

KUNSTHALL STAVANGER

LEAN Curated by Legacy Russell

MARCH 4 - APRIL 25, 2021

ENGLISH

lean /lēn/

verb: be in or move into a sloping position.

noun: a deviation from the perpendicular; an inclination.

"I prefer no curves at all, unless they be the // : This angle the cryptographic slant into figurative space is toward a poetics of internal excess[.]"

—Ronaldo V. Wilson[1]

This exhibition *LEAN* brings together artists Justin Allen, Jen Everett, Krista Gay, Devin Kenny, Kalup Linzy, Rene Matić, Sadé Mica, and Leilah Weinraub who, through movement, sound, and film, collectively congregate and confer toward *lean* as a Black vernacular and queer poetic proposition. For these eight artists—seven of whom were featured in the originating exhibition presented by Performa's Radical Broadcast, and the eighth, Krista Gay, whose work debuts as an online-only feature via Kunsthall Stavanger's website—*lean* is an intimacy, collaboration, intergenerational, and international conviviality.

First imagined and shown as a digital exhibition for Performa's Radical Broadcast, *LEAN* is now migrating for the first time to a physical format at Kunsthall Stavanger. Being sited in physical space away from the

screen presents the exciting opportunity for the nine artworks in this exhibition to activate new ways of engaging with the artist-driven histories of the kunsthall as a political site of avant-garde exploration and creative experimentation. Convening here, these artists explore the intimacies of familial relationships and enact bodily interventions in public and private space, offering a radical proposal for new and exciting architectures while challenging Eurocentric constructs of site and time.

Theorist and professor Kemi Adeyemi observes: "[A] white ruling class [is] obsessed with, the verticality and perpendicularity of the 90° angle." [2] Thus expansiveness of the *lean* here across these pages extends far beyond its definition of origin, an active refusal of a 90° that is, as Adeyemi notes, "distinctly gendered and racialized". As a lexicon, *lean* is a suture, and a song; it throws shade, and makes it. Its constellation is far-reaching and galactic while still somehow dense, sensual and sticky. It is a visual axis and a line-break. Spiritual, it is what our hands do when they pray.

Lean holds us and holds us up, and as a 1972 singer-songwriter Bill Withers reminds us, "We all need somebody to lean on . . ." [3]. // *Lean* is the bounce, dissent, and sway of hip-hop group Dem Franchize

1. Wilson, Ronaldo V. Poems of the Black Object. "VERGELIOIAN SPACE V: CALIBAN X", p. 49. Futurepoem, 2009.a

2. Adeyemi, Kemi. "Beyond 90°: The Angularities of Black/Queer/Women/Lean: Kemi Adeyemi (29.1)." Women & Performance, Women & Performance, 26 Feb. 2019, www.womenandperformance.org/bonus-articles-1/29-1/adeyemi.

3. Reference to a song by Bill Withers titled "Lean on Me" (1972).

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Boyz on base, an entire club on an early-aughts dance floor snapping back to their "Lean Wit It, Rock Wit It"[4]. // *Lean* is the very essence and energy of the *contrapposto*, a classicised angularity made whole and holy by the blend, blur, and limens of a luminous blackness and queerness. // *Lean* is the birth of drag ballroom competitions in 1920s Harlem, New York City and the 1990s genesis of Atlanta trap music, bound in decadent conversation and entanglement across dancefloors and decades. // *Lean* is the exact radical repatriation that emancipates these canonized slants back into the world where they belong and, beyond the freeze of carrara marble, makes them move. // *Lean* is the sonic re/negotiation of sound in what is chopped and screwed as a hall-haunting alongside of, and in remix with, the innovations and technologies found in the notes and lines of musicians such as Julius Eastman, Alice Coltrane, and Nina Simone. // *Lean* is all at once a complex interdependence, codependency, community and kinship, a rhizomatic set of mathematical possibilities that break from the static and pose in lyrical abstraction.

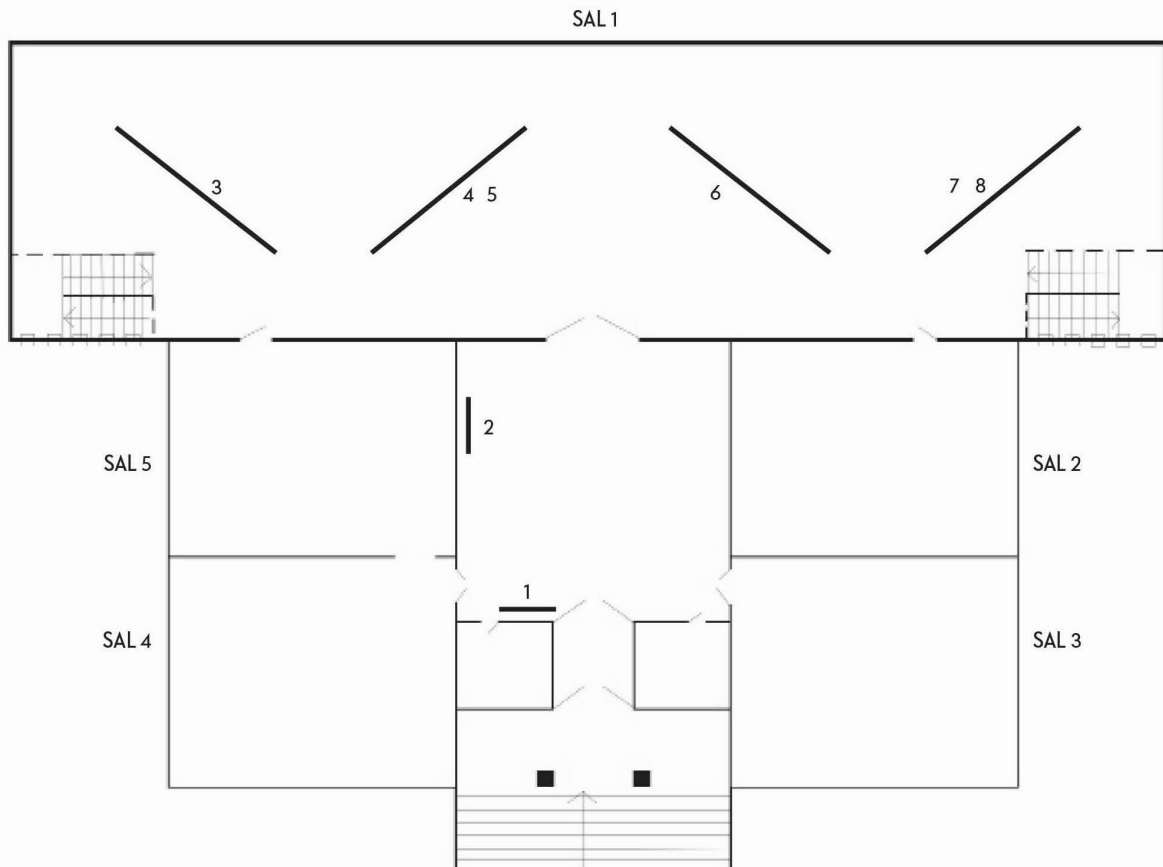
Thus, to *lean* represents a gesture that forces an impossibility of physics: a falling without collapse, an epic draping that never meets the floor but instead floats, an image that defies imagination. When the sites we travel through are designed to surveil us, dictating how our bodies should move and feel, we who *lean* enact essential spatial and emotional labor, protective enclosures that break and remake space, decolonize time, remix memory, reformat care. As poet Harmony Holiday notes: "Now we have to thank the catastrophe for imbuing us with the stamina to reach ourselves at these endless slants[.]"[5] Leaning scores and slants with urgency, a performative and political proposal for new worlds to be dreamt up and built, and new ways of reading, listening, becoming, being. Forever reaching somewhere between the horizon and the sky, this LEAN here and the artists therein offer windows into a networked architecture, an endless form of communication, a call awaiting a response, gorgeous glyphs of desire.

—Legacy Russell

4. Reference to a song by Dem Franchize Boyz "Lean Wit It, Rock Wit It" (2006).

5. Holiday, Harmony. "The Black Catatonic Scream ." Triple Canopy, 2020, www.canopycanopycanopy.com/contents/the-black-catatonic-scream.

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1. Jen Everett. *Happy New Year*, 2018. Video 54 seconds.
2. Justin Allen. Documentation of performance, *Explain Totality (version 3)*, Movement Research at the Judson Church, October 22, 2018. 11 minutes, 11 seconds.
3. Rene Matić . *Brown Girl in the Art World III*, 2019. Video 11 minutes, 01 second.
4. Sadé Mica. *With me Mam in Malham*, 2019. Video 57 seconds.
5. Sadé Mica. *Posturin*, 2018. Video 1 minute 1 second. Commissioned by Tate Collective.
6. Devin Kenny. *Lean (20hz 'dando repeat barline rmx)*, 2020. Video 44 minutes, 48 seconds.
7. Kalup Linzy. *Art Jobs and Lullabies, Video Suite 1*, 2015. Video 20 minutes, 20 seconds. Courtesy the artist and David Castillo
8. Kalup Linzy. *KK Queens Survey*, 2005. Video 7 minutes, 20 seconds. Courtesy the artist and David Castillo.

BLACK BOX

9. Leilah Weinraub. *SHAKEDOWN*, 2018. Video 1 hour, 10 minutes, 59 seconds.

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10. Krista Gay. *BLACK PUSSY*, 2020. Video, 58 sekunder.
11. Krista Gay. *BLKPussy_error*, 2021 Video 3 minutes 51 seconds.

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1. JEN EVERETT

Happy New Year, 2018. Video 54 seconds.

Jen Everett (b. 1981, Detroit, MI; Lives and works in St. Louis, MO) [she/her] is an artist whose practice has evolved from photography-based to incorporating text, installation and time based media. Everett engages the question of the Black archive as a site of transmission, rupture, and interiority. Her interest in the intersections across site, time, and memory are heavily influenced by her undergraduate training in architecture. In "Happy New Year" (2018) the artist excavates and alters footage from her family's archive of 1980s home videos shot in Detroit, Michigan, where the artist grew up. This work brings the viewer directly into an impromptu New Year's gathering at Everett's childhood home, with the artist's father himself behind the camcorder as a playful auteur and director of the ordinary scene unfolding. Though just under a minute in duration and devoid of sound, the interactions across the women and with the man behind the camera are epic, sonorous, and signified. Everett's editorial hand reworks and restages her father's gaze as enacted by the camera's eye, reshaping the memory of the original moment with gentle cuts and pans that, in their texture and layering, take on a painterly quality. The artist renders complex and intimate portraits of each of the four Black women pictured, relatives sharing space but equally worlds apart in how they distinctly engage or refuse the frame. Everett's work makes a collaborative self-portrait of artist and father as well, traces made at the hand of a gendered intergenerational negotiation and renegotiation, a subtle narrative and counternarrative that remixes a new record entirely.

Biography

Jen Everett is an artist from Southfield, Michigan, currently based in Saint Louis, Missouri. Broadly, she is interested in the myriad ways Black people continue to produce and transmit knowledge in excess of formal structures. Her practice moves between lens-based media, installation and writing.

Jen's recent work considers the relationship between rupture and Black interiority through an investigation of the materials we collect, the information we hold in our bodies and where the two may converge. Jen received an MFA from Washington University in St. Louis where she was a Chancellor's Graduate Fellow in the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts. She earned a Bachelor of Architecture from Tuskegee University. Her work has been shown at the Krannert Art Museum, Seattle University's Hedreen Gallery, SPRING/BREAK Art Show New York, Leo Model Gallery at Hampshire College, Vox Populi – Philadelphia, and Gallery 102 in Washington DC. Jen's work has been presented during lectures at the Saint Louis Art Museum and Harvard University and has appeared in *Transition* and *SPOOK* magazines. Her work was published in *Color Theory* (Wolfman Books, 2019) and *Undertow* (Silent Face Projects, 2018). Jen has been an artist in residence at the Vermont Studio Center, Atlantic Center for the Arts and ACRE. Her work is in the collection of the Museum of Contemporary Photography (MoCP) at Columbia College - Chicago.

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2. JUSTIN ALLEN

Documentation of performance, *Explain Totality (version 3)*, Movement Research at the Judson Church, October 22, 2018. 11 minutes, 11 seconds.

Justin Allen (b. 1992, Arlington, VA; Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY) [he/him] is a writer and performer whose recent performance-based work responds to and interacts with the history of hardcore punk and celebrates Black contributions to this creative work. "Explain Totality (version 3)" (2018) revisits one of these serial performances, originally staged in 2018 by Allen at the historical Judson Memorial Church in New York City as part of the ongoing experimental series *Movement Research at the Judson Church*. In this piece the artist reflects on growing up in an American suburb, intermittently breaking into a cover song of the hip-hop duo Rae Sremmurd's 2018 release "Black Beatles". Allen's citation of Rae Sremmurd's song merges the vernaculars of punk and hip-hop, paying homage to this intersection as a necessary conversation and contact point. The artist's isolated gestures—skanking, windmills, the limber and stretch of his legs—score the movements found within, or as entry to, the collective act of moshing. The artist's physical form and choreography assert an organic architecture, one intended to make and hold space intimately in opposition to, and in collaboration with, other bodies on a dancefloor. This collides and contrasts with Allen's reflection on the histories of suburban development as being explicitly raced and classed, the suburbs themselves a noxious legacy of the project of American slavery and postbellum tactics of segregation and control.

Biography

Justin Allen experiments with performance, writing, linguistics, and the still and moving image to understand our relationships to time, social context, and place. He has read and performed at The Poetry Project, Movement Research at the Judson Church, The Shed, Kampnagel, and ISSUE Project Room where he is currently an artist-in-residence. His work has received support from Franklin Furnace and Foundation for Contemporary Arts.

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3. RENE MATIĆ

Brown Girl in the Art World III, 2019. Video 11 minutes, 01 second.

Rene Matić (b. 1997, Peterborough, England; Lives and works in London, England) [they/them] is an artist working across painting, sculpture, film, photography and textile. Matić's ongoing work navigates queries around blackness as it engages the embodiment of a mixed race identity, driven by their own personal experiences as a queer Black British womxn. Their video work "Brown Girl in the Art World III" (2019) is foregrounded by a recording the artist made at University where, in an art school critique, Matić was asked to discuss recent work amongst a group of fifteen students, eleven of whom were white. The viewer watches the artist—filmed on an iPhone and being actively directed behind the camera by their wife, who is white—dancing in front of an abandoned pub in the historically working-class English town of Skegness[1]. Matić's voice talks to, at, and through the piece as if confronting a mirror reflection. As a work of art, Matić is both separate from and bystander to the piece. At the same time they remain bound up within, and in collusion with, the complexities of its creation—a most candid and vulnerable self-portrait. In this monologue the artist cites their ongoing study of dance as an entanglement between the plausibility of an emancipated Black expression set against the economy of Black entertainment, shifting uneasily under the weight and direction of the white gaze. Matić plucks painfully at these tensions, holding space for themselves before their peers within the canonized praxis and violence of "the crit" as a performative framework. A "Black femme seeking freedom", the artist establishes an essential intervention both in the space offscreen they share with their classmates, alongside the on-screen intervention and movement research enacted in public space. Matić reflects on the tension between practice and theory as it engages Black and queer movement within the troubled terrain of the art academy as a site: "I first came to dance because it looked like fighting...being conceptualized rips me away from me."

[1] Misidentified as Cornwall by Matić, but the artist chose to leave as-is to honor the original recording.

Biography

Rene Matić is an artist currently working in London. Their work brings together themes of post-blackness, glitch feminism and subcultural theory in a meeting place they describe as rude(ness) – bringing to light (or dark) the fated conflicts and contradictions that one encounters while navigating the world in a body like their own. Matić's research reaches back to post-war Britain and the survival tactics and 'tap dances' of Britain's Brown babies. They take their departure point from dance and music movements such as Northern soul, Ska and 2-Tone. Matić's current work predominantly explores the Skinhead movement, its founding as a multicultural marriage between West Indian and white working-class culture and its subsequent co-option by far-right white supremacists. They use this as a metaphor to examine their own experience of living in the Black British diaspora, to excavate white jealousy, the continued legacy of colonialism and the fear of a Black planet - all things which find convergence within and upon their mixed-race identity. They have exhibited and performed internationally at galleries including: Bold Tendencies, London, UK; Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; Arcadia Missa, London, UK; The Royal Standard, Liverpool, UK; VITRINE, Digital, Online; Rile Space, Brussels, BE; Hume Gallery, Chicago, US; Lesbiennale 2019, Online; Autograph ABP, London, UK; Protein Gallery, London, UK; Attic Space, Nottingham, UK; Atrium Gallery, London, UK; Copeland Gallery, London, UK; Ugly Duck Gallery, London, UK. Commissions include the 'Black Cultural Archives' by Tate x Mayor of London (2018). Matić is currently included in the Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2020 and the group show 'Friends and Friends of Friends' at Schlossmuseum, Linz, AT (until January 2021). Matić's first solo show debuted in London at VITRINE (October 2020).

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4., 5. SADÉ MICA

With me Mam in Malham, 2019. Video 57 seconds.

Posturin, 2018. Video 1 minute 1 second.
Commissioned by Tate Collective.

Sadé Mica (b. 1995, New Moston, Greater Manchester, England; Lives and works in Manchester, England) [they/them] is a multimedia artist and musician whose work engages textiles, film, sound, and performance in an exploration of how their movement is policed by the environment and how the queer and Black body can be both freed and restricted simultaneously within the landscape of the British countryside. As an ongoing part of their practice, Mica travels to bucolic locations on their own, setting up a tripod and performing to the camera, subtle scenes set to intervene within a pastoral frame. In Mica's video work "With me Mam in Malham" (2019) the artist films themselves with their mother in the historic English village of Malham, a popular trekking destination. In a collaboration across kin, Mica and their mother mimic one another in gesture and form, striking and holding positions improvised and choreographed in response to the site. As they bend back, lean forward, and crouch to the ground, each becomes an extension of the lush verdure that surrounds them, a confluence between organic forms that transmits and transforms the energy of the natural landscape. In their video work "Posturin" (2018) Mica poses as if having their picture taken, standing in their studio space, arms crossed and engaging the gaze of the camera directly. The voice overlaid is Mica themselves, a lyric poem said in whisper. Here the artist reflects on the act of chest binding, the compression of breast tissue with a clothing item known as a binder intended to give the appearance of a flat chest. Used by non-binary or trans-identified people, chest binders are meant to be body-affirming and empowering. Mica, wearing a binder themselves, navigates a vulnerable internal monologue, reflecting on the shaping of a non-binary selfhood and what radical refusals can be enacted in the presence of breasts, versus the

absence of them. The artist muses, "There's calculation in the movements / Can't be one step ahead when the weight is even more / To bind is to restrict . . . to not, is to—resist? Forgive, let *femme* exist."

Biography

Sadé Mica lives and works in Manchester, UK. Their practice is rooted in exploring the self. The self in relation to gender and performance; how the world around them affects their relationship to their queerness and the body they inhabit. How movement is policed by environment and us and how fraught the control we have of our perception is when thrust outside of solitary environments. They explore how their body is freed and restricted, liberating themselves, their limbs in the British countryside, posturing against vast landscapes foreign to them, capturing the stillness of their form and thoughtful movements as well as those more chaotic and less considered. They use textiles to eschew the expectation of stealth bestowed upon trans people and their bodies and embrace unmasking the performative nature of gender, placing the onus upon those who aren't aware of the sacrifices made to find peace within one's body in the way that they are.

Recent exhibitions include: *Natural Encounters* - Leeds Art Gallery (2020); *To The Unknown* - Somerset House Studios (2020); *Found In Translation* - Trans Vegas Digital (2020); *GENDERS* - Science Gallery, London (2020); *It Teks Time* solo show - Outpost, Norwich (2020); *GIVIN U COY GIVIN U SMIZE* - IMT Gallery, London (2020).

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6. DEVIN KENNY

Lean (20hz 'dando repeat barline rmx), 2020. Video 44 minutes, 48 seconds.

Devin Kenny (b. 1987, Chicago, IL; Lives and works in New York City, NY) [he/him] is an artist, writer, and musician whose work manifests via performance, objects, video, photography, music, painting, and text. Kenny investigates the process of identity construction, particularly within American cities as running parallel to, and intersection with, the construction of identity online. A central motivation within Kenny's work is exploring the *Maafa*, a Kiswahili term meaning "great disaster" or "terrible occurrence" in reference to the enduring legacy and epigenetic trauma of the transatlantic slave trade; through this historic lens Kenny queries whether the syncretism and cultural exchanges that occurred as a result of that history laid a foundation for networked culture, even before the existence of telecommunications technology. "*Lean (20hz 'dando repeat barline rmx)*" (2020) is a new commission debuting for the first time as part of this exhibition. A love song and letter to Houston, where the artist lived from 2017-2020 the piece is also a wayward homage to the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Apollo 13 mission, known colloquially as the "successful failure". The title of the work operates as a reference key and throughline: frequencies below 20 Hz are generally felt rather than heard by the human ear; "dando" as short for *ritardando* a term drawn from classical music, meaning to gradually slow down; "repeat barline" engaging the loop or repeat as a primary form; and "rmx" as shorthand for remix, typical as a file extension found within pirated music downloads via early-aughts platforms such as Limewire, Napster, or Kazaa. Kenny's durational video work as titled also makes a visual and sonic language of "lean" as a club beverage and cultural phenomenon: originally hailing from Houston, lean as a drink is a mixture of codeine cough syrup, soda, and hard candy popularized across a Southern hip-hop culture by rappers such as Lil Wayne. The concoction when consumed triggers a sense of slow euphoria and extreme relaxation, and is theorized to have connections to the rise of the "chopped and screwed" technique of remixing hip-hop music developed in the 1990s by legendary Houstonian DJ Screw. The sonic

and visual composition of Kenny's work activates lean as both strategic distortion and encryption alongside its possibilities to bend and reformat blackness as a cosmic atemporality. Kenny chops and screws together a constellation of references, many of which are sourced from YouTube. These range from superstar meme creator Addy Borneman who passed away on April 12th, 2020; to Neil deGrasse Tyson on American talk show TV; to Gil Scott-Heron reciting his spoken word poem "Whitey on the Moon" (1970). The artist reflects on "the unforgiving vacuum of space" as glitched destination and ecstatic departure: space as outer space, space as Black space, space as Internet, space as archive, space as remix, sound system space, space as content, space as viral, "making a discursive space of a dance floor, wherever it may be."

Biography

Devin Kenny is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, and musician. Raised on the south side of Chicago, Illinois, he relocated to New York, to study at The Cooper Union as a teenager. He continued his practice through the Bruce High Quality Foundation University (NYC), Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (Madison, Maine), SOMA Summer (Mexico City), and the Whitney Independent Study Program (NYC), doing collaborations with Justin Allen, Lucas Pinheiro, the Center for Experimental Lectures, Triple Canopy, Rhizome, Andrea Solstad, unbag, and various art and music venues in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, and elsewhere including The Kitchen, Goethe-Institut, Recess, Julia Stoschek Collection Düsseldorf, CAMH, OCCII, REDCAT, MoMA PS1, and Performance Space. He received his MFA in 2013 from UCLA. Through performance, objects, video, photography, music, painting, and text, Kenny investigates the process of identity construction, particularly in American cities like the ones he grew up in, and identity construction online. As Kenny's heritage is impacted by the *Maafa*, or the transatlantic slave trade, a major question of his work is if the syncretism and cultural exchanges that occurred as a result of that history laid a foundation for network culture, even before the existence of telecommunications technology.

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7., 8. KALUP LINZY

Art Jobs and Lullabies, Video Suite 1, 2015. Video 20 minutes, 20 seconds. Courtesy the artist and David Castillo.

KK Queens Survey, 2005. Video 7 minutes, 20 seconds. Courtesy the artist and David Castillo.

Kalup Linzy (b. 1977, Clermont, FL; Lives and works in Tulsa, OK) [he/him] uses fashion, pop culture, and melodrama to critique ideas of race, sexuality, class, and gender. In doing so, Linzy challenges not only how we see the world, but how we move through it. Raised in part by his late grandmother, Linzy's early fandom of his grandmother's favorite soap opera *Guiding Light* seeded Linzy's interest in the TV show's fictional families and the complex fantasies unpacked across an ever-unfolding drama. Within his work the artist deploys the scenic tension and decadent structure of the soap opera, a guiding force that, in mimicking "real life", underscores the elements of reality that often are stranger than fiction. In "KK Queens Survey" (2005), Linzy performs as a New York artist who, while in her studio, receives a telesurvey call where she's asked questions about her participation in the art world and her creative work. Questions range from the seemingly banal ("How often do you complete a piece?") to the existentially outrageous ("Metaphorically speaking, how many asses have you kissed today?"). As Linzy in character responds to the prompts provided, we are privy to a sharp and witty repartee that lampoons the contemporary "art world". The artist's commentary makes known the pressures of being a working artist and underscores the ways in which artists are pushed to perform and enact questionable forms of labor that extends far beyond their in-studio creative practice. In "Art Jobs and Lullabies, Video Suite 1" (2015) Linzy presents an experimental music video that engages the texture and aesthetic of lo-fi production as an extension to his 2014 album of the same name. In this suite of songs Linzy embodies the trope of the R&B diva as a transformative tool and vehicle. Linzy's diva shifts between being weighed down by the

cumbersome task of playing a role of a lifetime, but also playfully and willingly role-playing in different forms and faces on the exploratory road toward self-actualization.

Biography

Kalup Linzy was born in Florida and is currently a Tulsa Artist Fellow. His work thematically explores sexuality, gender stereotypes, cultural identities, and his childhood upbringing through soap opera based video and performance works. Linzy's recent solo exhibitions include Sundance Film Festival, Park City, UT; Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; and LAX ART, Los Angeles, CA, among others. Recent group shows include The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; and MoMA PS 1, Long Island City, NY, among others. Linzy has been the recipient of numerous awards including a grant from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship, Creative Capital Foundation grant and a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Film and Video. His work is in the public collections at The Studio Museum in Harlem, Whitney Museum of American Art, Museum of Modern Art, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. He is represented by David Castillo Gallery in Miami Beach and The Breeder Gallery in Athens, Greece.

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9. LEILAH WEINRAUB

SHAKEDOWN, 2018. Video 1 hour, 10 minutes, 59 seconds.

Viewing times: 11:00-12:10, 12:15-1:25, 1:30-2:40, 2:45-3:55.

Leilah Weinraub (b. 1979, Los Angeles, California; Lives and works Los Angeles, California) [she/her] is an artist, film director, and CEO and co-founder of Hood by Air, the New York-based fashion collective known for luxury streetwear. As a filmmaker, Weinraub has documented such unacknowledged tastemakers, particularly those belonging to queer, autonomous communities of color whose creative output is often plundered by mass culture and whose stories are rarely told on their own terms. "SHAKEDOWN" (2018) is a feature-length documentary film that Weinraub began shooting in 2002 at the age of twenty-three. "SHAKEDOWN" premiered at the 2018 Berlinale and subsequently became the first non-pornographic film to be released on Pornhub. The film draws its name from Shakedown, a Los Angeles-based lesbian strip club, catering specifically to Black lesbians. Weinraub began her work at Shakedown as a house photographer but when faced with the limitations of still imagery transitioned into moving image. Over the course of the six years that followed, Weinraub shot 400 hours of footage, intimately following the lives of a handful of regular dancers, whom Weinraub in the film's credits cites as "The Shakedown Angels"—Dallas, Egypt, Foxy, Blaze, Sunshine, Jamaika, and the club's "mother" Miss Mahogany, a performer of 33 years—to name just a few. Weinraub's portrait of Shakedown as a generative safe space of creative exploration reveals an empowered and radical architecture, a space for and by Black women aimed to hold and house queer intimacies and kinships in new shapes and forms. At Shakedown, the dancers don avatars of themselves, a range on the stage seized and possible that gives wings to Black womanhood as gorgeous, complex, and expansive. Weinraub presents a necessary intervention and expansion of

Black feminism, refusing the confines of "respectability politics" and countering the gaze, erotic, and misogyny of a straight, white imagination, flipping the script on questions of power, economy, self-determination, and control. As Dallas reminds those in the room before the beat drops: "If you're straight, you don't need to be in the front."

Biography

Leilah Weinraub is an artist and film director that lives between Los Angeles and New York. Since premiering in the 2018 Berlin Biennial and at the 2017 Whitney Biennial, Weinraub's film "SHAKEDOWN" has toured internationally to various institutions, including MoMA PS1, New York; MOCA, Los Angeles; CAAM, Los Angeles; ICA, London; Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, as well as multiple film festivals. As CEO and co-founder of Hood by Air, the New York-based fashion collective known for luxury streetwear, Weinraub radicalized fashion by championing what she calls "modern people": the rising class of consumers who subvert traditional markers of race, class, and gender and revel in freedom, lawlessness, and spectacle. As a filmmaker, Weinraub has documented such unacknowledged tastemakers, particularly those belonging to queer, autonomous communities of color whose creative output is often plundered by mass culture and whose stories are rarely told on their own terms.

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10., 11. KRISTA GAY

BLACK PUSSY, 2020 Video 58 seconds.

BLKPussy_error, 2021 Video 3 minutes 51 seconds.

Viewable on web only

Krista Gay (b. 1998, Los Angeles, CA; Lives and works in New York, NY) [she/her] is an interdisciplinary artist whose work engages, as Gay puts it, “video archives sourced via cyberspace”. With a practice spanning text, sound, photography, and moving image Gay explores and examines media representations of Black womanhood as they appear online, and as different publics participate in the act of viewership via the proxy, prosthetic, and black electric mirror of machinic technologies. Through this work the artist traverses the volatile historical and contemporary relationships of the Black woman to the constructs of cyborg, slave, robot, meme, and machine. Gay’s critique of Black womanhood in the media—and, via extension, Black femme sexuality—cites the troubled binary assignment of Black femmes being either exalted and abject, worshipped or desecrated. The artist’s two recent video works featured here, respectively titled “BLACK PUSSY” (2020) and “BLKPUSSY_error” (2021), reflect on the images of Black femininity, Black womanhood, and Black women, as transmitted through the networked landscape of the Internet as a complicated site, landscape, and ontology. In the production of each, Gay considers the racist haunting of the antebellum archetypes of the “Mammy”, “Sapphire”, and “Jezebel”, proposing ways in which these triggering tropes might be emancipated, empowered, rearticulated, and redefined. These stereotypic figures continue to contour and shape how Black women across visual culture are represented today: *the Mammy*, rooted in the Southern history of American slavery, as an unsexed Black woman who would typically be tasked with the nursing or caretaking of a white family’s children; the *Sapphire* typically typecast as being an angry Black woman, one whose existence offends the supremacist logic of the societal norms that Black women should remain passive, non-

threatening, and invisible; and finally, the *Jezebel* as a Black woman that is shown as unbridled and sexually lascivious, singular in her ambitions to seduce or tempt. Gay considers the ways in which these stereotypes collide with the eugenics-driven legacy of medical apartheid that implicates the bodies of Black women as laboratories, sites to actively experiment on and exploit in the name of scientific, computational, and algorithmic advancement. The artist reflects on these works as pushing back on the gendered gaze and violent voyeurism of non-Black viewership as “an encounter, an act of refusal, a riot, a listening, [a] staying with the trouble.”

Biography

Krista Gay is an artist working through photography, video, language, and sound installation to study the sciences and histories of the Black American body. Her work cites her own contemporary position and lived experience as a Black woman in active dialogue and intersection with the ongoing subjugation of, and experimentation on, Black women in the name of scientific research.

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LEGACY RUSSELL

Legacy Russell is a curator and writer. Born and raised in New York City, she is the Associate Curator of Exhibitions at The Studio Museum in Harlem.

Russell holds an MRes with Distinction in Art History from Goldsmiths, University of London with a focus in Visual Culture. Her academic, curatorial, and creative work focuses on gender, performance, digital selfhood, internet idolatry, and new media ritual. Russell's written work, interviews, and essays have been published internationally.

Curated exhibitions and projects include *LEAN* (2020) featuring Justin Allen, Jen Everett, Devin Kenny, Kalup Linzy, Rene Matić, Sadé Mica, and Leilah Weinraub for Performa's Radical Broadcast; *This Longing Vessel : Studio Museum Artists in Residence 2019-20* featuring E. Jane, Elliot Reed, and Naudline Pierre (2020); *Projects: Garrett Bradley* (2020) and *Projects 110 : Michael Armitage* (2019), organized with Thelma Golden and The Studio Museum in Harlem at MoMA; *Dozie Kanu : Function* (2019), *Chloë Bass : Wayfinding* (2019), and *Radical Reading Room* (2019) at The Studio Museum in Harlem. She is the recipient of the Thoma Foundation 2019 Arts Writing Award in Digital Art, a 2020 Rauschenberg Residency Fellow, and a recipient of the 2021 Creative Capital Award. Her first book *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto* (2020) is published by Verso Books. Her second book, *BLACK MEME*, is forthcoming via Verso Books.

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