested, through *Criminal Queers*, that prison abolition might be one of the many struggles that trans/queer and gender nonconforming communities should work toward.

Importantly, in both films, gender and trans identities are left unstable. Eric and Chris knew that they did not want to traffic in the dominant visual economies of trans images. There were no binding scenes, no “undressing,” no visual cues that might lead the viewer to assume they “know” who these characters “really are.” In contrast, they let the actors work with and convey their gender however they felt: the actors might well have developed an on-screen persona who is more or less similar to who they are in their daily lives, or perhaps they developed a character

who is more adjacent. In effect, Eric and Chris chose to center a trans/GNC universe without giving the viewer the visual satisfaction of “discovery.” This has led individuals who have watched the *same* film to variously ask, “Why do you have only cis people in your films?” and, “Why do you have only trans people in your films?” While the majority of the people in both films identify as trans, Eric and Chris have left the question of gender open in order to see in what other directions we all might take such projects.

Tourmaline's film *Happy Birthday, Marsha!* (2018), codirected with Sasha Wortzel, tells the story of Marsha P. Johnson in the hours leading up to the Stonewall riots. The film stars Mya Taylor as Johnson, a disabled Black trans artist and activist who was one of the first people to resist the police raid at the Stonewall Inn on the night of the riots. Beyond simply portraying a time when trans people of color were oppressed or acted exceptionally, the film tells a much more complex story that challenges the hierarchy of intelligible history and the archive that keeps our stories as trans and gender nonconforming people from ever surfacing in the first place. Following Saidiya Hartman, *Happy Birthday, Marsha!* enables a story to emerge “that exceed[s] the fiction of history...that constitute[s] the archive and determine[s] what can be said about the past.”

Through making the film, Tourmaline came to realize that aesthetics and image matter deeply and can exist against the current instrumentalization of trans visibility as an advertisement for the state. *Happy Birthday, Marsha!* achieves its goals by focusing on Marsha's beauty and the beautiful ways that she and her fellow street queens made life and meaning out of the world around them, outside of the gaze of the state. The film shows something not normally seen on screen:

a trans life, with its intimate sociability and relationships. What is visible in the film exists as fugitive to both the rational and the moral: how Marsha and her friends came together, laughed and worked together, made meaning of the world together, and, thanks to Marsha, how they dreamed together.

One of the scenes in *Happy Birthday, Marsha!*, not coincidentally, was filmed at the New Museum—not in its exhibition spaces, but in its adjacent building, a floor of which currently houses working studio space for artists in residence. Via Sasha (who was then working as an educator at the New Museum), Johanna was introduced to Tourmaline and to the extraordinary film project in process. That encounter began a dialogue about institutional responsibility and chains of affiliation, about the politics of alliance, friendship, and platform-building. And that encounter eventually led to a conversation about this book.

Johanna's own longstanding commitment to education and pedagogy, manifested within the museum and academic contexts, bridges engagements with representation in art with those being articulated in discourse, viewing present circumstances in historical perspective. Seeking alternative approaches to representation—or perhaps better said, clarity around the stakes of representation—has defined her curatorial and discursive projects, which have always been moored in feminism and its continuously necessary expansions and self-evaluations.

Yet, recognizing the historical specificity and limits of dialogues devoted to subjectivity, and

juxtaposing contemporary developments in art and culture with previous efforts, may now allow for an elaboration and a recasting of critical language.

The altered landscape for arts institutions, artistic production, and even identity in a swiftly changing political climate lends real urgency to such considerations—to say nothing of the need to commit to projects dedicated to resisting increasingly complex modes of incorporation and repression. While our cultural moment feels, in this way, quite precarious, it also opens up to radical new possibilities, and these are what we most hope to foreground here.

To this end, we have included reflections by contributors who take up aspects of self-styling, drag, direct action, voice, sound, care and protection, technology, documentation, and labor, among many other topics. In every case, the question arises of whether visibility is a goal to be worked toward or an outcome to be avoided at all costs. Indeed, this question—unresolved and unresolvable—shapes discussions that, however varied, share an urgency that might be named existential. In other words, many of the contributors reflect on what it is to be, and then, what it is to reckon that being with structures that either refute or appropriate it (and sometimes do both at the same time). Our gambit is that in the face of such a paradox, we must challenge the very notion of being itself and name (though not codify) new modes of recognition, identification, and collective endeavor. As authors Morgan Bassichis, Alexander Lee, and Dean Spade have asserted elsewhere—and as Jeannine Tang reiterates in the final lines of her essay—“Impossibility may very well be our only possibility.” Bassichis, Lee, and Spade continue provocatively,

“What would it mean to embrace, rather than shy away from, the impossibility of our ways of living as well as our political visions?” Such impossibility, however, should be seen not as dire nor as a state of crisis but, rather, as a radical invitation to fantasize and to dream otherwise. This book aims to point unflinchingly to a cultural context that has little use for the impossible and yet is forced to grapple with its existence and persistence.

Gathered in these pages are twenty-one contributions that take various forms: individually authored and collaboratively written essays, historical and contemporary illustrated dossiers, and transcribed roundtables and dialogues. Most were produced specifically for this volume and, as such, might be understood as consciously participating in an evolving discourse whose very contours should be and are questioned here. To this end, even those texts that take up the task of providing a historical framework for today’s trans landscape offer versions of the past rather than postulating master narratives of it. For instance, in plumbing the radical politics of several historical organizing groups, Abram J. Lewis’s “Trans History in a Moment of Danger: Organizing Within and Beyond ‘Visibility’ in the 1970s” explores the complex and sometimes opposing strands driving these groups’ activities and thinking—from antipatriarchal feminism to interspecies animal communication to pagan magic. “Out of Obscurity: Trans Resistance, 1969–2016,” a companion piece by Grace Dunham, surveys and analyzes contemporary activist organizations in relation to their 1970s forebears, paying particular attention to prison abolition and health care. In “The

Labor of Werqing It: The Performance and Protest Strategies of Sir Lady Java,” Treva Ellison explores the life and work of historic 1960s performer Sir Lady Java in order to issue a critique of racial capitalism that easily extends its reach to our present moment. And, in “Cautious Living: Black Trans Women and the Politics of Documentation,” activists Miss Major Griffin-Gracy and CeCe McDonald similarly reflect on the perils of representation—and day-to-day life—that they have each negotiated for decades, in a conversation organized by journalist Toshio Meronek.

Such negotiations are at the heart of texts focusing specifically on artistic production: Roy Pérez’s “Proximity: On the Work of Mark Aguhar” examines the late artist’s decision to make her body her art and asks where representation begins and ends in such a configuration. In “Dynamic Static,” Nicole Archer also pushes back on the notion that one can locate something like a queer or trans “aesthetic,” and posits, through a close reading of several artists, a mode of pattern-jamming that has roots in older models of institutional critique. Jeannine Tang takes institutions themselves to task in “Contemporary Art and Critical Transgender Infrastructures,” demanding from them a new awareness of their imperatives, which tend to exclude (or to absorb) trans practitioners. In “Introducing the Museum of Transgender Hstory and Art,” on the other hand, Chris E. Vargas uses satire and biting humor to call for real changes and alternative models for showing and contextualizing trans art.

A shared thread running through many of the pieces here is, not surprisingly, the archive—or, perhaps better, the archives (plural).

In Stamatina Gregory and Jeanne Vaccaro’s “Canonical Undoings: Notes on Trans Art and Archives,” the authors assess the current structural impasse many feel when writing histories that have effectively been refused or erased. They, like Morgan M. Page in “*One from the Vaults*: Gossip, Access, and Trans History–Telling,” propose alternative models of retrieving and disseminating the past. But in both of these texts, archives stand for much more than repositories of history: the archive is seen as an active, present site, one that undergirds and supports the very people who seek it out and, in doing so, contribute to its evolving contents. To this end, Mel Y. Chen’s “Everywhere Archives: Transgendering, Trans Asians, and the Internet” considers the ways in which user-generated archival structures such as YouTube tags can remap gendered and racial identifications.

Two roundtables take up the relationship between histories and futures. “Representation and Its Limits,” moderated by Tavia Nyong’o and with participants Lexi Adsit, Sydney Freeland, Robert Hamblin, and Geo Wyeth, focuses on the pitfalls of visibility and trans representation within institutions that continue to operate in exclusionary, violent ways. “Models of Futurity,” moderated by Dean Spade and with participants Kai Lumumba Barrow, Yve Laris Cohen, and Kalaniopua Young, focuses on contemporary instances of structural violence, while speculating on potential futures and alternatives that operate outside of their logic. The current landscape, however, is stark with such violence, and as many contributors to this book note, art’s operation within the symbolic has limits. micha cárdenas’s “Dark Shimmers: The Rhythm of Necropolitical Affect in Digital Media” meditates on the ways we are increasingly unable to escape the physical and psychic effects and affects of technologically driven violence. In

“Blackness and the Trouble of Trans Visibility,” Che Gossett addresses how the legacy of racial slavery inflects contemporary anti-Black and anti-trans violence, as well as the interventions of Black radical thinkers to destabilize human/animal and gender binaries. And Park McArthur and Constantina Zavitsanos poetically take up the fragility of bodies and the strength of collaboration, while considering ideologies of ableness in “The Guild of the Brave Poor Things.” Various modes of affinity and alliance are explored—and questioned—in Heather Love’s “The Last Extremists?,” which considers mainstream media’s embrace of queer and trans content in the face of an increasingly conservative gay mainstream. Relatedly, in “An Affinity of Hammers,” Sara Ahmed analyzes the ways in which feminism, which is often seen as aligned with trans and queer politics, is wielded by trans-exclusionary radical feminists as a violent tool against trans women.

In “Existing in the World: Blackness at the Edge of Trans Visibility,” a conversation between Juliana Huxtable and Che Gossett, Juliana suggests that existing and persisting are acts not only of resistance but also of interference. This idea resonates with Eva Hayward’s “Spiderwomen,” in which the author explores the possibility that corporeality embodies a kind of sensuous transaction not only between body and environment but also between species in an encounter that changes both parties—an idea with immense political ramifications. “All Terror, All Beauty,” a conversation between Wu Tsang and Fred Moten, concludes that in nonbinary thinking, conclusions themselves are a moot point, though this hardly means reverting to relativism. As Fred says,

“The absoluteness is in the attempt, not in the achievement.”

The biggest effort for this volume—its absoluteness, if that exists—is to allow the paradox of trans representation in the current moment to find form in conversations that don’t attempt to smooth the contradictions. In order to facilitate an open network of resonances and to allow through-lines to emerge among the texts—for instance, the figures of the threshold and the trap, the reconfigured parameters of the archive and the institution, and claims to beauty and glamour as modes of trans worlding—we have resisted grouping them into thematic categories. Issues of representation inevitably summon questions of self-representation, and to that end, we wish to be forward about the terms we bring to the subject. (In this regard, we should note that we have elected not to standardize terms that allow for self-determination; for instance, the words “Black” and “trans” and their affiliates appear in many variations here, as requested by the writers using them.)

In today’s complex cultural landscape, trans people are offered many “doors”—entrances to visibility, to resources, to recognition, and to understanding. Yet, as so many of the essays collected here attest, these doors are almost always also “traps”—accommodating trans bodies, histories, and culture only insofar as they can be forced to hew to hegemonic modalities.

This isn’t a new story; various kinds of “outsider art” have historically been called upon by an art market or academic cadre that utilize them to advance dominant narratives before pushing them back out. Yet, in addition to *doors* that are always already *traps*, there are *trapdoors*, those

clever contraptions that are not entrances or exits but secret passageways that take you someplace else, often someplace as yet unknown. (It is precisely this ambiguity between seeing and knowing, between figure and the new ground that thresholds open up, that initiates McArthur and Zavitsanos’s text: “What about a door is a trap when it’s known, or known to be unknown?”) Here is the space we believe exists and a third term that acknowledges the others but refuses to be held to them.

Thresholds

Trap Door, then, is offered as an imperfect experiment. We do not claim to be the first voice, or even a definitive one, on the many ways “trans” and “art” might collide. In this respect, we must note that the bulk of the people gathered here, with important exceptions, are based in or primarily work in the United States. The scope of the book is thus geopolitically limited. At the same time, from the beginning of the project, we felt committed to including the voices of emerging artists and cultural producers recognized mostly outside of the art world. Given that gender always lives in the idiom of race (to say nothing of disability, sexuality, class, and so on), we wanted to work to disrupt the assumed whiteness of both trans studies and visual culture. Also, while we point to political roots for the present dialogue, we must underline that this collection has been compiled in a time of specific struggle. From prison abolition work to #BlackTransLivesMatter, we have wanted to continue to center the ways in which the question of the visual is always also a question of the political. For that reason, as noted previously, we have included the work of numerous activist collectives, as we know their work to be a vital intervention of its own. But we would hasten to add that art itself can and should be seen as activist, and we do not wish to mark any clear-cut division between what counts as “political” and what as “artistic,”

even as we certainly see some people put themselves at far greater immediate risk in their activities.

A central aspect of this book, even while it meditates on the unthinkable difficult terms of our contemporary moment, is to insist on pleasure, self-care, beauty, fantasy, and dreaming as elements key to sustained radical change. Therefore, we consider the efforts of those included in this book as exhibiting some combination of artistic and activist impulses, conceived via both deeply researched and wildly speculative thought. In putting such an extraordinary range of making and imagining into the world, we hope we have enabled others to do the same and more. In fact, the present volume demands responses and further dialogues from readers and the larger public: if we offer here another image of trans experience and culture, it is necessarily to the exclusion of so much else at hand. The very problems of representation we seek to engage are reproduced in the making of this volume, and yet we continue to name and unname the known and the unknown, without guarantees, toward the aesthetics—which is to say the materiality—of trans flourishing.

This essay has been adapted for the purposes of this booklet. Its original title is ‘Known Unknowns: An Introduction to *Trap Door*’. Endnotes by the authors can be found in its original version: Tourmaline, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton, eds., *Trap Door*, pp. xv - xxvi, © 2017 Massachusetts Institute of Technology, by permission of The MIT Press.



Tourmaline, *Pollinator*, 2022. Collection Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean. Donation 2022 – Baloise
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The artist

Tourmaline (b. 1983, Roxbury, Massachusetts) has presented her work within significant survey exhibitions, such as the 59th Venice Biennale *The Milk of Dreams* (2022); *Mountain/Time* at the Aspen Art Museum (2022); *The Slipstream: Reflection, Resilience, and Resistance in the Art of Our Time* at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (2021) and *Critical Fabulations* at MoMA, New York (2021). Her work is part of numerous public collections, such as the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne and Tate Modern, London. Tourmaline was also granted the Guggenheim Fellowship in 2021. She lives and works in New York.

Baloise Art Prize

Founded in 1999, the Baloise Art Prize is awarded annually at Art Basel to two artists exhibiting within the Statements section of the fair. Tourmaline is the recipient of the 2022 Baloise Art Prize. She is the seventh artist to join the Mudam Collection thanks to the support of Baloise since the museum became a partner of the prize in 2015.

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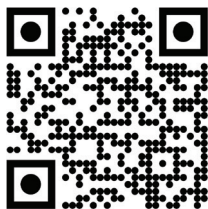
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