

The background is a complex, abstract composition of overlapping, angular shapes in a wide array of colors including red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. The shapes radiate from a central point, creating a sense of depth and movement. The text 'QUEER LOVE' is centered in the image, rendered in a bold, white, outlined font with a slight shadow effect. The word 'QUEER' is positioned above 'LOVE', and both are slanted slightly to the right.

QUEER
LOVE





La MaMa Galleria



Lehman College Art Gallery

QUEER ARTISTS SPEAK ON LOVE

There is something beautiful about photographing new love, you can see the couple slowly getting comfortable with each other in their body language.

Lex Barberio

For Fritz

Our passion for each other burnt the sky
And kept our bed aflame ten thousand times
Then later on that passion- finally slaked,
A new more powerful passion Took its place

Charles W. Leslie

The beach itself can feel so charged with a cruisy energy, that it was refreshing to see friends enjoying each other in a pure and nurturing way.

Patrick Arias

A kiss is an act of resistance, like an act of tenderness in a violent world.

Adriana Elena Bravo Morales

These overnight stays in motels, while traveling through remote towns, were our safe havens once we closed the door at night. Inside we could be together without fear of attack, being othered, verbal slurs, or being sexualized or harassed by men/the male gaze, that otherwise every queer woman is far too familiar with or has experienced in some shape, or form while travelling.

Lizzie Alexandra

I like to capture the peak experience of falling in love, when you have nothing but runway ahead of you, and can reach for the sky.

C. Finley

I hug; therefore, I feel.
I have loved, I have given and received.
I have felt one in the mystical instant of a hug.
I portray that instant of generosity, acceptance, and gratitude where loneliness stops and there is only love.

Federico Uribe

...there are elements of gender and sexuality in [my work], but it's more about being a person, what it means to be alive, and what it means to connect with other people.

Jess T. Dugan

The beach itself can feel so charged with a cruisy energy, that it was refreshing to see friends enjoying each other in a pure and nurturing way.

Patrick Arias

I seek out moments of extreme passion within painful and scary experiences of love and lust. Much of my illustrative art uses wrestlers as a reference point to both explore queer magnetism within hyper-masculine landscapes, and to contemplate the innate violence of intimacy.

Harris Singer



QUEER LOVE

Affection and Romance in Contemporary Art

Lehman College Art Gallery

La MaMa Galleria

SUPPORTERS

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Lehman College Art Gallery  

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Above: *Queer Love*, 2022. Detail

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QUEER LOVE

Alex Jovanovich

As a flaming Midwestern youth with a ravenous appetite for camp, I first found myself in the flamboyant fictional characters in popular 1960s TV shows broadcast as reruns during the early-to-mid-'80s—like *Batman*. I identified with a range of the Caped Crusader's crackpot and queer-coded archenemies, including the stylishly tailed-and-top-hatted Penguin (played by Burgess Meredith), the pasty-faced yet elegantly effete Egghead (portrayed by Vincent Price), and the grandiloquently witty Black Widow (marvelously embodied by the legendary gay icon Tallulah Bankhead, a proud lifelong alcoholic who appeared to be pleasantly inebriated throughout the entirety of her two-episode run).

Made fabulously and uproariously funny flesh by the program's "special guest villains," these comic-book figures naturally provided a welcome refuge from a lonely childhood and the brazen homophobia of the Reagan Era, which became even more paranoid and unhinged with the devastation brought about by the new "gay cancer" known as AIDS. At that time, Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger were the macho and muscled killing machines that bloodthirsty American audiences cheered on in movie theaters, while Boy George, the pudgy and maquillaged British chanteuse, was the kind of epicene prey that late-night talk show hosts loved sinking their heterosexist fangs into. Rock Hudson finally came out of the closet, but only as he was entering the grave. His final turn before the camera—in a recurring role as millionaire horse trainer Daniel Reece on the prime-time soap opera *Dynasty*—shocked viewers around the world. No amount of makeup or good lighting could hide the havoc that AIDS wreaked upon his face and once-robust body. The actor passed away in October of 1985, roughly six months after his last appearance on the show.

During this period, popular culture depicted queers as lamentable punchlines—sad creatures whose love only brought about suffering and death. Right-wingers and religious bigots made it clear: our "immoral lifestyles" were a form of perdition. When I became acutely aware of my own sexuality in the fifth grade, I felt doomed: I was told, in no uncertain terms, that any desire for physical pleasure or genuine happiness would bring about a dark and ugly future. I yearned to be the glitzy and glamorous Bankhead, wisecracking my way into a brighter tomorrow with lots of cute boyfriends waiting to take my hand (and cherry). Yet society demanded that I be Paul Lynde, a gay performer



who was often forced into being a bitterly self-deprecating clown for the amusement of straight audiences. Like Bankhead, he too was a heavy drinker.

Queer Love: Affection and Romance in Contemporary Art reminds us how much has changed over the past thirtyish years. Of course, queers continue to fight for visibility and equal rights because we have to, as there are still those who want to see us pushed back into the shadows, alone, afraid, and helpless. The works featured in this two-venue exhibition celebrating queer carnality, camaraderie, and passion—organized by Bartholomew Bland, director of Lehman College Art Gallery—are not interpretations of our existence culled from a rigidly heterosexual imagination. The pictures and objects here take on virtually every stripe of LGBTQIA+ within our polychromatic, ever-expanding spectrum. In this show, we render ourselves on our own terms: as happy, hot, horny, and blue; messy, magnanimous, marvelous, and weird; fit and fat; thin and flabby. We are polished to perfection and unashamedly raw; exceedingly nice, and irredeemably nasty. We either embrace the more *cis* aspects of gender presentation, tweak them to fit our own unique needs, or reject them entirely, charting new terrain in self-expression and style. We define and redefine what constitutes family; we celebrate our singularities and acknowledge our commonalities; we represent all walks of life. Queers invent the types of identities, relationships, and bodies we want for ourselves because we don't follow generations of calcified models or blueprints for being in the world—such rigid guides would never work for us because they were never *intended* for us. Passing through life in this way is indeed a challenge, but one that is necessary and exhilarating.

Where do I find myself in *Queer Love*? I see me in *Sappho*, Production, Los Angeles, 1978, 2017, Barbara Hammer's black-and-white photograph of fat and happy dykes hugging and laughing outdoors, naked and safe in the daylight, protected from prying, judgmental eyes by a tall wooden fence. I see me in Michael Fox's *Lovebirds*, 2002/2019, a photographic portrait of the artists Genesis Breyer P-Orridge and Lady Jaye, a couple who saw themselves as two halves of one great soul, and endured multiple surgical procedures to become closer in both spirit and appearance—a divine union of hearts crafted through sliced and sutured flesh. I see me in the sweet submissive captured by Jess T. Dugan in *Devotion*, 2012, a picture in which a youthful butch appears to be delicately lacing up a combat boot worn by their lover, who is tantalizingly out of frame. I see me in the voluptuous physiques of the men in Rakeem Cunningham's photo *Togetherness*, 2018, who dreamily pose inside a room draped with sumptuous red cloth as though they were a pair of sexy adult *putti*, their dark skin

supple and glistening. I also see me in trans rocker Jayne County's paintings of extraterrestrial Egyptian cat goddesses—*Two Plus Four Cocks in Silver* and *2 + 6 Alien Bastets 33 1/9*, both 2019—whose massive, totemic dicks are mystical entities unto themselves, gazing at the viewer wide-eyed with numinous, hypnotic force. In these images of sensuality, psychedelia, kinkiness, and magic, I see the polymorphous and all-encompassing pleasures of queer eroticism, the scars from battles that were hard won, and my remarkable, multi-dimensional kin thriving. But more than anything, I see real queers exacting the best sort of revenge: living out their lives fully and authentically, in defiance of anyone else's conceptions of who they should be.



Batman: The Movie. Directed by Leslie H. Martinson. Burgess Meredith [Penguin], performer. July 30, 1966.

"Black Widow Strikes Again." *Batman*. Developed by Michael Goguen and Duane Capizzi, and produced by Warner Bros. Animation. Miss Tallulah Bankhead [The Black Widow], performer. Season 3, Episode 21. American Broadcasting Company, March 15, 1967.

Publicity photograph of Paul Lynde with Elizabeth Montgomery, promoting the April 28, 1968 episode of the ABC TV comedy series *Bewitched*, entitled "No Harm Charm." Courtesy of Wikimedia.

"The Avenger." *Dynasty*. Developed by Richard and Esther Shapiro, and produced by Aaron Spelling. Linda Evans, Rock Hudson, performers. Season 5, Episode 13. American Broadcasting Company, January 2, 1985. © 20th Century Fox Film Corp. All rights reserved/courtesy Everett Collection

Boy George. Photographer: Dean Stockings. November 29, 2013. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike.

QUEER LOVE: THE SHOW AND ITS MAKING

Bartholomew F. Bland

I often think the process of creating exhibitions is like shaping clay on a potter's wheel—shaping, building up, perhaps the pottery falling a bit, but then reforming. As the exhibition *Queer Love* evolved and expanded, Clifford Prince King's photograph *Growing Each Day*, 2019, became my talisman for the growing show. Its optimism, gentle "day-to-dayness," and simple kindness came to me, even when I was away from the gallery. King's quiet image is as far away on the emotional spectrum as possible from the operatic, blood-red passion of Catherine Opie's *Julie & Pigpen*, 2012, an ode to flaming desire that can't be quenched. Opie's image stays with me for different reasons, and together these two compositions act like balanced yin and yang. I see aspects of both within myself, and they are my daily reminder of the many divergent shapes, colors, and emotions that make up our humanity. King and Opie, like every artist in this show, seek to answer the enduring question, "What Is This Thing Called Love?"

The seed for *Queer Love* was planted in autumn 2019, when interested parties gathered at Lehman College to talk about how the College might better serve its LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff, as well as the many members of the public who participate in its cultural offerings. In this spirited session, the views bantered back and forth and the opportunity to curate Lehman Art Gallery's first large-scale exhibition of queer love energized me. The pandemic, though, soon burst onto our world, roiling Lehman's exhibition schedule and delaying the exhibition—a delay that ultimately proved beneficial. It gave time for two artistic and like-minded galleries to connect: Lehman and La MaMa Galleria, a downtown New York City organization rich with a history of queer programming. As months passed, the ideas that percolated between the two galleries transformed into a valentine to queer love, a rainbow of romantic experiences, deeply felt, intensely human, and portrayed by LGBTQ artists.

The exhibitions that appeared this spring of 2023 at Lehman and La Mama show a variety of work by the same selected artists, almost four dozen. In ink and oil, on fabric and in photographs, they

Clifford Prince King. *Growing Each Day*, 2019. Archival pigment print

Courtesy of the artist and STARS Gallery, Los Angeles. Detail

Catherine Opie. *Julie & Pigpen*, 2012. Pigment print

Courtesy of Regen Projects, Los Angeles and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Honk Hong, London, and Seoul. Detail



interpret their feelings. They draw, they paint, they sew. No matter the method, their message is strong—the bonds between themselves as art creators and the ties of intimacy to those they cherish are enduring.

In lushly beautiful images that seem to leap from the gallery walls, LGBTQ artists point to a cultural shift towards positive representations of queer relationships that cross formerly hard-drawn lines of race, age, religion, class, and gender identities. From celebrating their love to proclaiming a place for queer people within a larger society, the multi-figural works of LGBTQ artists focus on their experiences and how they impact of their relationships with family members and friends. In a full program roster, Lehman College and La MaMa Galleria acknowledge the issues faced by LGBTQ artists as well as college and high school students who seek to “come out,” while holding positive ties to their biological families.

A great many people have supported this exhibition with hard work, original ideas, and funding. I owe a special debt of gratitude to C. Finley, the former director of La MaMa, who was a vital sounding board for me, expanding my horizons and cheerfully making multiple creative connections that enhanced the richness of the exhibitions at both venues. At Lehman College, we are grateful to President Fernando Delgado, who has offered much gracious support for its ongoing public mission. Thank you to Susan E. Ebersole, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, a champion of the arts across the Lehman College campus, who provided enthusiasm and assistance for the Gallery’s development. Each member of our Board of Directors, co-chaired by Marina Garde and Dolly Bross Geary, works with dedication throughout the year to further the mission of the Gallery. For *Queer Love* in particular, I am deeply grateful to Dolly for her passionate commitment, as she has unstintingly dedicated her energy and funds to ensure its fruitful development and execution.

As Director, I am lucky to work with an outstanding staff. Deborah Yasinsky, Curator of Education, organized the education programs for the exhibition, which include the Gallery’s first Queer Love artist residencies in Bronx public high schools. Mary Ann Siano, Grants Associate, worked tirelessly to acquire the governmental funding that allowed us to undertake such ambitious programming. Thanks to Jessica Fernandez De Jesús, Gallery Assistant, who embraced the myriad details necessitated by this show’s long list of artists and lenders. Juan Cano, Preparator and head of Chunky Art Studios, oversaw the elegant installation of the work at Lehman. Linda Locke, who has edited many of the Gallery’s publications, did dynamic and thoughtful editing work on close deadlines with her usual enormous care and attention to detail. Michelle Frank did a fine job creating the graphic identity for the show and our catalog’s handsome design. I give special thanks to Professor David Schwittek,

Associate Professor of Graphic Design and Digital Media in the Lehman College Art Department for an outstanding job organizing the Sara Little Turnbull Speaker Series, which examines queer representation within the world of art and design.

Our catalog essayist, Alex Jovanovich, has contributed a moving, humorous, and enlightening piece that shows how our cultural production is inextricably linked with the way we view our sexuality and identity. For every Lehman Art Gallery exhibition, a site-specific work is commissioned for the Gallery’s dramatic Lobby Rotunda, designed by famed modernist architect Marcel Breuer. David Rios Ferreira and Neil Fernando created *A Commission for the Cybernetic Artificial Church of the Queer Immaculate Reception*, 2023, a meditation on the queer family, its stained-glass windows a dramatic entré to the show. We are grateful to all the artists on view, who under tight timelines and budgets delivered ambitious works that created a mosaic of love on our gallery walls.

Every job has its daily frustrations, but I recognize the great privilege I have had to develop *Queer Love* and assemble the voices of artists who explore the meaning of emotion, love, and ritual in our lives. The changes that have convulsed the world and its societies in the last several years have transformed the work of galleries, museums, and higher education. As I write these words, *Queer Love* has been on view for several weeks and its openings at both galleries were celebrations as well as affirmations. They made me feel good that we had mounted the shows. What I didn’t expect was what happened in the quietude of the weeks following. The Gallery traffic pattern changed. From my office on the Gallery’s balcony, I can see visitors come and go. After *Queer Love*’s opening, I witnessed a slow but steady stream of young people come to the gallery alone, shy. They would glance around, then phones raised, grab a picture of an image, perhaps one with special meaning for them. Their appearances are a touching reminder that it is hard to be young and seeking a life you want for yourself.



ARTISTS

Ruvén Afanador	20	Rakeem Cunningham	64	ggggrimes	96	Catherine Opie	140
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David Antonio Cruz	62						



CATALOG OF THE EXHIBITION

RUVÉN AFANADOR

An exuberant display of queer friendship and creative joy, this image comes from a photography shoot for the cover of the album *Only An Octave Apart*, and is a joint portrait of countertenor and Met Opera star Anthony Roth Costanzo (right) and New York City cabaret legend Justin Vivian Bond. The two singers have wildly different voices, with Bond providing a gravelly baritone to Costanzo's dramatic high notes that meld to stunning effect. The duo is known for their varied repertoire, ranging from Purcell's 17th-century aria "Dido's Lament" to the 80s pop hit "Walk Like an Egyptian." Of the melding of their voices, Costanzo says, "It was like magic. The first duet that we sang, we barely even rehearsed it, even backstage." Speaking of Afanador's floral-laden album portrait, Bond says, "The best example [of our being creative in sync] was when we took the photos for the cover of the album. There were like 1800 choices. . . . we picked basically all the same photos, and that's an allegory for our collaboration. We are pretty much on the same page with our taste and vision."

*Mx Justin Vivian Bond and Anthony Roth Costanzo,
New York City, May 18, 2021, 2021*
Archival digital print, 16 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Lehman



LIZZIE ALEXANDRA

Alexandra's delightful black-and-white portrait of a couple with their two dogs is an ode to domestic bliss. Wrapped in each other's embraces, all four figures watch the photographer intently. Alexandra recalls how they met: "I met Leslie on an app several years ago, she was based in Los Angeles and I, in New York City. We met up on the West Coast and went on a cute date, loosely staying in touch once I returned to the East Coast. Shortly after, she met Francesca [Frankie] who would become her wife, and who would immigrate to the United States from Italy. Both are now my good friends. While at a barbeque on a trip to Los Angeles last year, I took this portrait of them, stoic and poised, sitting in their power, with their two pups, Suki and Nova. I feel it perfectly captures the idea of "the queer nuclear family."

Leslie, Frankie, Suki & Nova, Los Angeles, California, 2022

Series: *Dyke Wives*

Pigment print, 31 x 32 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Lehman

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An image of loving passion, Alexandra recalls the creation of this work in memorable terms, noting that she and her partner spent the night in a highway motel in New Mexico on a road trip through the Southwest. She says, "In the morning I set the camera to self-timer on a tripod and together we jumped on the bed, grabbing at one another spontaneously. The resulting intensity of our embrace—bodies merging into one another—reflected just how in love we were in that moment and the oneness shared between us. These overnight stays in motels, while traveling through remote towns, were our safe havens once we closed the door at night. Inside we could be together without fear of attack, being othered, verbal slurs, or being sexualized or harassed by men/the male gaze, that otherwise every queer woman is far too familiar with or has experienced in some shape or form while travelling."

The Lovers, 2014

From a road trip through the Southwest, roadside motel, New Mexico, USA

Pigment print, 43 x 28 inches

Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa





PATRICK ARIAS

Arias describes this work as an image about overcoming death through loving human connection. The photographer creates a scene of deep intimacy and celebration at a birthday party. The person seated on the man's lap being celebrated is Oron, and the composition and staging of the work recalls the "structure that comes with older queers passing down knowledge and history and spoken word tradition to younger queers." Among the jolly festivities, the text visible on Oron's thigh reads, "Remember You Will Die." Various forms of *Memento Mori* (Latin for "You Have to Die") symbolically appears across the art-history canon as reminders like the ticking clock, draining hourglass, and wilting rose. Arias's photograph is thus linked to a long tradition, but also connects his work to the contemporary urgent issue of Latinx queer identity that can be "fraught with reminders of our death, and how our safety is always at stake when people want to erase our existence."

Queer Pedagogy Study: Memento Mori, 2016

Digital print, 16 x 20 inches

Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa

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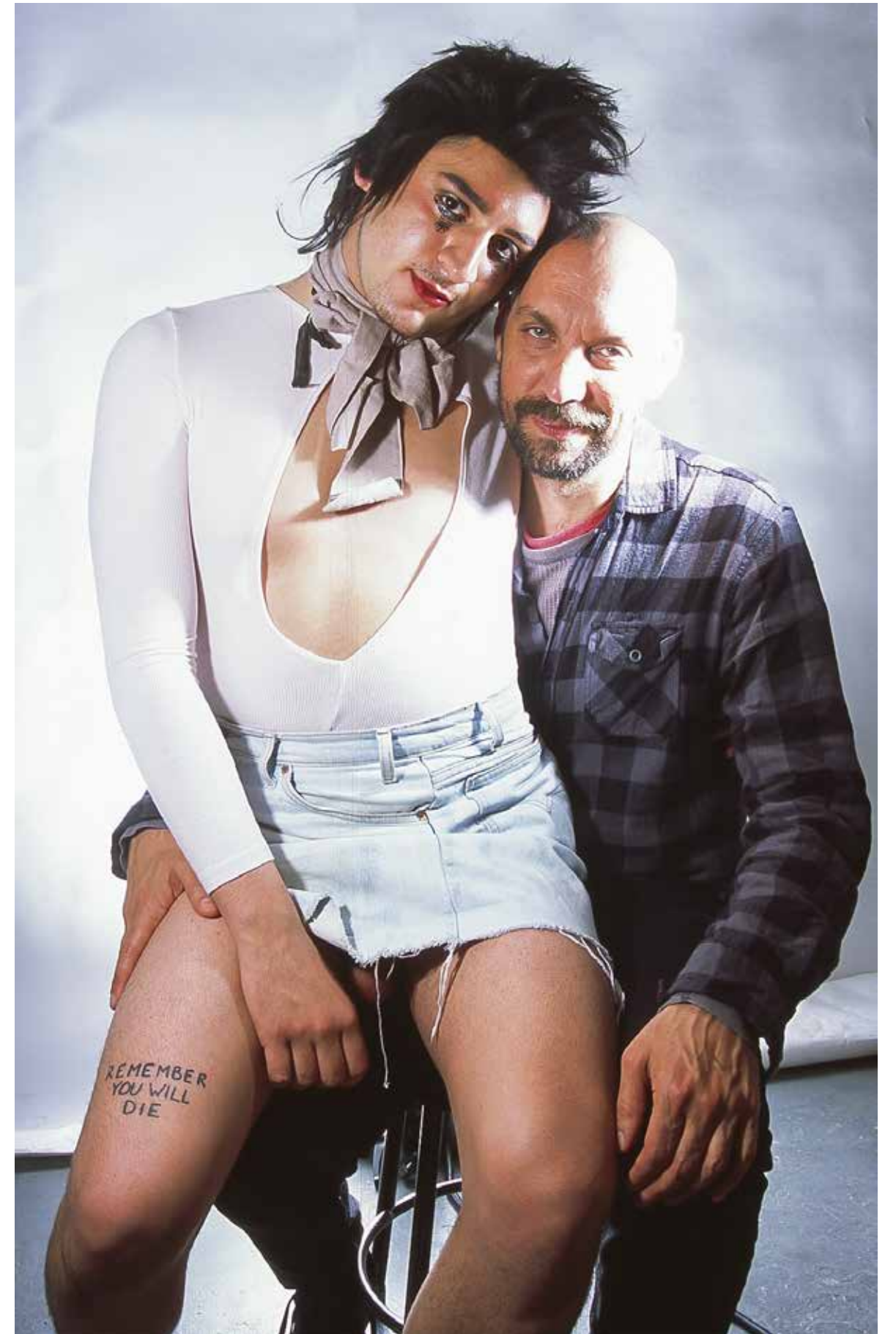
Arias uses his camera lens to document LGBTQ culture through an anthropological scope—his purpose to preserve fleeting moments of queer history. Here, he captures a moment of ephemeral pleasure at the meeting of two of his closest friends having "an intimate and playful aside" together at the Sandy Hook Nude Beach in New Jersey. Arias captures the expressions that come from a moment of quippy banter or confidences exchanged within a relaxed summertime setting. The artist says, "The beach itself can feel so charged with a cruisy energy, that it was refreshing to see friends enjoying each other in a pure and nurturing way." Images of joy can carry a political context, and Arias, through his work, hopes to lift the confidence of queer people, so they can tell their stories the way they want to tell them.

Nude Beach Love-In, 2019

Digital print, 16 x 20 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Lehman





LEX BARBERIO

Barberio, who often photographs friends she knows well, says, "I wanted to capture Gem & Em in a way that felt honest about who they are as a couple, who find security in each other and play who plays pivotal roles in other lives." Em is Emily Estefan, a Cuban American singer and the daughter of producer Emilio Estefan and Gloria Estefan. Gem is Gemeny Hernandez, an artist, stylist, and co-host with Em of *In Our Own World*, a MyCultura podcast. This photograph was taken for the launch of that endeavor.

Gem & Em, January 2022

Photograph printed on metallic paper, 8 x 12 inches

Courtesy of Emily Estefan and Gemeny Hernandez

Following Page

Barberio photographed Kat Cunning (Kat) and Elizabeth Ludlow (Lo), at right, while on a scenic drive.

The artist chose to portray this couple against a crystalline blue, almost archetypal, California sky.

Shot from a low angle that makes the figures appear monumental, her composition suggests a romantic

"Thelma and Louise" on the open road, unbound by convention, claiming their freedom to be together.

The artist comments, "There is something beautiful about photographing new love, you can see the

couple slowly getting comfortable with each other in their body language." Cunning is a nonbinary

singer and actor, who portrays Reina Reign on HBO's *Rap Shit*, while actress Elizabeth Faith Ludlow is

known for her portrayal of Arat in *The Walking Dead*, the AMC post-apocalyptic horror television series.

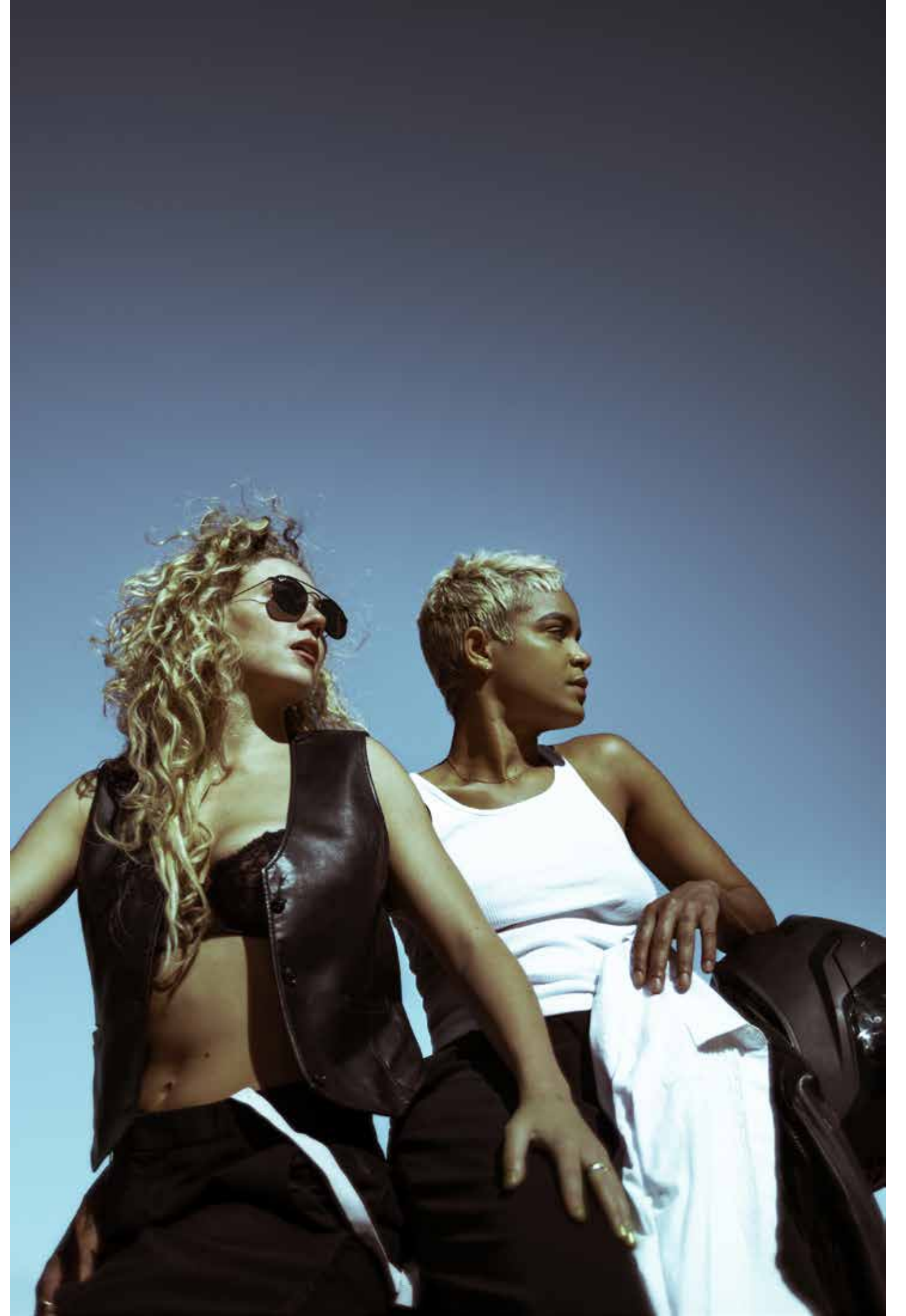
Kat & Lo, November 2022

Photograph, 8 x 10 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Lehman





MARK BEARD

[HIPPOLYTE-ALEXANDRE MICHALLON (1849 - 1930)]

Is this the painting of a 19th-century French artist?

It is, in fact, an historicized canvas and the work of contemporary artist Mark Beard, best known for creating work under artistic aliases like Bruce Sargeant, Brechtoldt Streeruwitz, and the fictional French painter whose work is shown here, Hippolyte-Alexandre Michallon. Beard gives each of his artistic alter egos detailed biographies and each has a distinct individual artistic style that allows Beard to explore different historical art movements. His most recognized persona is that of Bruce Sargeant, a 20th-century British painter, whose homoerotic works celebrate the male physique. In Beard's assumed world, Sargeant's revered teacher was the famous French academic painter, Michallon. The subject of *Hercules Mourning* portrays a scene from the Greek myth of Hercules—the death of Hylas, the beautiful young man who served as Hercules's companion, servant, and in some versions of the myth, lover. The subject of his death and Hercules' subsequent grief has been an enduring theme in Western art.

Hercules Mourning the Death of his Cupbearer Hylas, n.d.

Oil on canvas, 48 x 60 inches

Courtesy of CLAMP, New York

Lehman

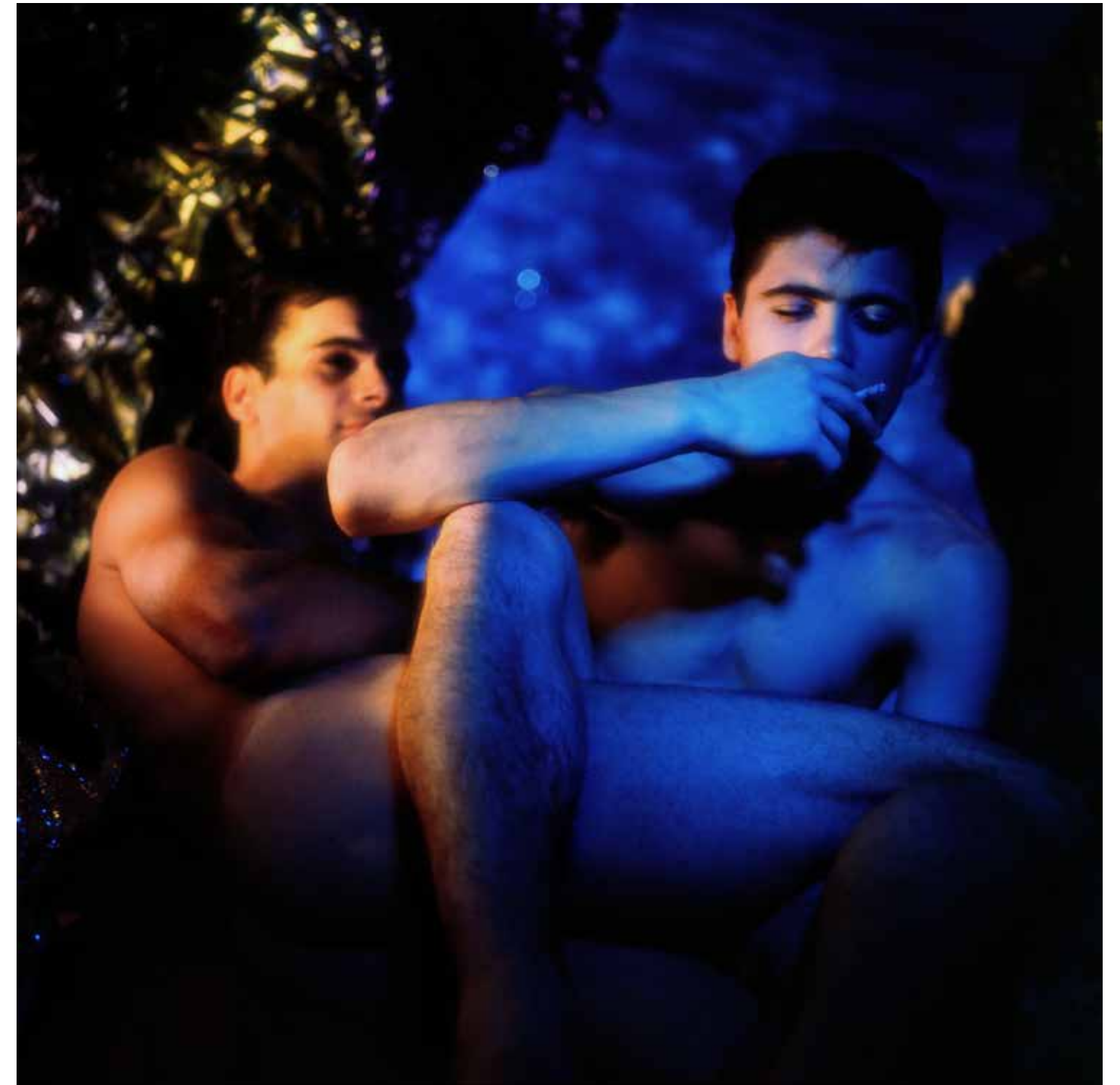


JAMES BIDGOOD

Bathed in contrasting blue and gold light, two handsome young men lay entwined in what appears to be a grotto. One, eyes closed, inhales from a post-coital cigarette, the other looks at him admiringly. This fantastical setting, part of the artist's *Sandcastles* series, was a first step towards the romanticized kitsch aesthetic that anticipated Bidgood's most famous work, the film *Pink Narcissus*, released anonymously after editing disputes with the distribution company. That infamous 1971 film follows the erotic, poetic fantasies of a young male prostitute's journey from innocence to decadence to abnegation. Admired by generations of artists and filmmakers, Bidgood's flamboyant style stands as a foundational inspiration for many contemporary queer artists.

Smoking, Sandcastles 1960s, early 1960s
Digital C-print, 15 x 15 inches
Signed, dated, and numbered, verso
Edition of 25
Courtesy of CLAMP, New York

Lehman



Following Page

Smoking, Sandcastles 1960s, early 1960s
Digital C-print, 15 x 15 inches
Signed, dated, and numbered, verso
Edition of 25
Courtesy of CLAMP, New York

La MaMa



ADRIANA ELENA BRAVO MORALES

Bravo Morales describes a kiss as “an act of resistance, like an act of tenderness in a violent world.”

Beso de Chola, an ongoing photographic and performance piece, is best known for the image of two kissing *cholitas*—young Bolivian women who identify as members of an indigenous culture and who dress traditionally. This work is a studio portrait but many similar images photographed for this project on the streets of Bolivia show the public’s reactions to women passionately kissing each other, which ranged from shock and confusion to willful ignorance. The artists shatter the collective public image of the *cholita* as a matriarchal woman devoid of desire. Bravo says that people often “think of indigenous women as asexual, like children, like old people. . . but the kiss between two indigenous women in traditional dress is powerful.”

Beso De Chola/Chola Kiss, 2016

Digital print, 36 x 24 inches

Created for the exhibition *Lo Normal*, curated by Maria Teresa Rojas and Mirisabel Villagomez, in collaboration with Ivanna Terrazas.

Photography by Antonio Suarez for project *Beso de Chola*

Courtesy of the artist

Lehman



ELLIOTT JEROME BROWN, JR.

Questioning stereotypical ideas about Black masculinity, Brown highlights the beauty of the Black queer body in scenes of gentle tenderness and intense intimacy. Inspired by artists like Lorna Simpson and Carrie Mae Weems, Brown's compositions of extreme crops and unexpected angles show moments of touch and softness between men. Often he does not fully reveal the faces of his subjects and by further abstracting their bodies Brown allows his subjects even more mystery and privacy. The dichotomy between public and private has become one of Brown's ongoing themes. He said, "Photographing in a space where people choose privacy or anonymity means that you show up with a different toolset."

Untitled, 2020

UV-laminated archival inkjet print, 40 x 30 inches

Mounted on Dibond aluminum composite

Edition 1 of 3 and 2 AP

Courtesy of the artist and Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York

La MaMa

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Untitled, 2021

UV-laminated archival inkjet print, 40 x 30 inches

Mounted on Dibond aluminum composite

Edition 2 of 3 and 2 AP

Untitled, 2021

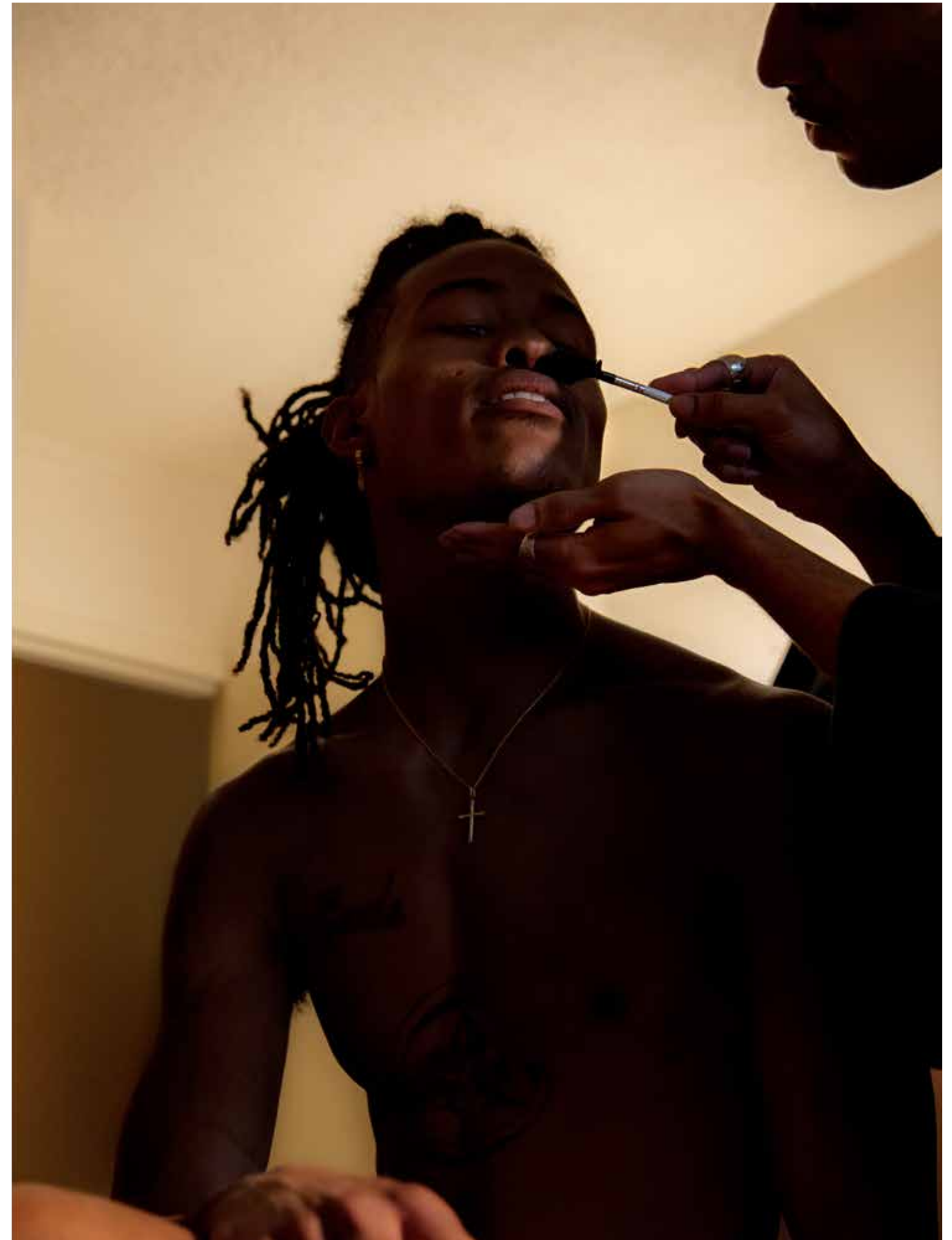
Screen print and UV inks on MDF board; archival inkjet print on adhesive vinyl, wood, and hardware

96 x 72 x 5 ½ inches

Untitled, 2021. Detail (screen print)

Courtesy of the artist and Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York

Lehman



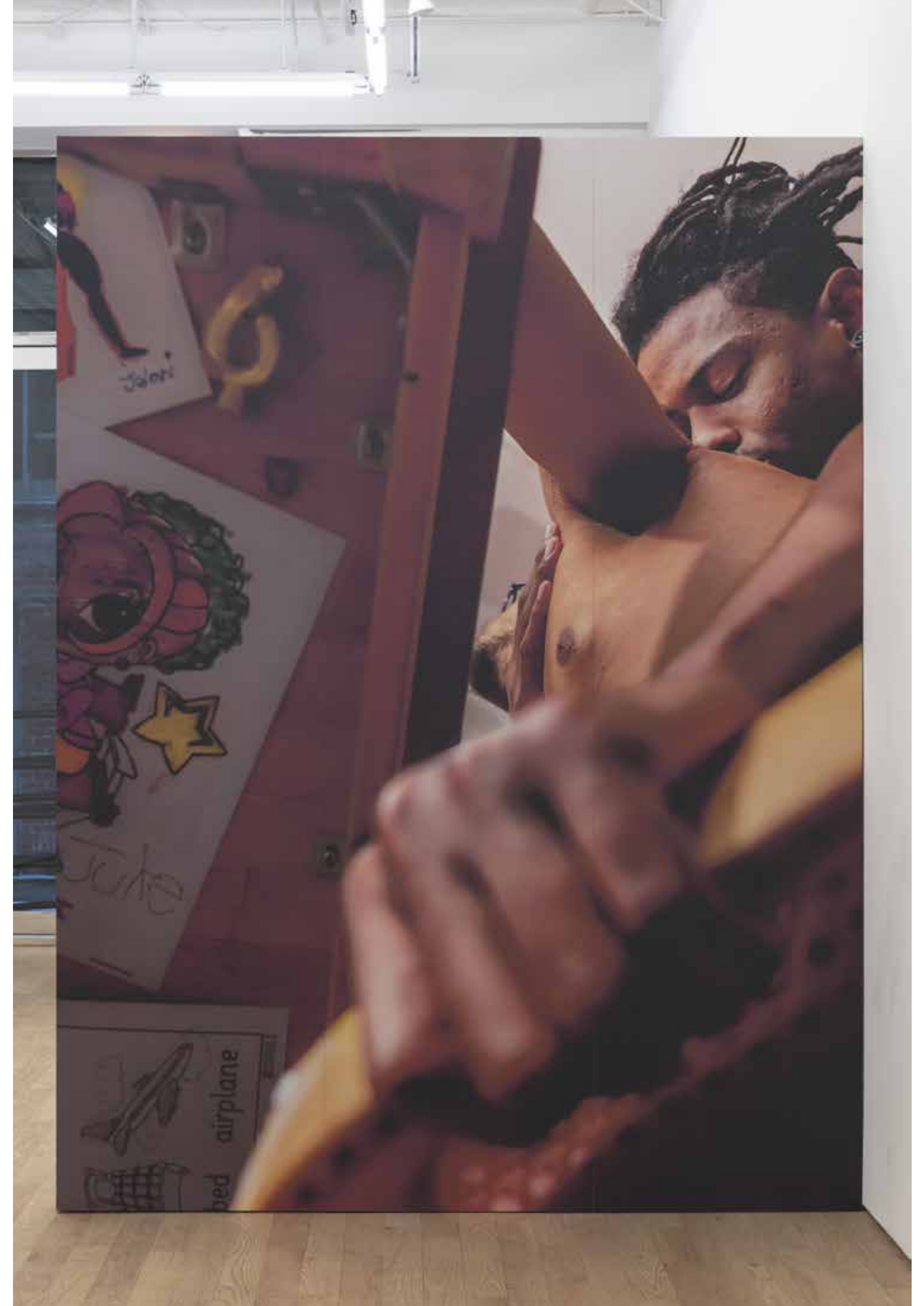




"The wall, like the box, was devised as part of an effort to reconcile what felt vague, unintentional, and incomplete about traditionally framed images. From there I thought of not only working with the wall as a material itself, but what presenting it as a cross-section could yield.

After making the full-bleed image on the verso side of the wall, I knew I wanted it to be printed large to make the fist gripping the chair feel like an anchor or weight. Then I thought about what could make up the interior of that image, as a support, and developed what is seen on the recto."

Elliott Jerome Brown, Jr.



PACO CAO

In *Love is Love*, Cao creates a tribute to Charles Leslie, a close friend, who Cao loves and admires.

Leslie wrote the deeply felt poem *For Fritz*, reproduced by Cao, to the love of his life, Fritz Lohman.

At the time the poem was written for Valentine's Day in 2010, the couple had been together for 48 years. The poem beautifully encapsulates the story of Leslie and Lohman, life and business partners.

Both were the founders of the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, previously known as the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art. Cao says that the portrait he created to graphically background the poem is "a reference to my own passions and desires, presented in such a way that it could be said that the work is an interplay of intertwined affections."

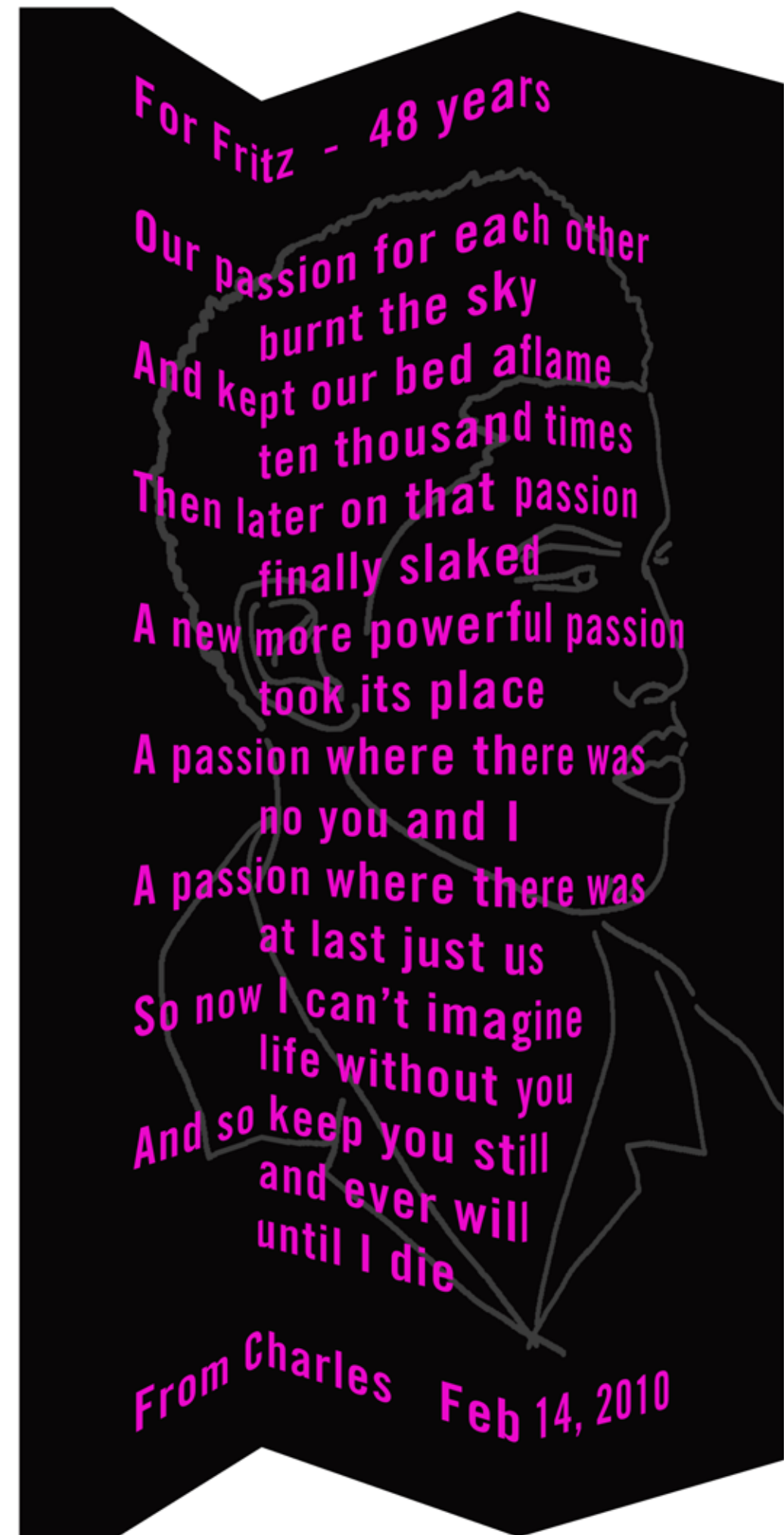
Love Is Love, 2022

Vinyl on wall, 86 7/8 x 43 1/3 inches

Based on a poem by Charles Leslie dedicated to Fritz Lohman, February 14, 2010

Courtesy of the artist

Lehman



LUIS CARLE

Carle is a New York-based Puerto Rican artist, who says, “I use my camera to document the world with a focus on the magic I find in daily life. My pictures tell stories.” That magic can express itself many ways, and Carle is a master at capturing moments on the city’s streets: scenes of joy that play across parades, parks, and bridges. Many of his photographs capture the urban vigor and aggressive interaction of New York’s pulse, but Carle is also capable of more intimate scenes with a romantic overtone. In *Pride, Love and Fireworks*. Carle presents an image that is less raucous and more contemplative—a couple watching the aesthetic miracle of fireworks—that suggests a momentary “softening” in the city, a pause that allows for a romantic embrace, as well as reverie and wonder.

Pride, Love and Fireworks, 2003
Media digital print, 11 x 14 inches
Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa

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In *Folsom Street* Carle layers meaning on two kissing men, each dressed in shorts and provocative harness, sitting on a barrier at a construction site. Behind them a sign warns “Caution,” but the viewer can also read the composition as an ironic caution against exhibiting socially dangerous public displays of affection. The thwarting of queer affection in public places has long been an issue for many queer people. Construction sites and workers, a locus of traditional heterosexual masculinity, have frequently been “sent up” in gay culture. In the 1970s, the music group The Village People dressed their lead singers as camp masculine archetypes, including a construction worker. Carle artfully uses the bright orange construction barrier as an element of this photograph, in which the brilliant hue becomes a flashing warning signal of transgression.

Folsom Street, East. Caution Kiss, 2015
Media digital print, 11 x 14 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Lehman





VINCENT CHONG

Chong was trained as a Chinese calligrapher and seal carver, which the artist says, “is the foundation of my artistic practice.” Chong moved to New York City in 2018, finding community with other queer and Trans Asian and Pacific Islanders (QTAPI) and QTBIPOC folks. The artist comments, “My chosen family is very much centered around the QTAPI collective “BubbleT,” where I met many of my friends. Shaobo and Louis are friends, who I admire. They are both designers and iconic Bushwick figures, and during my performances, I have often worn their clothes and shoes. Because many members of the community are involved with fashion and photography, I think a lot about what painting can uniquely do that is different from photography. In general, I like that the speed of a painting feels much slower than a photograph. I often see Shaobo and Louis looking amazing in photographs, so I wanted to think about how a painting could create a moment in a way that was different from a photo. To me a photograph feels like a moment as an infinitely thin slice of time, whereas a painting feels like a moment as an amount of time like an evening or an afternoon. In this painting, I wanted to create a moment that reflected an intimate evening getting to know Shaobo and Louis better.”

Bushwick at Twilight (Louis and Shaobo), 2022
Oil on linen, 56 x 46 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Lehman

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Yellow Jackets Collective is a painting of three individuals, Michelle, Parissah, and Ester, who are a collective and a chosen family doing work within the community that centers on Queer Asian Femmes. From community organizing to throwing parties their work ranges widely. The artist met the three in 2018 through the “WOW” project, a woman, queer, and trans-led community initiative to grow and protect NYC Chinatown’s creative culture. Chong says, “Before I met them, I saw them speak on a panel during an NYC Pride event, after I first moved to the city. They were the first Asians I had ever heard speak about the presence of anti-Blackness within the Asian community, and how we can work to deconstruct this in our families and communities. I have so much respect for their work and love for them, and I was honored that they were open to being in a painting together. I wanted the painting to reflect their bond as a family.”

Yellow Jackets Collective, 2021
Acrylic on linen, 52 x 88 inches
Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa





JAYNE COUNTY

County's deep love of felines shapes the surreal image the artist presents here, which combines the boldly colored figures with elements of the ancient and the outer space. The "cocks" that County presents in this image are actually modelled on images of Bastet, the Cat Goddess of ancient Egypt. The artist says, "I am a cat freak and have had many cats throughout my life. Bastet is the epitome of cat worship and concentration." This creature is a reoccurring motif in a series of County's paintings, and the artist notes, Bastet "comes in dreams and has sexual inclinations, as she once did in ancient Egypt, thus, she becomes the Goddess of Wet Dreams." County says of Bastet, "I have depicted her as a fertility goddess with multiple breasts and huge snake-like penises, a representation of the fertility of both sexes, male and female, as one.

Two Plus Four Cocks in Silver, 2019
Acrylic and ink on canvas, 16 x 20 inches
Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa



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"Bastet, the Cat Goddess of ancient Egypt," County says, "protects me and my cats from harm and hostility from ignorant humans, so it is my privilege to present Bastet." County's use of Bastet in a series of paintings underscores that Egyptians were not the only people to feature sexualized gods, who visited mortals in the night. The artist notes that ancient Greeks referred to *incubus* and *succubus*, creatures that visited mortals in their dreams to have sex with them.

2 + 6 Alien Bastets 33 1/9, 2019
Acrylic and ink on canvas, 24 x 30 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Lehman



DAVID ANTONIO CRUZ

A glamorous tangle of beautiful people stare from Cruz's canvas. The canvas is part of this artist's *chosenfamily* series that explores the familial, nonbiological bonds between queer people, while it expands the idea of the family as a structure vital for building hope and resilience. Cruz, though, speaks of queer perspective and agency in his intergenerational portraits of multiple family ties. His work derives inspiration from the high society "swagger" portraits of John Singer Sargent, the 19th-century Anglo-American artist. Many critics note that Sargent's work, though never publicly identified as gay in his lifetime, was encoded with queer aesthetic. Cruz also draws inspiration from the paintings of 20th-century, Irish-born queer British painter Francis Bacon, which shows more bohemian environments. The sitters for Cruz's paintings are invited to pose in opposition to social norms as a form of resistance, play, and queering the act of posing.

*iamtheimmenseshadowofmytears, thehopesofmylover,
dreamsofmyancestors*, 2022

Oil, acrylic, and ink on wood panel, 72 x 98 inches (overall)
Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago

Lehman



RAKEEM CUNNINGHAM

Cunningham photographs himself and others playing and posing in the studio informed and surrounded by a multiverse of niche subcultures. Each of the artist's portraits is a declaration of subjectivity and existence—proof of self-validation and an ongoing healing journey, as Cunningham uses art to explore the nuances of queer black experience. Working in fashion, the artist says, “I got tired of shooting people who were told that they were beautiful all the time. I felt like I couldn't really connect with that. I felt the more I worked in fashion, the more I lost that connection with myself. So, after school I started doing more self-portraiture and exploring my identity in that way. I was also exploring my sexuality; I came out in college when I was 21, 22. That really inspired me to do work that I thought was challenging, work that made me uncomfortable. I started doing a lot of self-portrait work partially because I didn't really have anyone else to photograph at 2 a.m. . . . it was the first time that my appearance, my race and how I talked became super apparent to other people. I got a lot of negative feedback, like many queer Black people get: “you're too dark,” or “no fats, no fems,” all this stuff. It crushed my soul a little bit. I thought when I came out that I was going to be part of this accepting community. But that really wasn't the case. I felt attacked all the time, like I wasn't attractive or that people didn't find me attractive. So, the self-portraiture started in a way like, well, if these people don't find me attractive, I'm going to do it for myself. I'm going to make work that makes me feel good, that makes me feel proud to be in my skin.”

Togetherness, 2018

Digital vinyl print, 48 x 72 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Ochi Gallery, Los Angeles

Lehman



BETSY DAMON

Damon's work is deeply influenced by her social activism for the rights of queer people, women, and the environment. She created the series *Body Masks 1* in her New York studio earlier in her career, during a photography shoot, where she cast female forms in plaster. She sought to find a visual relationship between them and the palm fronds of coconut trees. Damon celebrates the female body as a form of landscape that represents not only love and affection between women but also underscores love between humans and their physical environment.

Body Masks 1, 1976

Photographic print, 36 x 24 inches, each

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Body Masks 2, 1976

Photographic print, 36 x 24 inches, each

The Intimacy of Carving Together dates from several years earlier in the artist's oeuvre and emphasizes the loving intimacy that can exist in the physical act of artistic creation and of two artists working together. Damon says, "I was carving with my first female lover. We were seeing the femaleness in a lot of nature and revealing some of those forms in wood."

The Intimacy of Carving Together, 1972

Photographic print, 11 x 8 ½ inches

Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa







ANABELLE DECLEMENT

Two photographs, one by Anabelle DeClement, the other by Sophie Schwartz (See Sophie Schwartz's image in this book and below) are intimately linked. The two photographers met in graduate school at Yale University, becoming artistic collaborators, and, at the time, romantic partners. Together DeClement and Schwartz created a photographic series that ruminates on what it means for photographers to photograph other photographers, and how two people will photograph the same situation differently revealing something essential about each person. Photographed from different cameras and different angles, their two images show a large orb, but the orb foregrounded in DeClement's image appears as a lamp seen at a distance in Schwartz's related work.

Kiss, 2022

Archival inkjet print, 24 x 30 inches

Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa



Sophie Schwartz

One Thirtieth of a Second, 2022



JESS T. DUGAN

Dugan creates tender portraits of non-binary love, and photographs to understand their own identity, as well as to connect with others on a deeper level. Dugan says their photographs show “. . . people who exist in a gently masculine or androgynous space. . . there are elements of gender and sexuality in [my work], but it’s more about being a person, what it means to be alive, and what it means to connect with other people.” Dugan has reflected on the multiple aspects of desire, noting, “There’s the desire to make photographs, the desire to be close to someone that I’m interested in, the desire to understand myself through the act of photographing, the desire to see myself reflected in another person, and the desire to be part of a community. There’s a type of mirroring that happens between me and my subjects. I’m interested in seeing how our energy meets, how they look at me, and what kind of intimacy we can create together. My photography practice allows me to explore all of these various kinds of desires.”

Devotion, 2012

Archival pigment print, 24 x 18 inches

Signed and numbered, verso

Edition of 10 and 3 AP

Courtesy of CLAMP, New York

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Laurel, 2014

Archival pigment print, 24 x 18 inches

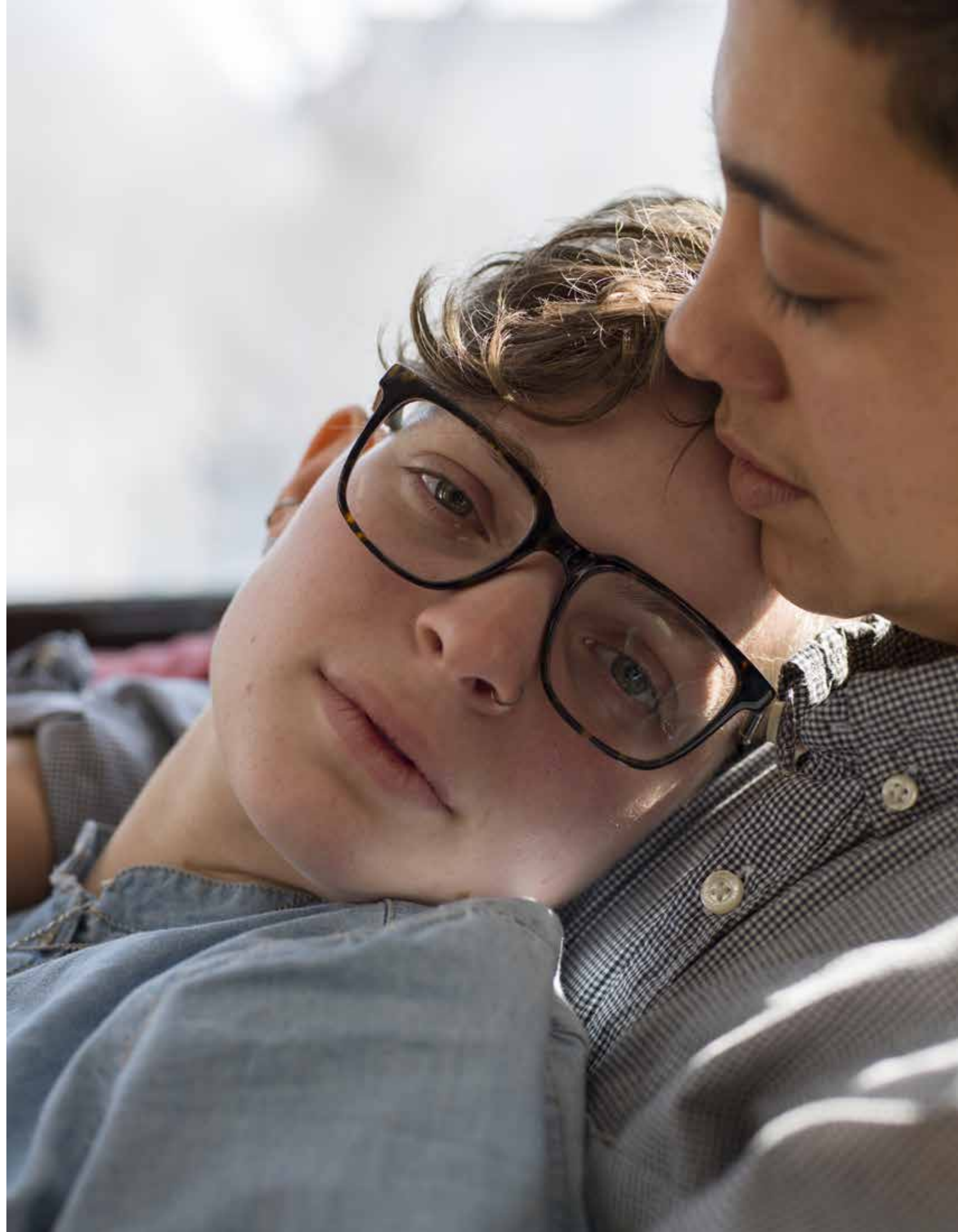
Signed and numbered, verso

Edition of 10+ and AP

Courtesy of CLAMP, New York

Lehman

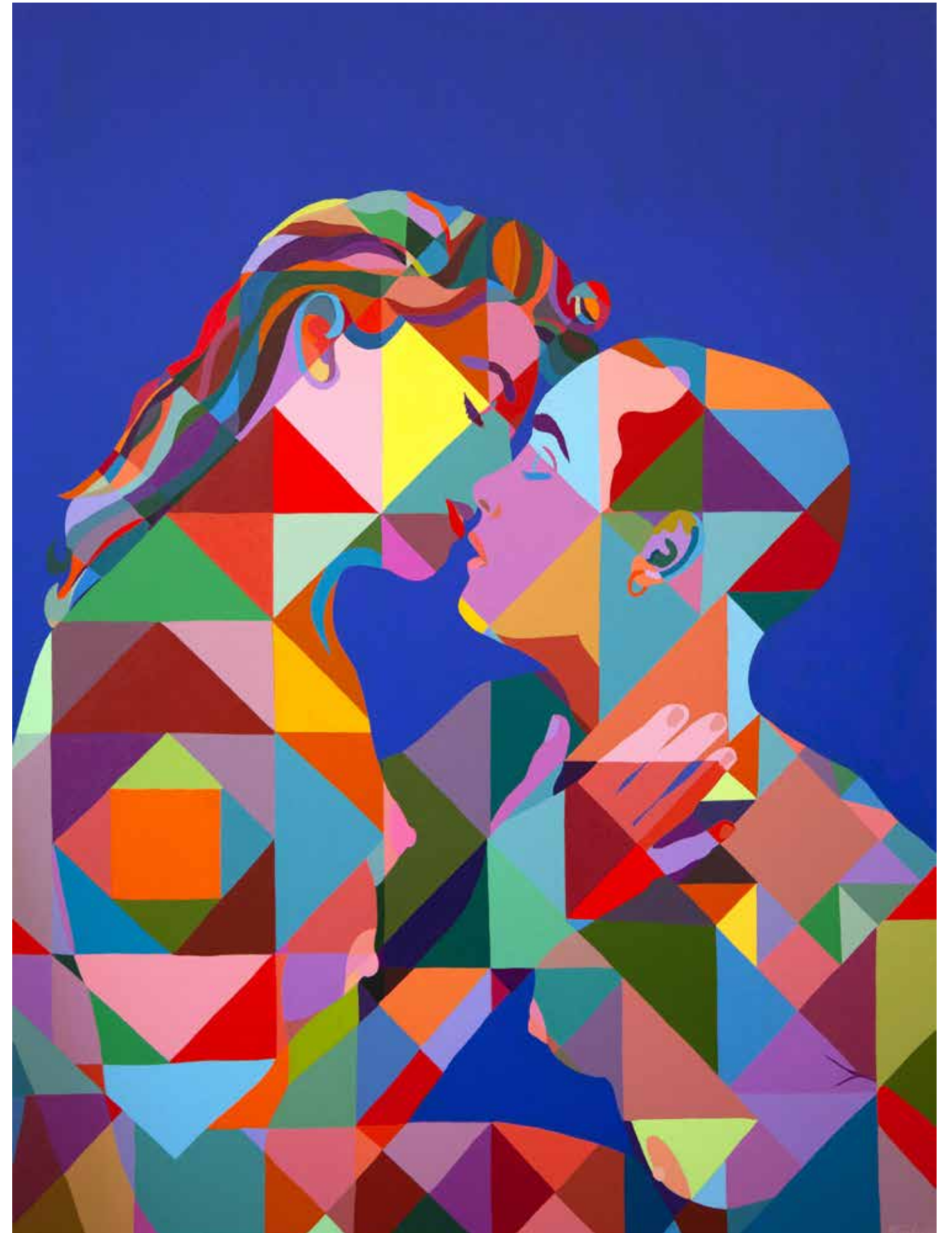




C. FINLEY

"I like to capture the peak experience of falling in love, when you have nothing but runway ahead of you, and can reach for the sky." This romantic view of life captures the art of C. Finley, which combines the vibrancy of Pop Art graphic production with the geometric shapes of traditional patchwork fabric quilts. Artfully blending both, she creates a "softer" experience, with a goal to bring comfort to the viewer. Exuberance is a hallmark of her art in the large-scale public murals for which she is best known, as well as in her more intimate works. Finley on theme: "For me, the only theme is unconditional love." Finley on color: "Color is the medium that I choose to write my love letter to the world." Finley on form: "The heart will always embrace perfect simplicity and purity of form." Though the heart as motif flirts with the banal in our consumerist culture, Finley recognizes that in our eye and associations it retains its power to conjure "vibrancy, positivity, and joie de vivre."

Florencia and Krista, 2020
Acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Following Page

Queer Love, 2022
Acrylic on canvas, 24 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Lehman



FOR FREEDOMS

In 1943 artist Norman Rockwell made four paintings of what President Franklin Delano Roosevelt—in 1941—deemed “four essential human freedoms”: Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Worship, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear. Rockwell’s compositions, broadly embraced by the public during World War II, continue their hold on the American psyche. Sixty-five years after their creation, *For Freedoms*, an artist’s collective that centers art as a catalyst for collective liberation, restaged the Four Freedoms images, updating Rockwell with an inclusive vision of who and what type of family units are a part of the United States, as well as what freedom in this country might look like now. They created a myriad of familial variations, including this piece of two gay fathers, inspired by the original *Freedom from Fear*. The composition of this print and the idea of protecting innocent children from the slings and arrows of a wider world where some oppose queer adoption and parenthood has powerful resonance. Alix Smith, also appearing in *Queer Love*, created an image featuring lesbian parents, again inspired by the 1940s paintings of Rockwell..

Freedom from Fear, 2018

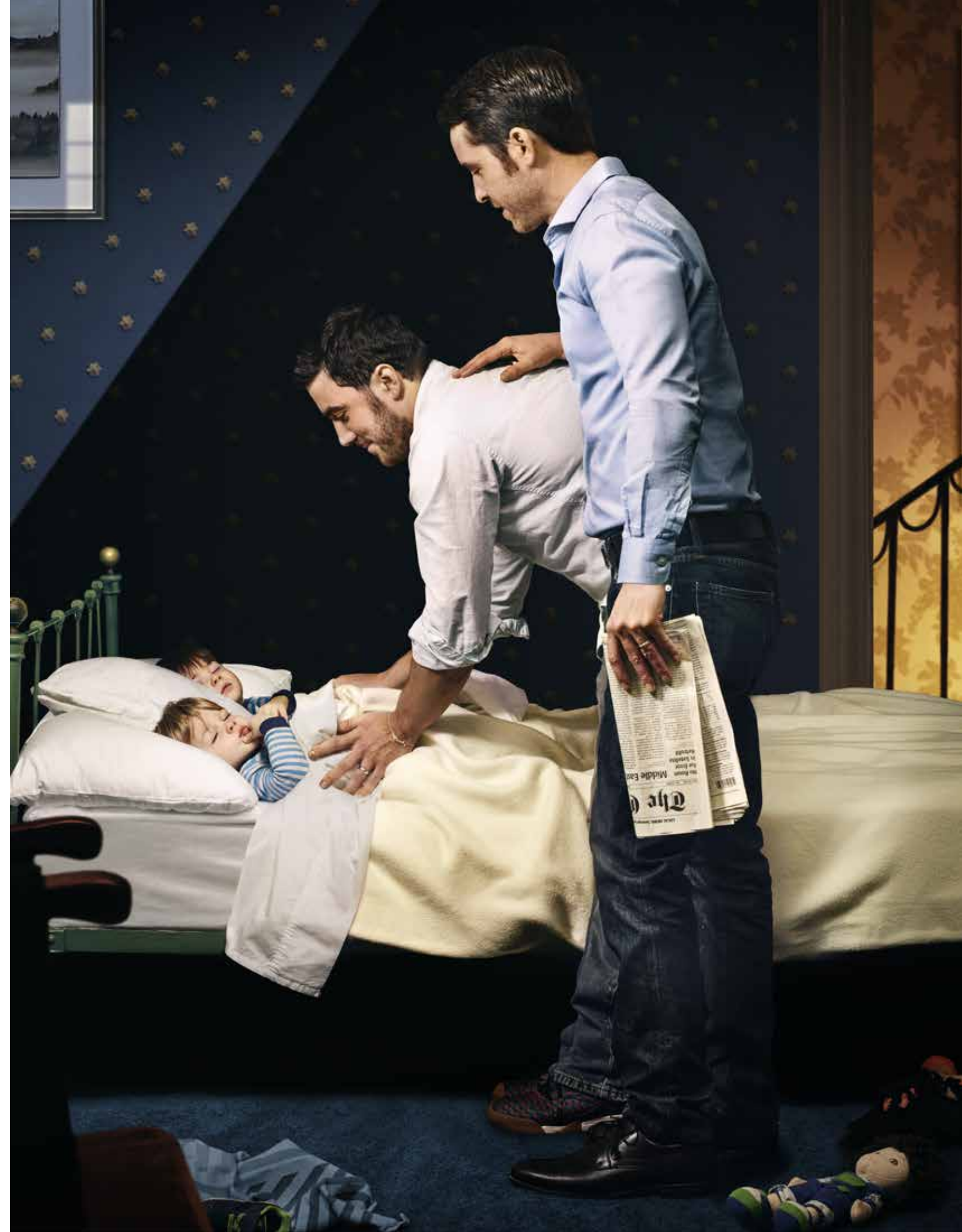
Series: *For Freedoms*

Digital print, 40 x 30 inches

Hank Willis Thomas and Emily Shur, in collaboration with Eric Gottesman and Wyatt Gallery

Courtesy of For Freedoms

Lehman



MICHAEL FOX

In *Lovebirds* Fox creates a photographic portrait of the artists Genesis Breyer P-Orridge and Lady Jaye, a couple who romantically saw themselves as two halves of the same soul and endured multiple surgical procedures to become closer in both spirit and appearance. These two figures are posed by the artist to morph and so become two halves of a perfect heart. Fox recalls, "I took a series of "before and after" portraits of them together in their home as they were beginning their *Pandrogeny* project . . . *Lovebirds* was taken in late 2002, before their first joint breast augmentation, which occurred on Valentine's Day 2003. Upon waking, Genesis looked down and exclaimed, "These are our angelic bodies," saying further, "Angels don't have genitals, and they're neither male nor female."

Lovebirds, 2002/2019

C-print, 43 x 29 x 1 ½ inches

Printed by Julie Pochron, 2019, in the artist's frame

Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa



GABRIEL GARCIA ROMAN

Garcia Roman finds inspiration for his images of queer people in the styles of Renaissance, Flemish, and Christian Orthodox paintings. His aim—to link today’s queer experience with longtime artistic traditions, transforming his contemporary subjects into the “Queer Icons,” for which this Mexican American artist is known. Garcia Roman repositions his “outsiders” like saints central to a narrative—figures inherently worthy of attention. In the two prints here, this artist highlights loving and committed couples and gives their relationships the elevated sanctification religious iconography suggests. The artist employs the distinct chine-collé technique (a process that produces two-layers, one of print and one of paper support: a tissue-thin paper cut to the size of the printing plate and a larger, thicker support paper below that are run through the printing press together). He spurs creativity by inviting his subjects to contribute handwritten musings, poems, and affirmations to surround their images.

Brother(hood) Dance, 2017

Photogravure, with chine-collé silkscreen, 15 x 18 inches

Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa



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Carlos & Fernando, 2016

Photogravure with chine-collé silkscreen, 14 x 11 inches

Castro Bayani & Candy, 2020

Photogravure, with chine-collé silkscreen, 14 x 11 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Lehman



CHRISTY GAST

Gast is generally interested in places where there is evidence of conflict in human desires, which she traces, translates, or mirrors in her art. But in *Valentine* the artist creates a more purely optimistic metaphor for the intimacy and entwining nature of love. She weaves together two pairs of pants—one floral, one patterned with tiny hearts, in a large checkerboard fashion. This “hearts and flowers” motif speaks of unity, intimacy, and the merging of identity that comes in a romantic relationship. Gast’s artistic practice is rich and varied: she has tap danced around Lake Okeechobee, performed as a mermaid on trapeze, as a cowgirl with an inflatable desert, and written and recorded folk ballads about women in the military.

Valentine, 2018
Poly-cotton textile, 37 x 30 x 4 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Lehman



ZACH GREAR

Grear is a self-taught artist whose work is inspired by queer erotica and tattoo iconography, which he backgrounds with lush blossoms, creating, in turn, a distinct and romanticized erotica. He employs markers and collage to alter found imagery, specializing in vintage gay porn magazines he used to shoplift as a teen. Each piece transforms the original image into a new “othered” version of itself, and the recurring words and symbols he uses are meant to add to the image’s distortion, challenging its original intent. *Eden* suggests an idealized world of erotic encounters that retain an element of innocence. Grear says, “I think probably as with most queer people, there are still remnants of shame. And so, with the idea of drawing gay erotica, for some reason, there was a disconnect in terms of me exploring and really being open with that. . . as I got more and more tattooed, it became a standard of beauty and something that I pursued. . . because [tattoos are] a part of how I see a beauty standard in the world—heavily tattooed people, even unrealistically tattooed people. . . using found imagery and vintage erotica took it to the next level.”

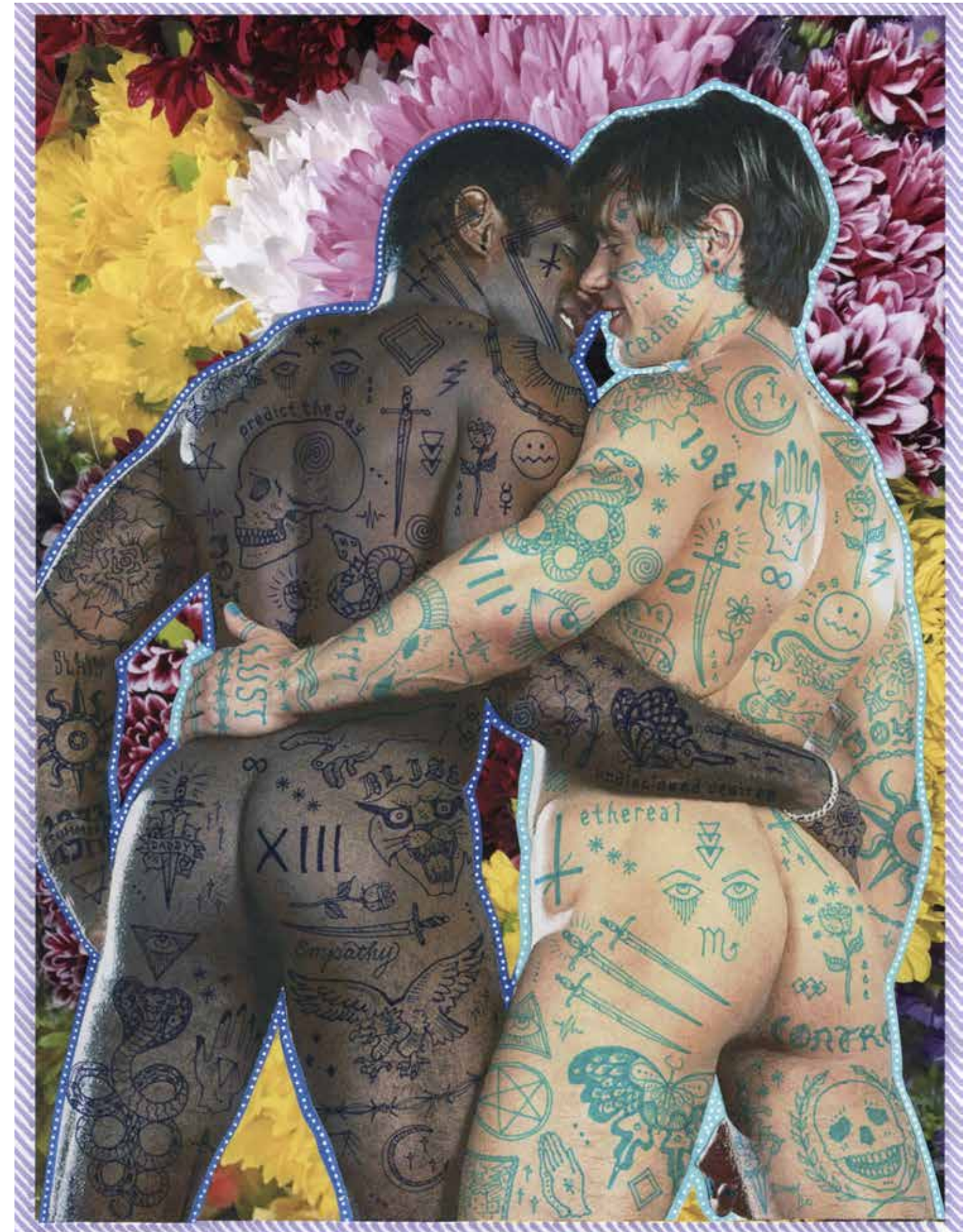
Eden, 2020
Marker on paper, collage, 8 ½ x11 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Lehman

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The Revolutionary Act, 2021
Marker on paper, collage, 8 ½ x11 inches
Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa





ggggrimes

ggggrimes is on a mission to celebrate queer culture through art. A black trans artist from the Bronx, their gorgeously hued digital paintings display queer people of color living “happy, beautiful, colorful, sexy lives.” Active on Instagram, which has enhanced their reputation, ggggrimes says, “I decided early on in my art career that I didn’t like how white, cisgender, and heterosexual the vast majority of popular art at the time was. The art scene on Instagram has changed massively in the last couple of years, and I think it’s due to so many of us queer artists connecting and building a great community. Before I found community, I was dealing with people going on rants at me for even saying that my goal was painting only people of color. My Instagram page is a safe space for QTPOC to be themselves without judgment.”

Date Night Distancing, August 9th, 2021

Digital print on canvas, 24 x 36 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Lehman

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Poetry, September 21, 2020

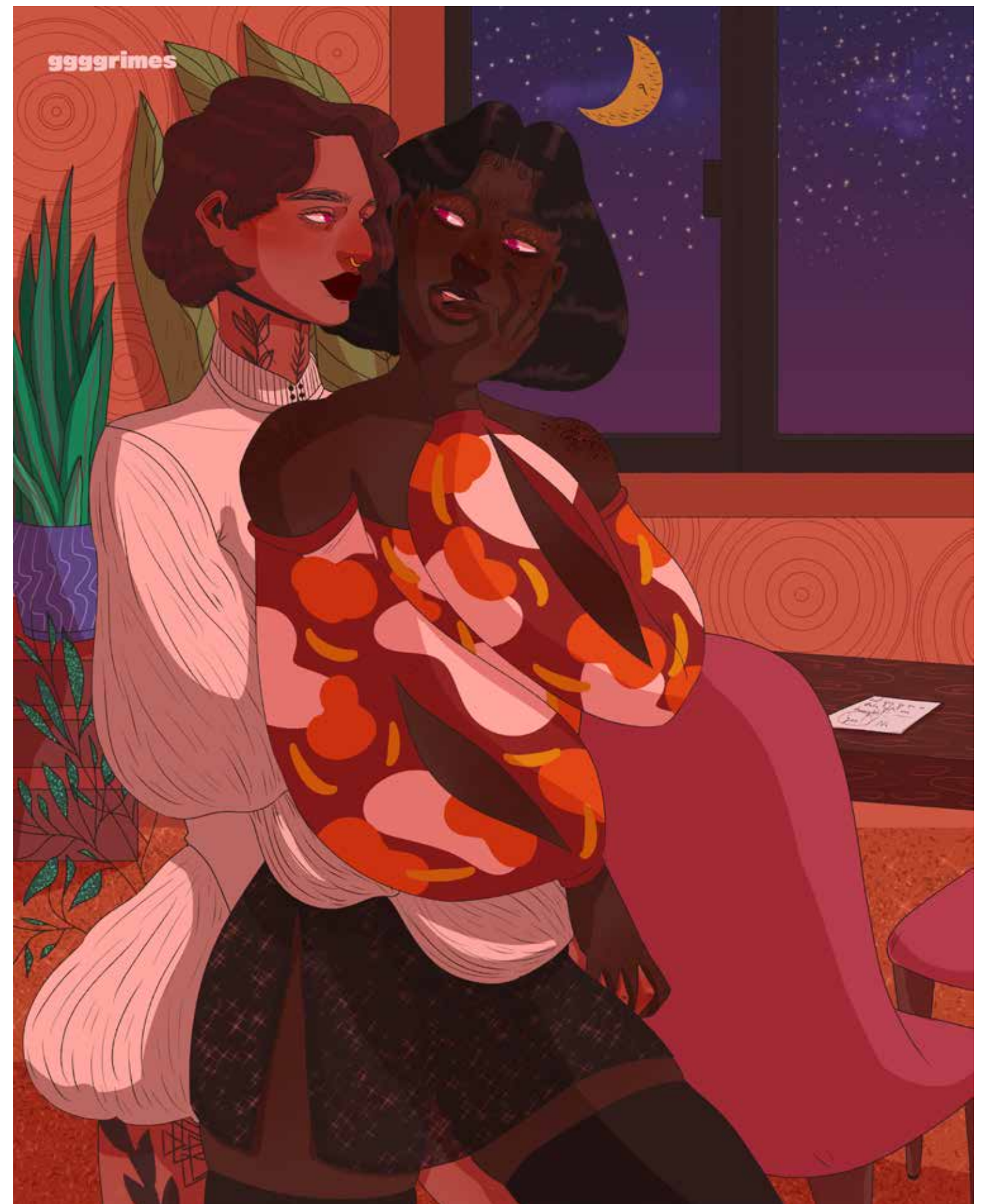
Digital print on canvas, 24 x 36 inches

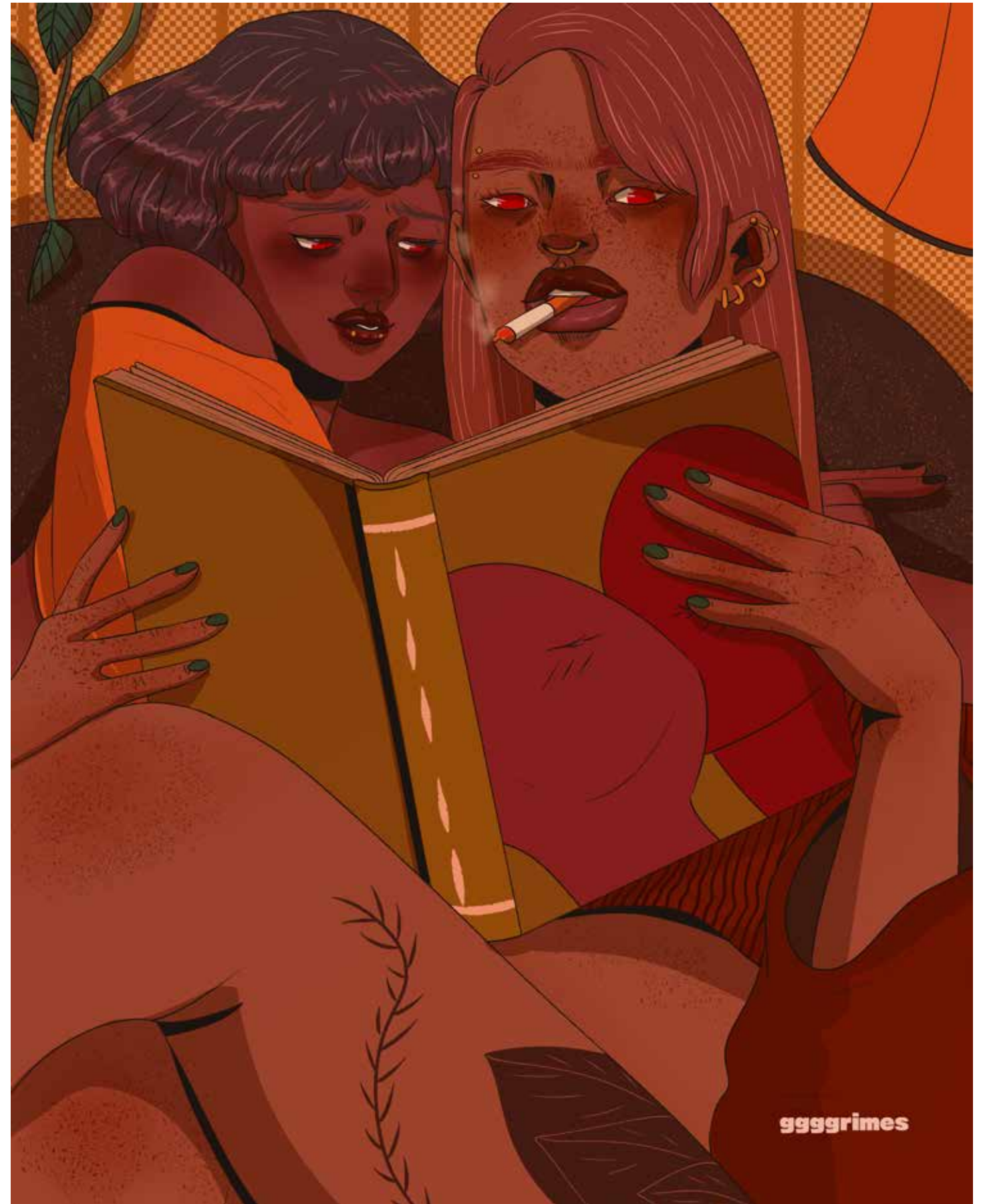
Strapped, July 15, 2019

Digital print on canvas, 24 x 36 inches

Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa





gggrimes



SUNIL GUPTA

New Delhi-born photographer Sunil Gupta left his adopted home of Montreal, coming to New York City to earn an MBA in 1976. He found, too, a new world of love, affection, and belonging that began to infuse his photographs. Gupta spoke fondly of his time discovering Greenwich Village and New York City in the 1970s: “I spent my weekends cruising with my camera, it was the heady days after Stonewall and before AIDS when we were young and busy creating a gay public space such as hadn’t really been seen before. In retrospect these pictures have become both nostalgic and iconic for a very important moment in my personal history.” Sometimes Gupta’s black-and-white candid photographs were overtures to sex, but others represented a platonic affection. In either case, Gupta’s images document people engaged in the then revolutionary act of simply existing in a queer, public space.

Untitled #36

Series: *Christopher Street*, 2019/1976

Silver gelatin print, 36 1/8 x 24 1/8 inches

Edition of 5, plus 1 artist’s proof (#1/5)

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La MaMa

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In 2008 Gupta was commissioned to produce a body of work related to LGBTQI+ rights in India. The resulting series, *The New Pre-Raphaelites*, references the struggles against Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code—an archaic law criminalizing homosexuality. Section 377 led to the push of LGBTQ culture underground and kept secret, as well as making it difficult to research and treat serious medical problems, such as HIV that were affecting LGBTQ people. To make his rebellious statement about India’s burgeoning sexuality, Gupta turned to the Pre-Raphaelite Movement’s use of abundant detail, intense color, and complex composition, first found in 15th-century Italian art. With these dramatic formal qualities, Gupta created a sense of longing in gay couples confined to the space of “criminal intent” in Section 377.

Untitled #5

Series: *The New Pre-Raphaelites*, 2008

Archival inkjet print, 29 7/8 x 44 inches

Edition of 7 and 2 AP

Courtesy the artist and Hales Gallery, London, and New York; Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto; Vadehraa, Delhi@Sunil Gupta. All rights reserved, DACS 2022

Lehman





BARBARA HAMMER

A pioneer of lesbian film, Barbara Hammer (d. 2019) created the print “Sappho,” 1978/2017, a joyful celebration of lesbian friendship and creative comradery, as she developed her short film, also titled *Sappho*. The film, made by Hammer and six of her students, revolves around the 6th-century Greek writer Sappho famed for her lyric poetry, who lived on the island of Lesbos. In the film a group of women unwrap the papyrus gauze of this lesbian goddess and bring her back to life. Hammer noted that at that time, the 1970s, “Lesbian artists were invisible inside the museum. There was no wall text identifying sexual preference or difference.” In her related performance piece, *Homage To Sappho*, 1978, Hammer says, “We researched the names of lesbian artists of the past, inscribing them on a path around the museum and on paper slips that were released into the air from a helium-filled balloon.

Sappho, Production, Los Angeles, 1978, 2017

Silver gelatin print, 8 x 12 inches

Courtesy of the Estate of Barbara Hammer and Company Gallery, New York

Lehman

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Hammer, a lesbian and a feminist film director, producer, writer, and cinematographer, was determined to make a film about marginalized groups in sexual relationships within the queer community, her haunting first feature-length documentary weaves together striking images of four gay and lesbian couples making love, including two elderly lesbians, an interracial gay male couple, an S/M lesbian couple, and two young pierced and tattooed women of color, who Hammer filmed making love in a sculpture of a burnt-out house. The last couple Hammer felt represented “a history we don’t have.” Part of the film focuses on the life of American novelist Willa Cather, who destroyed many personal letters and papers before her death. The film argues that Cather was covering up evidence of her lesbianism, while another section of the film explores the treatment of lesbians in Nazi Germany.

Nitrate Kisses, 1992

Film, 67 minutes, B&W/sound, Stills

Courtesy of the Estate of Barbara Hammer, New York and Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

La MaMa





TOMMY KHA

Originally from Memphis, Kha creates photos that reflect his relationship with the South and Southern culture, as well as his own Chinese heritage. His work touches on identity, connection, and belonging. Kha has become well known for his ongoing portrait series in which he is kissed and otherwise interacted with men in a staged setting. Contemplating ideas of love sparked a number of questions for him that have informed his practice: *How could he enact an immediate and romantic gesture with a complete stranger?* Kha usually appears with a stoic and deadpan expression in the *Men* photographs. Kha says that in photographs in which he appears he keeps his face still and uninterested like the neutral expressions of sitters in historical paintings, which both underscore and complicate stereotypes about Asian sexuality.

Men (J.M.), Earnestine & Hazel's, S. Main Street, 2018

Vinyl print, 21 5/8 x 27 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Higher Pictures Generation Gallery, Brooklyn, New York

Lehman

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Men (S.A.), Ridgewood, Queens, 2019

Vinyl print, 27 x 21 5/8 inches

Courtesy of the artist and

Higher Pictures Generation Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

Lehman

In *S.W.A.K. (Sealed with a Kick): Dan*, Kha's "very straight" friend softly kisses and licks Kha's mouth for four-and-a-half minutes, sometimes resting his lips on Kha's mouth for long stretches without moving at all. Kha says, "I found so much humor in this gesture that's highly romanticized and sexualized."

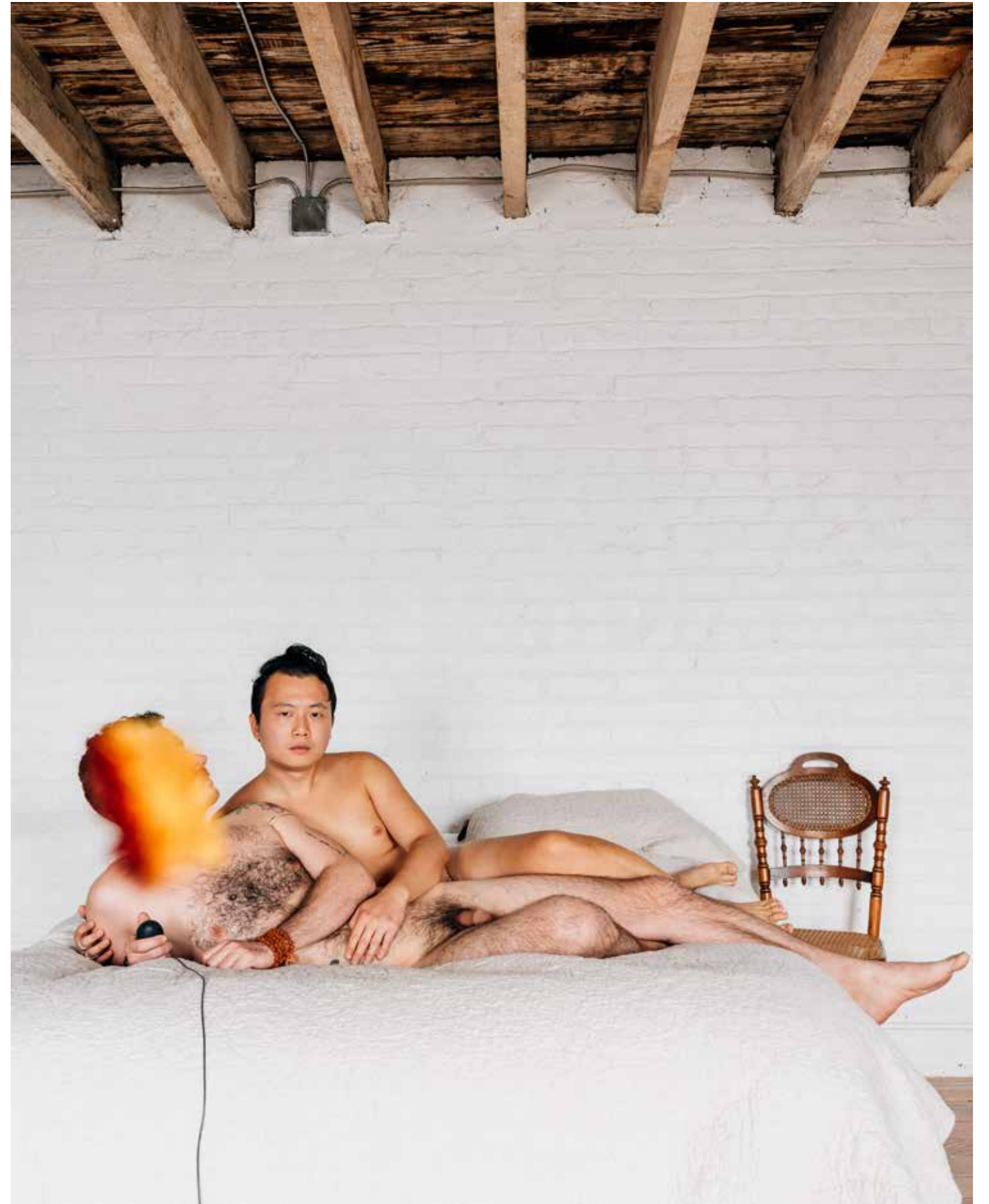
S.W.A.K. (Sealed with a Kick): Dan, 2022-2023

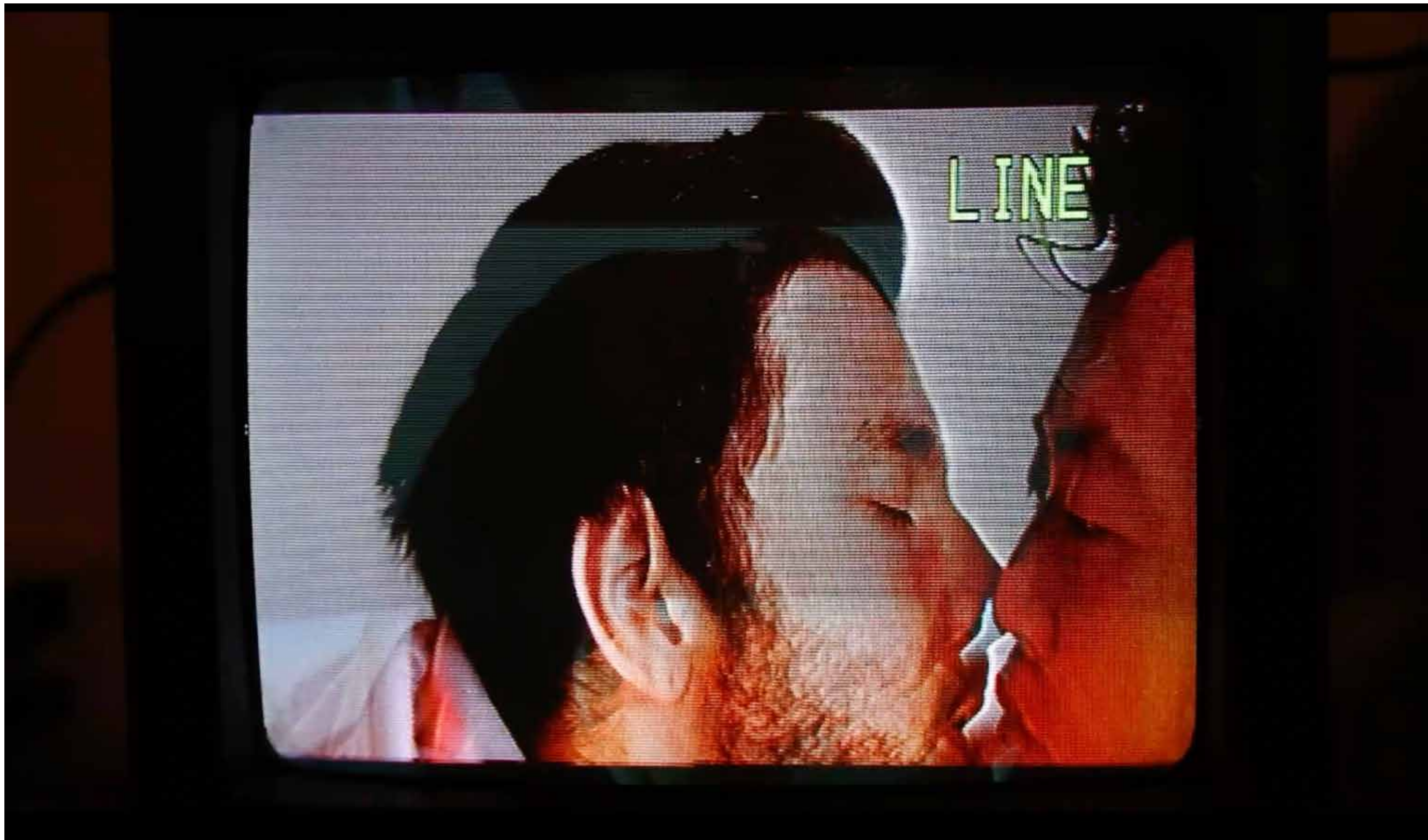
Framed single-channel color video, 00:09:40 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Higher Pictures Generation Gallery, Brooklyn, New York

La MaMa







CLIFFORD PRINCE KING

Deeply romantic and imbued with a sense of hopeful optimism, self-taught photographer King documents his intimate relationships in traditional everyday settings that speak about his experiences as a queer Black man. King's life is the starting point for his photographic exploration of desire, intimacy, and day-to-day living with HIV. The viewer is able to gain what King describes as a "glimpse into a Black gay world through scenes and rituals of the everyday." After King's diagnosis of HIV, he focused anew on understanding the legacy of this disease and the artists who responded to its crises. King returns time and again to the life-affirming aspects of his relationships.

Just the Two of Us, 2019

Archival inkjet print on Photo Rag Baryta, 36 × 24 inches
(CK0022.4)

Edition 4 of 5 and 2 AP

Courtesy of the artist and STARS Gallery, Los Angeles

Following Page

In *Growing Each Day*, King creates compositions that explore affection in all its varieties—the simple parts of intimacy, often overlooked but universal in the happiness they provide.

Growing Each Day, 2019

Archival pigment print on Canson Rag, 24 × 16 inches
(Photographique 310GSM, CK0010.1)

Edition 5/5 and 2 AP

Courtesy of the artist and STARS Gallery, Los Angeles

Lehman





ZACHARI LOGAN

Ruminating on the glories of nature and the quiet contentment that can be found between animals and humans, Logan, in *Feeding No. 5*, presents himself in loving commune with birds of the forest. In this self-portrait, part of the Canadian artist's *Wildman* series, flocking birds perch across his nude body. Logan draws the image with blue pencil on polyester, and his monochromatic technique encourages the viewer to focus on the magnificence of his draftsmanship. In various works in the series, Logan shows himself becoming engulfed by plants, animals, and insects. The man in these images refers to a "universal" or "unified" man at one with nature, which the artist believes is rapidly disappearing in the 21st century. Logan is concerned with the process of the rewilding of the human form, mutating it into flora or fauna, and fully transformed becoming the symbol of a new magical state, where there is no separation between humans and the natural landscape. For him, these transformations are metaphors for queerness and an overt celebration of the Arcadian ideal.

Feeding No. 5, 2015

Series: *Wildman*

Blue pencil on Mylar, 42 x 29 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Paul Petro, Contemporary Art, Toronto

Lehman



JESSICA MITRANI

Mitrani creates a startling diptych out of two distinct images that echo and reinforce each other. She draws her title inspiration from the ubiquitous ferries that shuttle queer people back and forth to the summer idyll of Fire Island. But her title also suggests that we are not all on the same ferry only; we are also “all in the same boat.” In that sense, Mitrani is creating an image that is specifically queer but also universal in experience. On the left side of the image a tattooed arm reads: “Every Minute/ Somewhere/ In the World/ Parents Are/ Finding Their/ Children in Drag.” This quote leads us to contemplate that all self-presentation beyond the skin that we are born with is a form of drag, as we make choices each day about how we present our bodies and ourselves to others. At the right side of the image, a person in a bathing suit with a heart-shaped cutout provides a “cheeky” visual commentary to the sentiments on the left side.

We Are All on the Same Ferry

(Yannik and Kyle, Fire Island), 2023

Two-color photograph, with iridescent pigment dust and paint, 16 x 21 inches

Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa



COBI MOULES

In the grand tradition of 19th-century American landscape painters, queer/trans artist Cobi Moules draws artistic inspiration from the glories of the natural world. A tour-de-force painter of exquisite detail, Moules here paints a scene of Acadia National Park in Maine, part of a series created around the island's coast that refers to works by Hudson River School artists, such as Frederick Church. Moules says, "During my trip to Acadia when I was working on the image for "Untitled (Ship Harbor)," the weather had been very harsh with high winds, fog, snowstorms, and ice. It was gorgeous and inspiring but was also quite difficult to work in. The religious ideologies that I am responding to within the Hudson River School felt very prevalent in this inhospitable moment. I see these figures taking on a couple of different roles. The tiny ones on the edge of water are defiant against the storm and crashing waves, while the figures in the foreground huddle together, holding one another and giving comfort."

Untitled (Ship Harbor), 2019

Oil on canvas, 13 x 20 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Kasper Contemporary

La Mama

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Untitled (Schoodic Peninsula) references *Schoodic Peninsula From Mount Desert At Sunrise*, a small Frederick Church painting. Moules says, "I created a much larger and more dramatically engaged painting from the small quiet reference. I am imagining a scene taking place out on the peninsula that Church was looking out at, from a quiet and slightly dreary scene to a much more energetic and joyful one." Moules incorporates multiple self-portraits throughout his compositions. Multiple selves, loving and supporting each other, act as a kind of physical representation of differing "self-states," integrating themselves into the landscape, creating a world with a sense of excitement, self-worth, and play.

Untitled (Schoodic Peninsula), 2020

Oil on canvas, 45 x 80 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Kasper Contemporary

Lehman



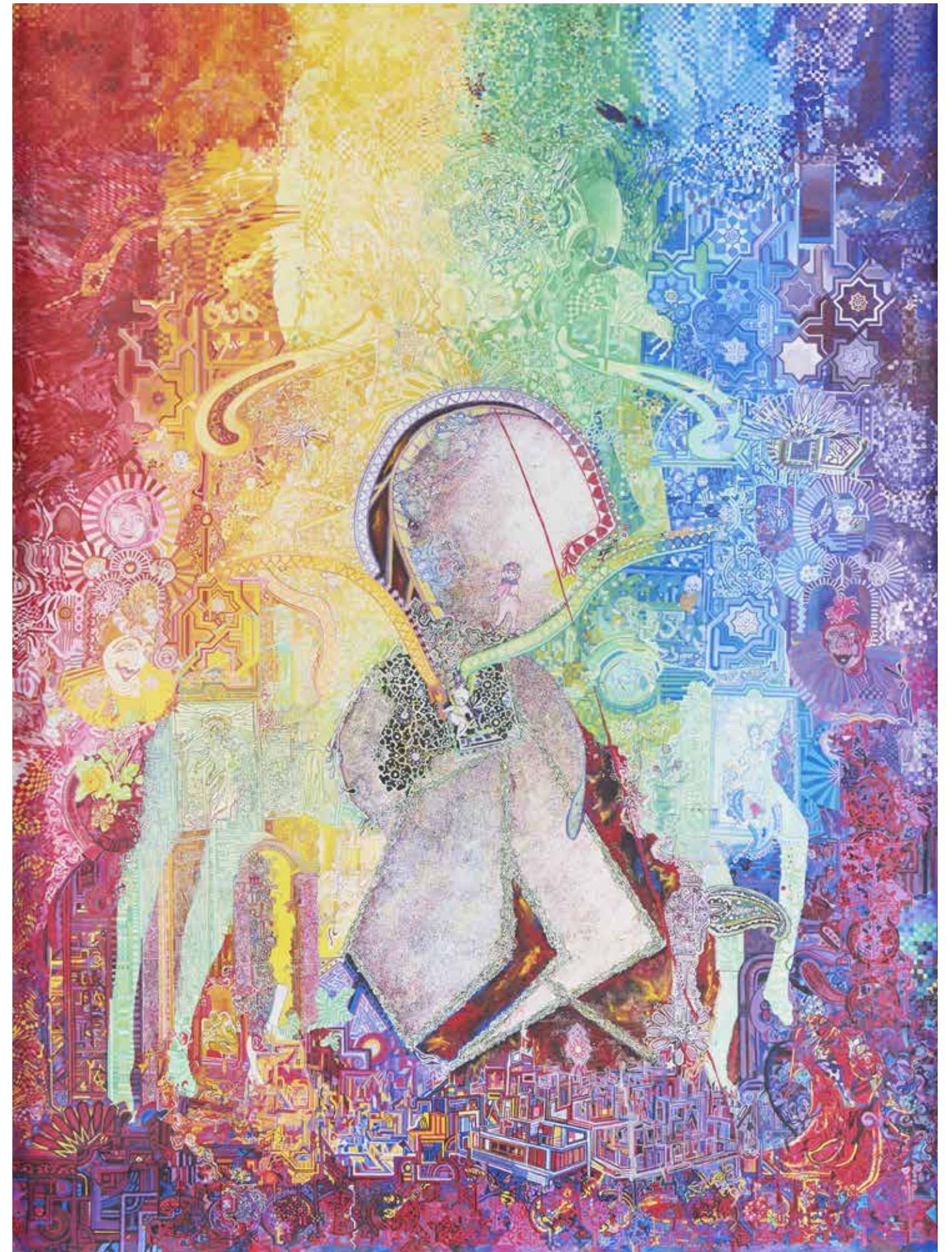


RAÚL DE NIEVES

A rainbow-hued composition, *Saint George and The Dragon/The City* appears, at first, mysterious. Viewed from across the gallery, it looks like a sensuous cloud of prismatic color that shows a myriad of surreal detail. The legend of St. George and the Dragon holds longtime fascination for De Nieves. The story of Saint George successfully slaying a dragon that ravages townspeople was brought to the West by returning Crusaders in the 12th century. De Nieves equates this tale with his experience of moving to San Francisco as a young gay man at the age of 19, and his intense desire to be around an embracing queer culture. If one looks carefully at the composition, you can detect the outlines of both St. George's horse and the dragon, nearly obliterated in a thousand details of a fantastical city, representing San Francisco. For the artist this contrast represents his own idea of the defeat of homophobia and confronting something previously taboo. This piece evolved out of an image of love that haunted him in a strange dream. He said, "One becomes something of a saint by confronting fear." Retained as a sentimental talisman by the artist when the other works in the series were sold, de Nieves describes the work as "a seal of love."

Saint George and the Dragon/The City, 2013
Gouache, ink on paper, 64 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Company Gallery, New York

Lehman



SAMANTHA NYE

Nye questions familial roles and sexual power dynamics. The artist said, “To make this work, I’ve assembled a cast of women, ages 55 to 92, including my mother, grandmother, their lifelong friends, and queer elders, to create shot-by-shot remakes, which often position my mother as my love interest or vice versa. . . The video on view is a remake of the Scopitone film (a precursor to contemporary music videos) titled “Daddy,” starring my mother, myself, and five self-identified “Lesbian DADDIES” over the age of 60. The original film and song were performed by Julie London in 1966. For my version, I commissioned a cover of the song from Justin Vivian Bond. In this video my mother performs the lead role, singing to the camera about finding her perfect DADDY, while behind her the five lesbian DADDIES perform acts of seduction, kink, BDSM, and worship on me. Will my mother choose her DADDY based on how well they perform on her daughter?”

VisualPleasure/JukeboxCinema-DADDY, 2018

Video. 2:59 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa



TURA OLIVEIRA

Oliveira's lush and colorful composition depicts figures under a large image of an erupting volcano. The artist frequently explores volcanoes as symbols of something unseen and mysterious. She regards the volcano as a powerful metaphor of revolution—a force that both creates and destroys. Many of Oliveira's works highlight scenes of queer care and touch, and she infuses her works with ideas of pleasing and gentleness, even in the midst of chaos and violence. The nature of queerness may be seen as a metaphor for societal revolution. The tender side of queerness and an explosive eroticism that may echo the volcano as a revolutionary act in and of itself.

There Is No More Work in the Shadow of the Holy Mountain That Has Become the Volcano, 2020
Hand-dyed silk, cotton batting, glass beads, 74 x 74 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Lehman

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Oliveira layers her queer figures onto silk and describes them as shifting and sliding simultaneously on multiple planes of the fabric. This is a visual corollary to one of this artist's main themes: the ultimate unknowability of others, as their personalities morph, retreat, and collide. She describes the erotic act and love itself as various attempts to know another person that can never fully succeed. The artist suggests the ephemeral nature of love, referencing the lyrics of Neil Young's 1974 song, "Love is a Rose," which has impacted her work:

Love is a rose but you better not pick it
Only grows when it's on the vine
Handful of thorns and you'll know you've missed it
Lose your love when you say the word mine

The comet's wake like smoke through my fingers, reflected in water, 2022
Cyanotype on silk, 120 x 60 x 55 inches
Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa





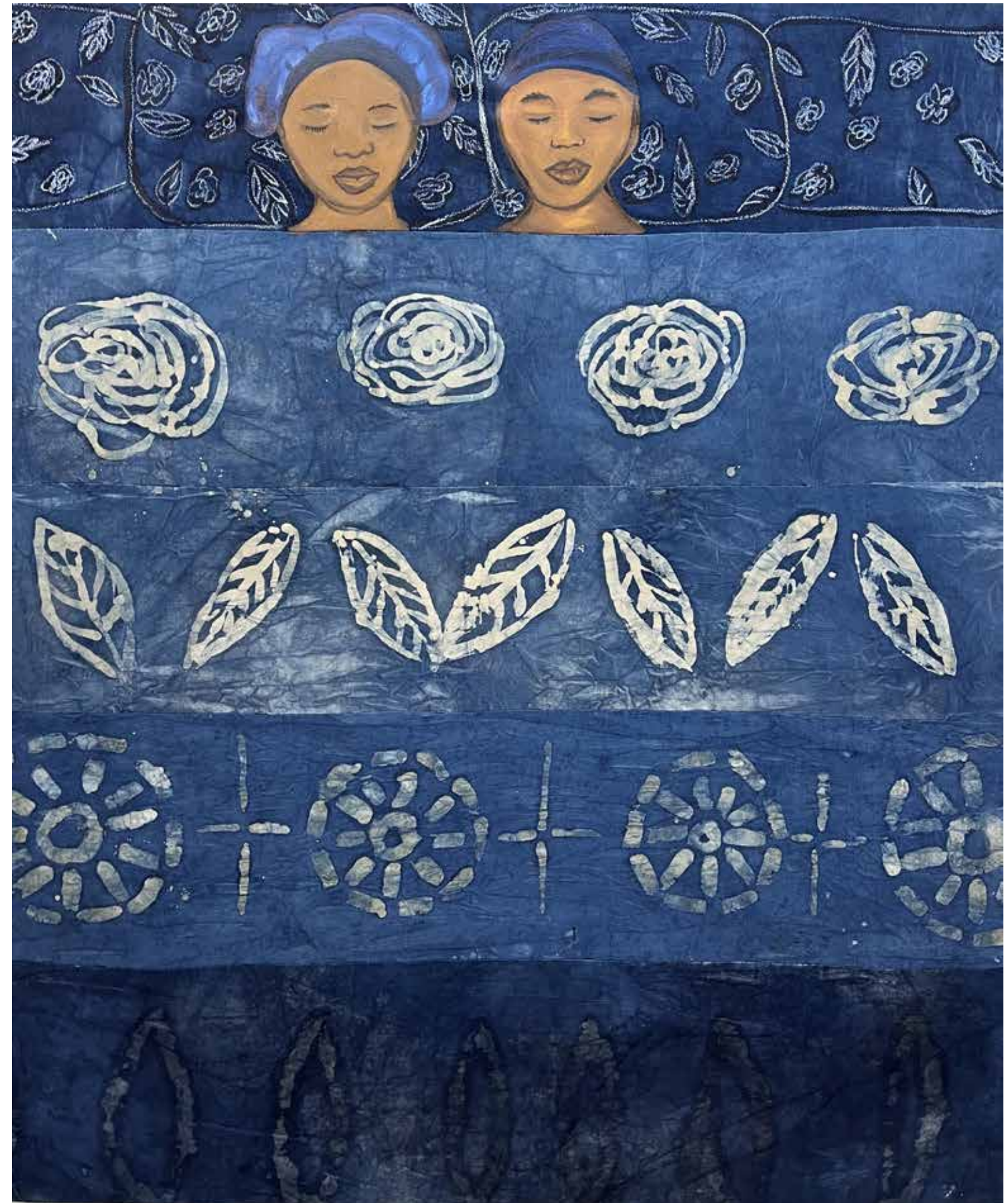
SOLA OLULODE

Olulode's deeply hued, nearly indigo, works speak to the eroticism of "blue" movies. Here the artist creates a delightful dream world of coziness that captures the comforts of romantic bliss and domesticity. Her two figures, eyes closed and tucked into bed, are a tribute to same-sex feminine love and quiet contentment. The flowers and leaves of her quilt draw stylistic inspiration from such 20th-century artists as Henri Matisse and Marc Chagall, but their works are transformed by Olulode through the lens of queer sensibility. Her quiet but powerful figures intuit the eternal, yet are thoroughly modern. Heavy and rough in outline, they show a complementary gentle subject matter that conjures sweet dreams in the sleep of night.

Stitched To You, 2022

Oil, acrylic, thread, indigo, batik, and oil pastel on canvas, 70 7/8 x 59 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Sapar Contemporary Art Gallery, New York

La MaMa



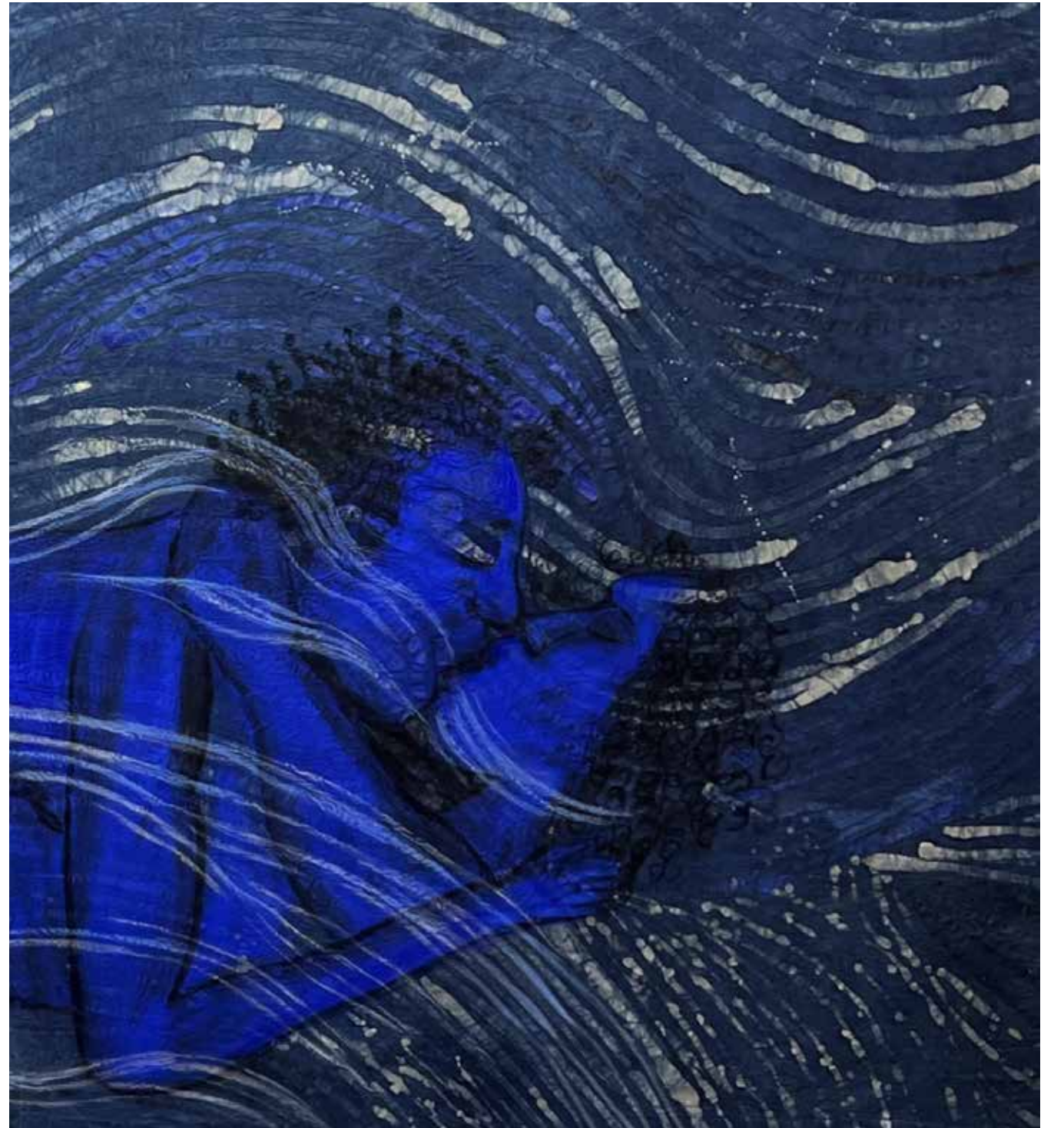
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The diptych format of *Let Me Drown* functions as a giant snapshot of a couple experiencing the fractured sensibility of erotic joy in a series of intimate moments. The artist creates a dream world of swirling desire that captures the heady intoxication of romance.

Let Me Drown In The Depths of Your Love, 2022

Charcoal, pigment, wax and pastel on canvas. Diptych 70 x 70 inches each
Courtesy of the artist and Sapar Contemporary Art Gallery, New York

Lehman



CATHERINE OPIE

Catherine Opie captures a passionate and bloody kiss between performance artists Julie Tolentino and Stosh Fila [aka] Pigpen, a kiss that lies at the uneasy intersection between the erotic and the violent. Opie's photograph contrasts the formal coolness of her approach with their frenzied embrace "red in tooth and claw," (Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "In Memoriam, A.H.H.," LVI. 1850). The mouths of her subjects drip vampiric blood that visually morphs with the red ribbons of romantic ties. Their fingers, branded with the tattoo shorthand "x" and "o," signal hugs and kisses, while Julie and Pigpen's dress emphasizes gender roles and the complications that perennially emerge from them. Opie's photography technique—lighting, composition, and black-draped dramatic backgrounds—recalls Old Master Dutch painters, such as Rembrandt and Frans Hals. Working in this century, Opie gives her same-sex subjects both dignity and swagger in their passion, while linking them to long art-history tradition.

Julie & Pigpen, 2012

Pigment print, 53 1/2 x 42 inches

Edition 5 and 2 AP (CO 4360; LM22037)

Courtesy of Regen Projects, Los Angeles and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, London, and Seoul

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A photograph of the loving intimacy of Anthony Lepore and Michael Henry Hayden is portrayed by Opie in her print *Anthony and Michael*. A technical tour de force—the sheen of its inky black background allows viewers to see themselves reflected into the composition and to identify with the couple. Presenting the figures in languid dishabille against a black background suggests Golden Age Dutch painting in the 17th-century, which gives them a monumental and romantic but slightly somber dignity. Lepore and Hayden, frequent collaborators, create installation photographs, paintings, and sculptures that highlight their overlapping investigations of domestic life and the natural world.

Anthony & Michael, 2012

Pigment print F, 77 x 58 inches

Edition of 5 and 2 AP (C) 4221)

Courtesy of Regen Projects, Los Angeles and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, London, and Seoul

Lehman





DAVID RIOS FERREIRA AND NEIL FERNANDO

Rios Ferreira presents a set of large-scale drawings for the exhibition *Queer Love* in the Rotunda at Lehman College Art Gallery. Caressing cyborg and robotic forms present hybrid child figures amidst a cacophony of line and color in four imaginary stained glass window vignettes titled, *A Commission for the Cybernetic Artificial Church of the Queer Immaculate Reception*.

This series marks the first collaboration between David Rios Ferreira and his artist husband, Neil Fernando. Each drawing in “the commission” carries its own title—*Annunciation*, *Nativity*, *Adoration*, and *Epiphany*—names that refer to the phases in the Catholic Jesus birth narrative, as well as descriptive words that can be attributed to the emotional and sometimes actual stages this couple faced when they adopted their daughter. When creating these works, Rios Ferreira thought a lot about science fiction. Growing up he viewed films like *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* and *Enemy Mine* through a queer lens. He identified with the depictions of male love, father-child relationships, the themes of adoptive and familial love and gender identity. More recent films like *Dirty Computer* explicitly use androids, computers, and cyborgs as an allegory for the queer experience.

Rios Ferreira's mix of mechanical and humanoid motifs in “the commission” are a meditation on his emotional and physical insecurity that stemmed from the stigma of being queer, and then prompted him and his partner to create a family and have a child. In the Rotunda you see coloring book illustrations, petroglyphs, *anime*, and 18th-century print r_ images that speak to the complexity of family formation, as it relates to gender, race, and religion. This work reflects the introspection of Rios Ferreira and Fernando as they built their family. It also celebrates their love for each other and their love for their daughter, placing her and this experience in the realm of the divine.

Opposite

Rotunda Installation

Following Pages

A Commission for the Cybernetic Artificial Church of the Queer Immaculate Reception:

Annunciation, Nativity, Epiphany, and Adoration (in order)

Site-specific installation, 2023

Courtesy of the artist

Lehman







PAUL MPAGI SEPUYA

Sepuya's photography studio is the site of both labor and leisure. Well-known for photographs where he, the photographer, becomes part of the composition, Sepuya complicates ideas of voyeurism and exhibitionism. In his space, artist and model can play at self-presentation and the line between friendship and model frequently blurs. In the *Daylight Studio* series, Sepuya's tender embrace of his model is reflected back to his camera via one of several mirrors in the studio. For him, the studio now becomes the creative site for private intimacy, where camera and subject interact, though the figure is protected. No matter how intimate the embrace, the viewer cannot intrude or fully objectify because the boundary of the mirror's reflective surface provides distancing. Sepuya also obscures identity by not including faces in many of his compositions.

Daylight Studio Mirror (_1230695), 2021

Archival pigment print, 45 x 34 inches

Edition 1 of 5 (PS1005)

Courtesy the artist and Bortolami Gallery, New York

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In his *Studio* series, Sepuya portrays models interacting with one another. Cropped dramatically and separated across the picture plane with their identities partially obscured, each of the figures, one black, one white, become an emblem of longing across the studio's photographic void.

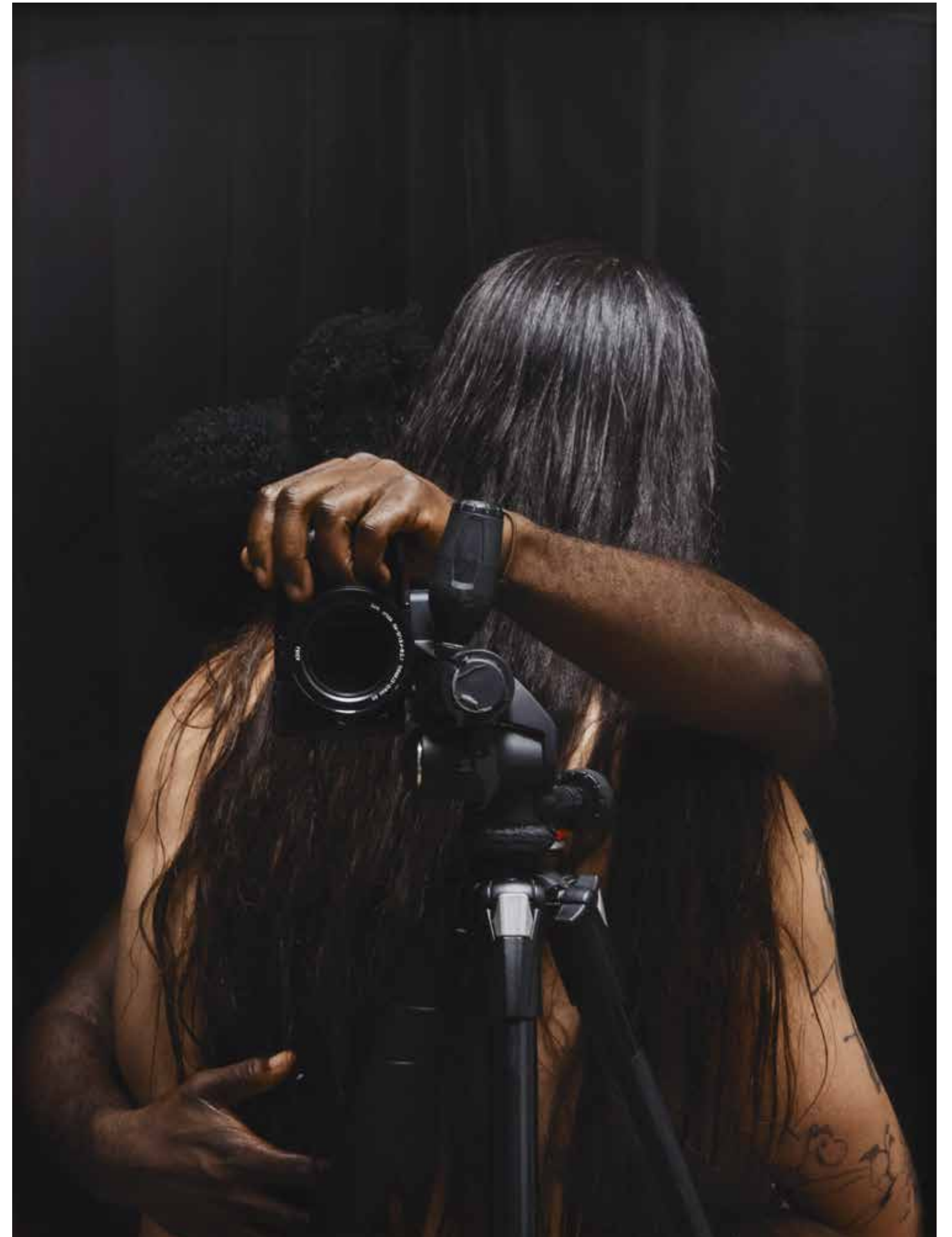
Studio (0X5A9098), 2021

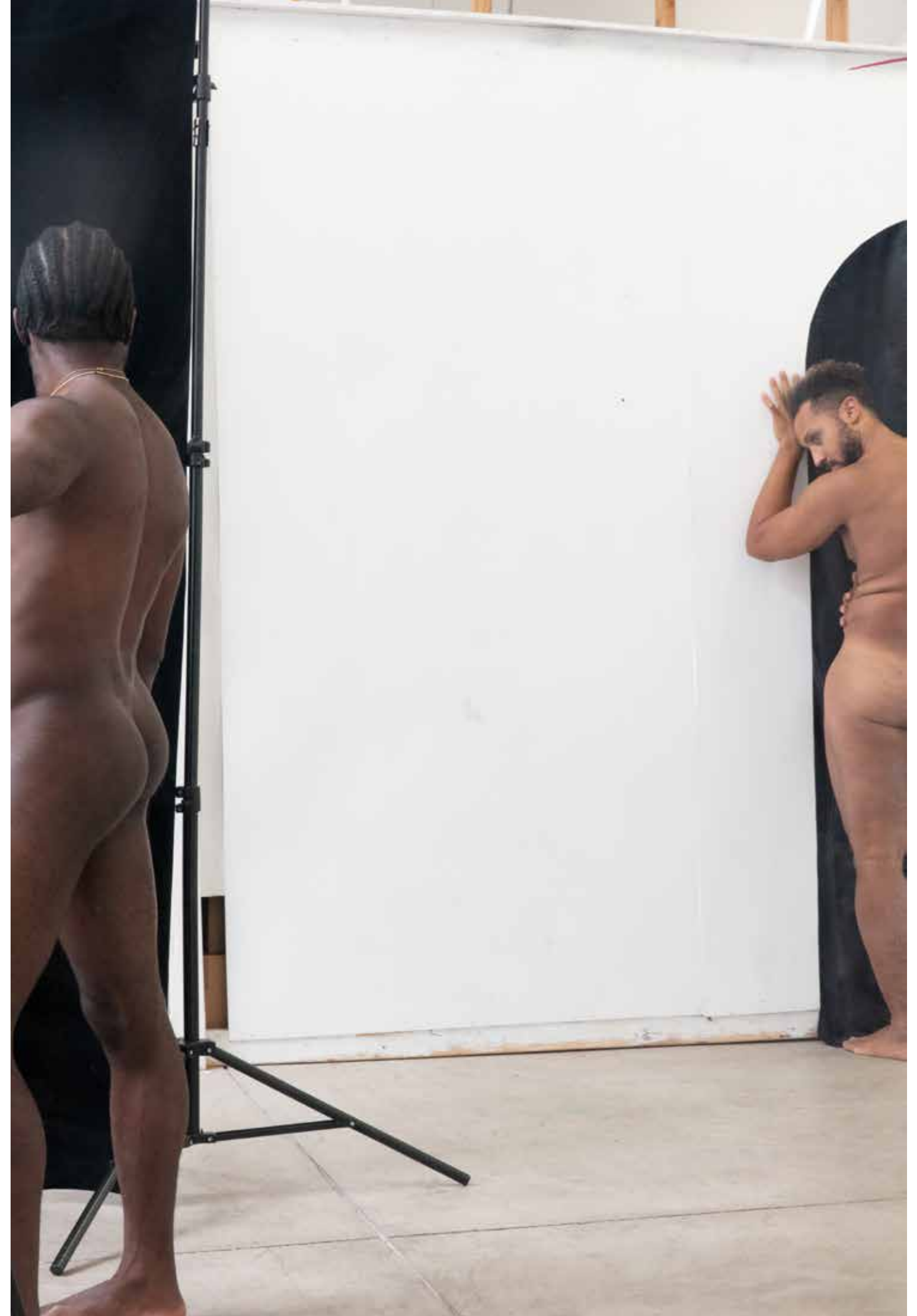
Archival pigment print, 13 x 9 inches

Edition 1 of 5 and 2 AP(PS8941)

Courtesy the artist and Bortolami Gallery, New York

La MaMa





XAVIER SCHIPANI

Schipani describes his art as a search for his “Transcestors,” or those who walked before him. A collector of history and imagery, he focuses his attention on the past as proof of his existence now. Constantly searching, this artist looks for a world where his own body has context in the historical representation of the trans-masculine male. The visual result of his inspiration: large-scale paintings and mural work, much like cave paintings and other tableaux that communicate not only existence but the importance of trans people. Piecing together writing, film, music, and art within his community, Schipani uses images of the figure to guide storytelling and as a form of mapping a history of trans individuals. His figures emote a sense of longing, exploration, and emotional curiosity that openly ask the viewer to be as vulnerable as the artist. The title, *Twisted*, plays both on the pose of his entwined and loving figures, as well as how trans people have been viewed in the past. The artist says, “I feel frustrated with the way that erotic art is often seen as ‘low brow,’ so it is something that I like to explore and find new ways to represent.”

Twisted, 2021

Pastel, watercolor, digital on matte vinyl, 30 x 40 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Lehman



SOPHIE SCHWARTZ

The spherical lamp foregrounded in Anabelle DeClement's image *Kiss* (in this exhibition and below) is viewed from a distance in Schwartz's photograph here. Schwartz captures DeClement in the act of photographing the orb, making Schwartz's image more narrative and less poetically obscure. With a wider view, Schwartz's work can be seen as a behind-the-scenes or pre-production shot, and a counterpoint to DeClement's more consciously artistic image. Both photographs were made in New Haven in the same room, at the same time, and are designed to stand alone or shown as a pair. Schwartz compares this ability to stand alone but come together as an evocative metaphor for queer relationships. They say, "We complement each other's viewpoints in a really beautiful way."

One Thirtieth of a Second, 2022
Archival inkjet print, 24 x 30 inches
Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa



Anabelle DeClement
Kiss, 2022



GERALD SIMCOE

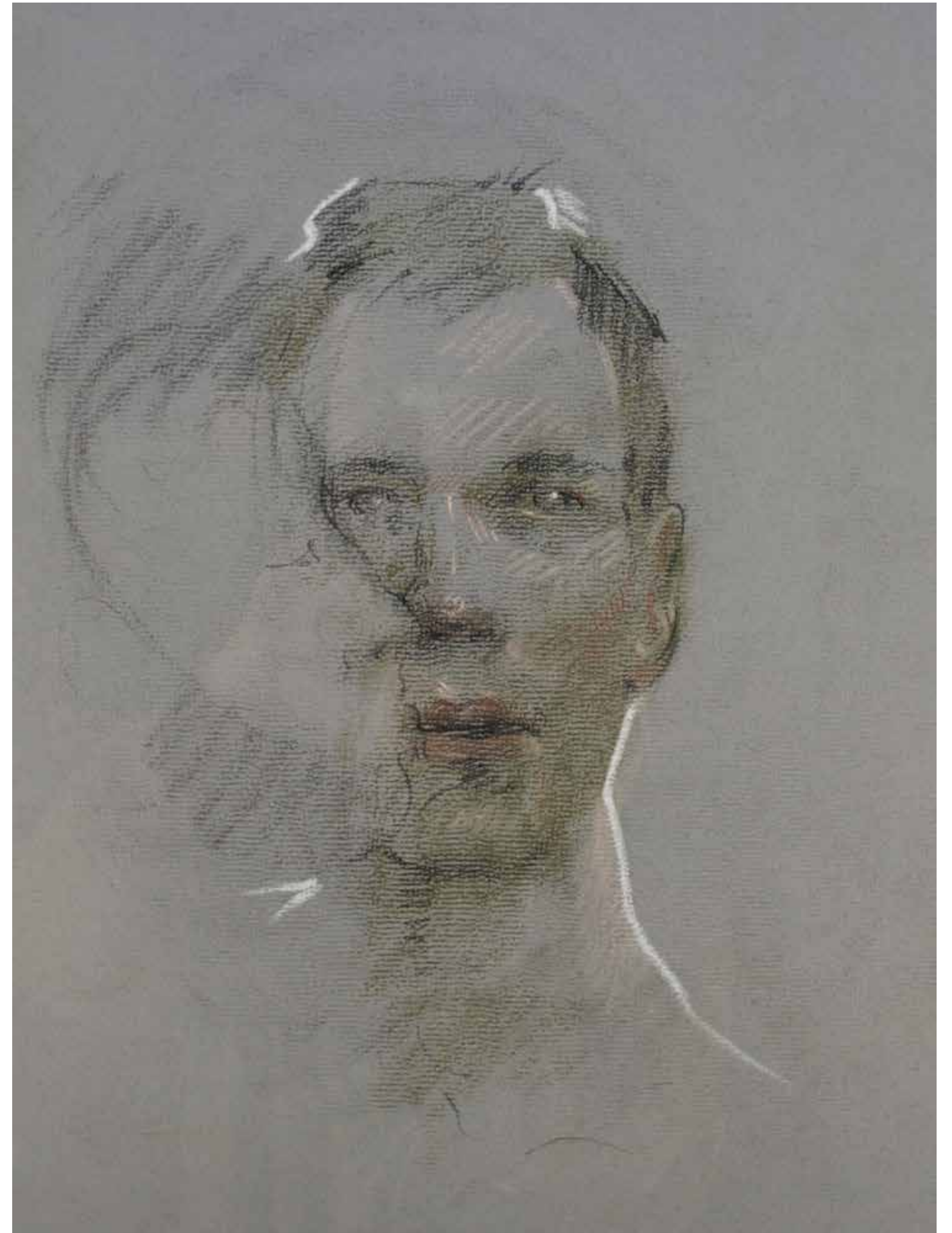
Simcoe suggests the ephemeral nature of romantic love in his elegant line drawing of a male figure who faces an audience, while receiving a kiss from a profile that is only delicately sketched. The composition is romantic, conjuring lyrics from the 1931 Herman Hupfeld song, "As Time Goes By": *A kiss is just a kiss, a sigh is just a sigh . . .* The artist created this drawing from life at the Gay Men's Erotic Workshop at the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York City. Simcoe recalls: "There were two models that evening holding this pose for 20 minutes. I envisioned the person looking towards the viewer as the one who is dreaming of the kiss, [while] the other bearded man is planting a kiss on his willing countenance. He is in a dreamlike trance remembering the experience, that is why I did not finish the person on left, only indicating his form with an arrow of white pointing at the willing 'victim's' receptive mouth."

First Kiss, 2008

Conte-colored crayon on toned paper, 12 x 18 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Lehman



HARRIS SINGER

Singer is a queer southern illustrator, performance artist, playwright, and poet, exploring intimacy and violence through queer maximalism, meditative creation, and absurdism. The artist said, "I seek out moments of extreme passion within painful and scary experiences of love and lust. Much of my illustrative art uses wrestlers as a reference point to both explore queer magnetism within hyper-masculine landscapes, and to contemplate the innate violence of intimacy. I do not think love and chosen family is as blissfully euphoric as it sometimes appears on paper, and my work complicates the given prompt within the context of *Queer Love*."

Holy the hideous human angels! 2022

Ink on recycled paper, 9 x 12 inches

Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa

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Singer's composition of two entwined forms reflects his interest in various art sources. The poem *Howl* by Allen Ginsberg makes a vivid case that everything encompassing the human experience, including extreme sexuality, is sacred. The *Turkish Bath* of his title suggests the place where men sometimes had anonymous sexual encounters with one another. Here the two forms, surrounded by fire and flowers, may be wrestling or making love. Singer's sinuous line work recalls that of the 19th-century English artist Aubrey Beardsley, today most famous for illustrating Oscar Wilde's one-act tragedy, *Salome*. Noting the religious aspect of the title Singer says, "As someone continually fascinated by hell and its place in queerness, I find it important to use Auguste Rodin's *Gates of Hell* as a meditative point of reference."

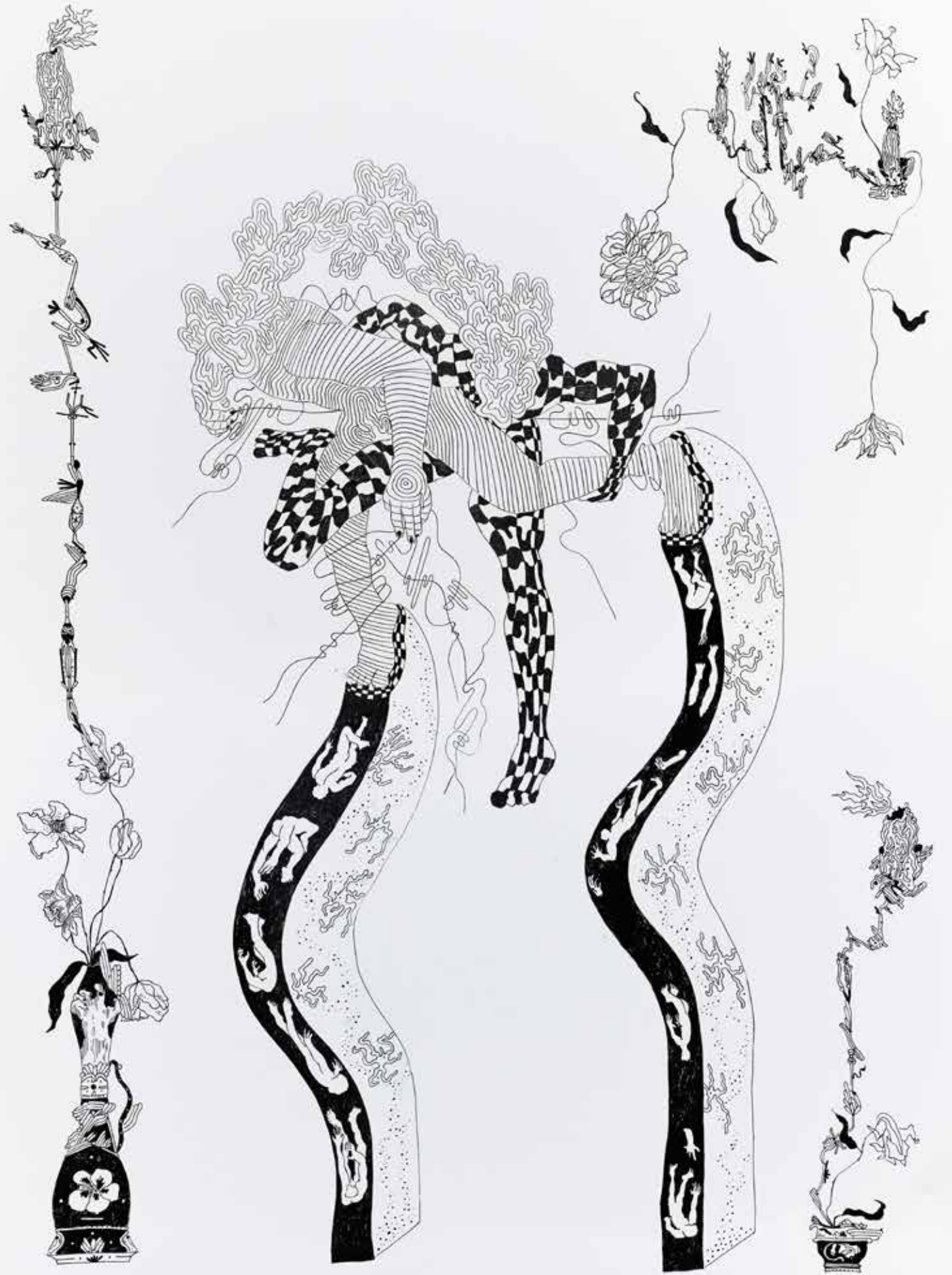
in a Turkish Bath when the blond & naked angel came to pierce them with a sword, 2022

Ink on panel, 18 x 24 inches

Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa





ALIX SMITH

The compositions in Smith's *States of Union* series are loosely based upon classical paintings. In #3 Smith adapts Norman Rockwell's *Freedom from Fear*, an image of American parents safely tucking their children into bed for the night, while a newspaper announces the blitz rages in far-off London. *Freedom from Fear* illustrates one of the *Four Freedoms*, the series of goals famously described by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941, before the United States's entry into World War II. In Smith's version with two female parents, the tone is more optimistic: the newspaper announces the election of President Obama and the hope for a better society. Smith expands her view of family for the contemporary world and by linking her photographs to historical works she creates a feeling of recognition and kinship with families whose composition might seem new today. The artist says, "The opportunity to see oneself—to have a visual representation of the possibility of what one might become—is a privilege long denied to gays and lesbians; this is a lack that my project seeks to remedy . . . I am offering a legacy of depiction to a group of people that, historically, have no visual legacy."

States of Union #3, 2008
C-print, 30 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist

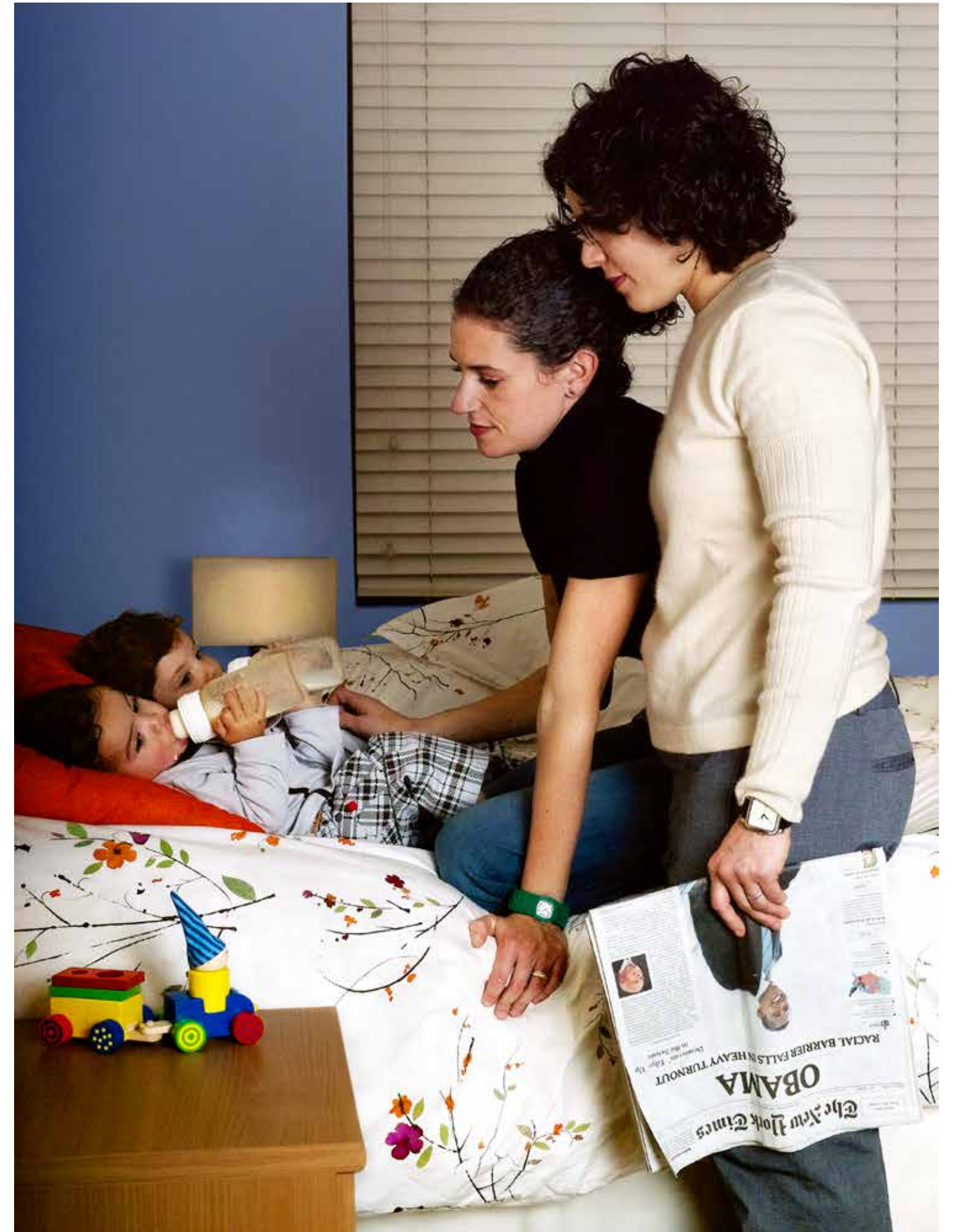
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In #11 Smith transforms *The Devin Family* (1767), a painting by 18th-century French artist Louis Michel van Loo that shows French aristocratic parents and their child in familial bliss. She takes this traditional, heteronormative work and transforms it into a contemporary scene equally harmonious and content.

States of Union #11, 2009
C-Print, 30 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa





A.L. STEINER

Steiner made this photograph during the production of a collaborative video project between the choreographers robbinschilds (Layla Childs + Sonya Robbins) and Steiner, entitled *C.L.U.E. (color location ultimate experience)*. A celebration of color, this magical photograph is reminiscent of an Arcadian daydream with a kaleidoscopic array of clothes shed from bodies that suggests a liberation from artificial constraints. Steiner notes that, “The configurations of the small group of us that made this piece [C.L.U.E. installation + performance-based formats]—myself, robbinschilds, AJ Blandford & Kinski—has shifted over the years—from friends + lovers to personal + professional breakups, through total reconfigurations, and between closeness + distance, in all the ways those two words can imply.”

Untitled (rainbow roots), 2007

Archival pigment photograph in custom acrylic frame, unique piece, from *C.L.U.E. (color location ultimate experience)*

A.L. Steiner + robbinschilds

Courtesy of the artist

La MaMa



FEDERICO URIBE

Scaled to a life-size representation of a masculine embrace, Uribe's heartfelt collage leaps off the wall. A master at using materiality to underscore his thematic points, the artist suggests that the bodies of his two figures here are intertwined in the same way that laces, representing connection, tie our shoes to our feet, or, by analogy, tie us to one another. Rendered in a vibrant red that suggests the throb of passion and romance, the piece can also be read as a meditation on privacy. Faces obscured, Uribe allows the single eye of one of the embracing figures to stare out at the viewer. But what does that stare connote? Is it accusatory, a resentment of such intimacy being observed? Does it plead as it speaks of the universal need for love? Or, is it roaming, scanning the viewer as a next romantic encounter? The artist, however, describes his work as a visual depiction of our most elevated emotions:

I hug; therefore, I feel.
I have loved, I have given and received.
I have felt one in the mystical instant of a hug.
I portray that instant of generosity, acceptance, and gratitude
where loneliness stops and there is only love.

Hug, 2007
Shoelaces and pins, 72 x 50 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Adelson Galleries

Lehman



RACHAEL WARNER

Warner makes paintings of the friends, peers, muses, and others with whom she is intimately involved and the paintings powerfully celebrate queer lives and identities. Originally from the Pacific Northwest, Warner now draws her portraits from the loving community she has built in her New York City home. Beautiful and stylized with striking color palette, Warner's work shows subjects at their best, recalling the Art Deco glamour of Polish painter Tamara de Lempicka. Warner's paintings, however, are warmer, infused with the individuality of her sitters. In *Let Me*, she presents an endearing domestic tableau of one man helping another knot his necktie. The intense gaze of the figure tying the tie, while seemingly staring into a mirror, is striking.

Let Me, 2010
Oil on wood, 36 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Lehman

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Warner presents the glamorous and animalistic passion of two women lovers that is echoed in the zebra and tiger-skin patterns of their clothes. Her title, *Cougar*, plays on the name often given to a sexually voracious older woman. As in other works, Warner paints in bold, joyful, and unapologetic terms that seek out an innate and personal humanity.

Cougar, 2014
Oil on wood, 48 x 48 inches
Courtesy of Dorothy Kim and Melissa Barsamian

La MaMa







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Always free to the public, Lehman College Art Gallery has been serving the interests of our diverse audience from the Bronx and New York City since 1984. The gallery specializes in thematic group exhibitions that bring together famous artists with emerging talents. Education is an integral component of the Gallery's programming and provides the basis of community outreach to more than 25,000 individuals a year — from young students to senior citizens.

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