

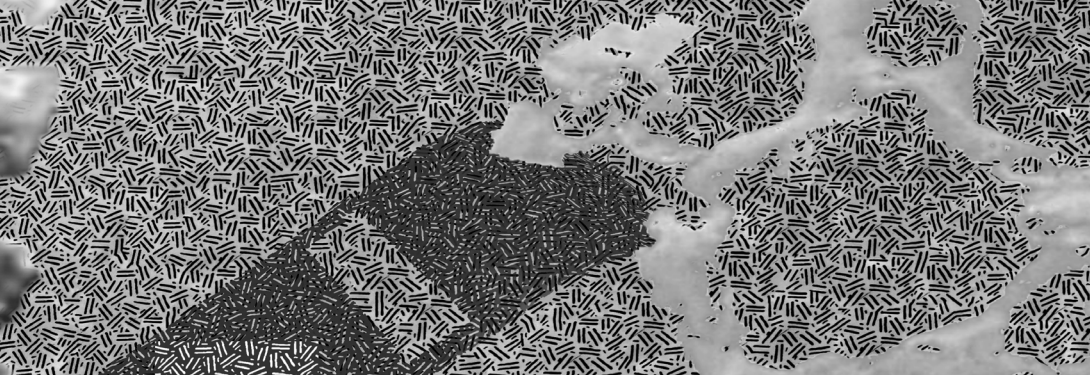


transnavigation

coming into the body as home

UNION HALL

January 16 - February 8
guest curated by rae richards



Sulo Bee
leslie dylan boyd
Maxwell Davis
Camille Garcia
Omar Monroy
Paisley Rose



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ABOUT THE *ROUGH GEMS* PROGRAM

Union Hall is pleased to present the fifth annual Rough Gems Curatorial program, taking place January 16 - April 19, 2025. Rough Gems is Union Hall's signature event, an annual open call and collaborative curatorial project showcasing the work of Denver-area curators in a rotating exhibition format. The goal of this ambitious exhibition series is to showcase local curatorial and artistic talent by turning over Union Hall's gallery space to emerging curators, inviting them to share an exhibition in an active and experimental environment and providing them tangible support in the form of time, space, curatorial mentorship, marketing support, and funds (aligned with W.A.G.E. guidelines). Rough Gems 2025 includes curators: rae richards, Nathan Storey, and J. Benjamin Burney, whose exhibitions were selected through an open call for proposals. Visit UnionHallDenver.org to learn more.

ROUGH GEMS 2025 SPONSORS



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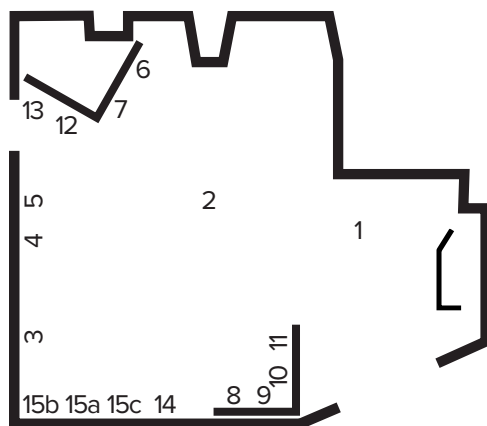
Transnavigation: Coming into the Body as Home captures a broad landscape of tools being used by trans people to move through internal and external worlds. This exhibition investigates how trans jewelers are navigating their bodies and the world their bodies exist in—by inventing alternate ways of being, reinterpreting tools, and revisiting ancestral practices. It is an invitation to sit in the skin of our bodies, to practice being nonsingular; both fractured and whole; embracing the intricate, fleshy, tumultuous, stories.

As sedimentations of rock, dust, and decay settle upon the land over time, so do power and violence—manifesting in intimately interconnected, contradictory sites where regimes of knowledge and practice circulate.¹ Being in a body means gender, disability, class, abuse, sexuality, and race all intersect and collapse into one human experience.² This is an invitation to sit in the skin of our bodies and to become curious, open, and uncomfortable. It is to practice being unsingular, fractured and whole, never allowing urgency or burning injury to deny intricate, fleshy, tumultuous, stories.

1 p. 4. Spade, D. (2015). *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*. New York, USA: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822374794>

2 p. 10-13. Clare, E. (2015). *Exile and pride: Disability, queerness, and liberation* (1st ed.). Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822374879>

TRANSPARENT GALLERY GUIDE



- 1 quilt, Camille Garcia, 2023. Secondhand silk, wool, cotton, velvet, linen, 84" x 70" x 1/8".
- 2 i live in a gorgeous and hostile world, Camille Garcia, 2024. Cast sterling silver, copper, vitreous enamel, 1" x 1.25" x 1/4" on 24" chain.
- 3 Untitled Video (Venus on Mars), leslie dylan boyd, 2024. Video.
- 4 Untitled (satellite device), leslie dylan boyd, 2024. Paper and aluminum, 5" x 2.5" x 1.5" on 14" chain.
- 5 Untitled (whistle), leslie dylan boyd, 2024. Paper and aluminum, 4" x 1.75" x 1.75" on 14" chain.
- 6 For Our Protection, Paisley Rose, 2023. African braiding hair, brass, and beads, 33" x 6" x 1".
- 7 Combs, Paisley Rose, 2020. Acrylic on canvas, 20" x 16" x 1".
- 8 __iRiD3SC3NC3]], Sulo Bee, 2023. Silver, Steel, Concrete, Sticks, Citrine, Geode, Asphalt, Shell, Epoxy, Rubber, Paint, 17.5" x 12" x 3".
- 9 GLOWiNG____petalz, Sulo Bee, 2023. Silver, Copper, Prehnite, Geode, Asphalt Shell, Epoxy, Paint, Rubber, 23.5" x 12" x 3".
- 10 ____F4iRY[TR3LLiC3]_no.3, Sulo Bee, 2023. Silver, Concrete, Prehnite, Geode, Granite, Asphalt, Shell, Epoxy, Paint, 4" x 3.5" x 1".
- 11 ____F4iRY[TR3LLiC3]_no.1, Sulo Bee, 2023. Silver, Concrete, Prehnite, Geode, Granite, Asphalt, Shell, Epoxy, Paint, 3" x 1.3" x 1".
- 12 Waiting... Bottom Text 01, Maxwell Davis, 2024. Powdercoated copper, acrylic, collage, 3" x 3" x 3".
- 13 Waiting... Bottom Text 02, Maxwell Davis, 2024. Powdercoated copper, acrylic, collage, 3" x 3" x 3".
- 14 Mexico Lindo Pt 1, Omar Monroy, 2024. Carved conch, tahitian shell plate, lapis lazuli skull, bamboo coral, obsidian, bone beads, techichi clasp, 22" x 6" x 3".
- 15a Untitled Omar Monroy, 2024. Photograph on matte cardstock, 36" x 24".
- 15b Untitled Omar Monroy, 2024. Photograph on matte cardstock, 20" x 20".
- 15c Untitled Omar Monroy, 2024. Photograph on matte cardstock, 20" x 20".

Sulo Bee's chromatic pastels, stardust, and blooming flowers merge into an ethereal dreamscape that rejects pragmatism and legibility, disrupting a binary world. Bee reconfigures reality, bringing forth saturated adornments that resist mandates to accept a world that is not enough. Through this enchanting excess, they embrace a desire for other ways of being in the world and time.¹ It is an immersive experience that reveals a glimpse into dimensions of trans-utopia.

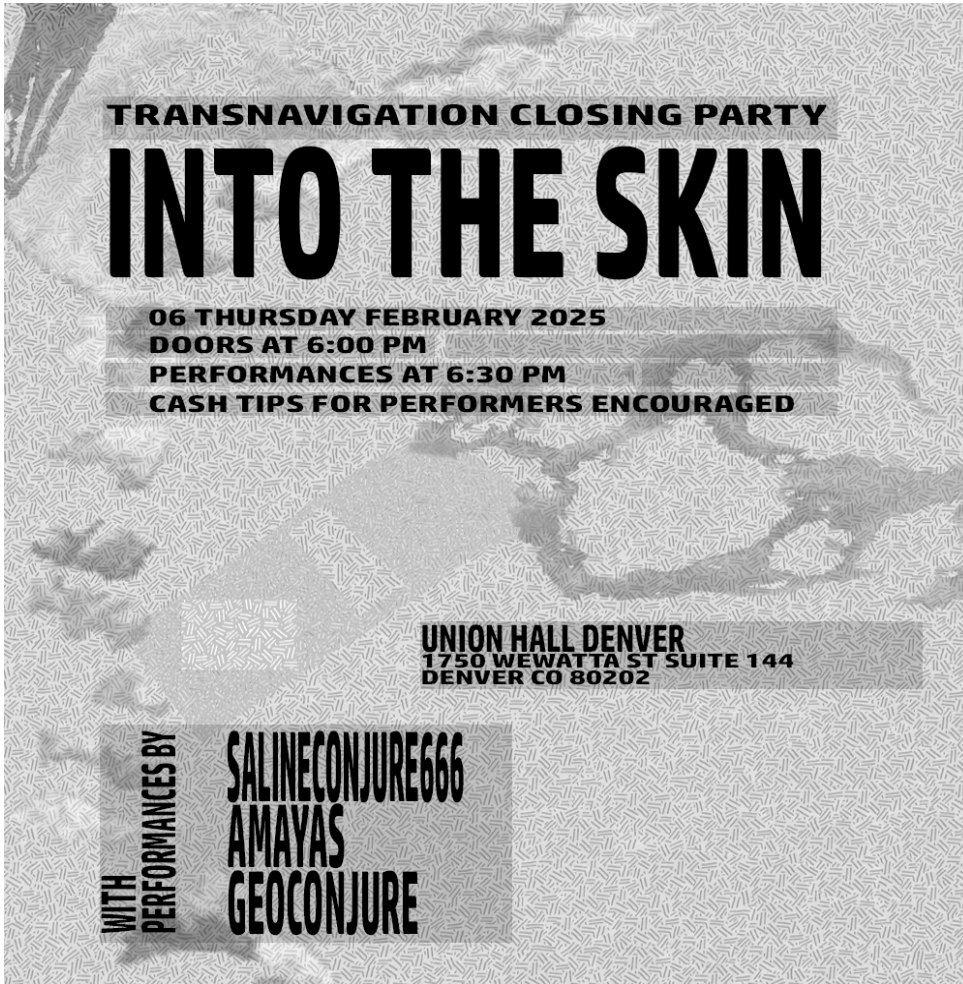
Camille Garcia's quilt and *i live in a gorgeous and hostile world* also play with time, weaving obscured and distorted memories, collaborating with machines to challenge the rigid structure of scientific knowledge. Maxwell Davis's work is embedded in masculine cultures, desire/ability politics, and the body on the internet. Davis examines cyberspace as an extension of the body, where cyberskin connects across space and time. In this space, bodies are denied material interactions but elicit desire nonetheless. These works create trans temporalities that interrupt cis time.

1. p. 96. Muñoz, J. E. (2009). *Cruising utopia: the then and there of queer futurity*. New York, New York University Press.

Themes of resistance are evident in leslie dylan boyd's *Untitled (Venus on Mars)* and *tools*, which reinterpret objects for the wilderness, reflecting on colonial scars, gender, and connection. Boyd's aluminum satellite and whistle, covered in envelope patterns meant to secure information, become symbols of safety turned inside out — rendered useless yet transformed by the surrounding landscape. Similarly, Paisley Rose's use of braiding as a protective ritual and Omar Monroy's jewelry as a cultural safeguard highlight adornment as a form of resistance, celebration, and protection.

Paisley Rose's *For Our Protection* intertwines Blackness, gender, and adornment, using braids and beads as sacred symbols of protection and cultural preservation. Hair is closely linked to identity, an intimate and public part of the body, a form of personal expression. Combs and *For Our Protection* contain layered strands, celebrating Blackness and the Black body, preserving culture, and resisting regulatory colonial norms that demand allegiance to binary presentations—which are intertwined with technologies of race, gender, transness, and queerness that cannot be unraveled from one another. Informed by the material, Monroy revisits and renews the history of Tahitian mollusk shells as adornment. Tahitian mollusk shells produce the iconic black Tahitian pearl, which was once an intricately carved work by the Mayans. *Mexico Lindo Pt. 1* is a reinterpretation of a cultural legacy, as Monroy creates her unique portrayal to be worn exclusively by Indigenous Mexicans.

Tending to the body as home, all of these artworks grapple with the complex messiness that lies embedded beneath (trans) skin. They each approach the body and adorn the flesh differently, but all work to enter and exist within the body as liberation, joy, fury and hope, with a will to reconfigure the world. This exhibition, imperfect by design, is driven by a radical commitment to sustaining one another and dismantling the systems that perpetuate interwoven acts of violence.



my body = the multitude's body
no single part of an ecosystem can be changed without changing every other part.

TLDR: TOO LONG DIDN'T READ

This exhibition brings together a collection of trans and queer jewelers who all grapple with what it means to be in their bodies. The show operates from three key understandings.

1. Self-love, even a radical one, will not disrupt or end systemic violence.
2. Transness does not just mean trans identity when in context with the body. Transness extends, wraps around, lives inside of all the other identities and experiences had by a body.
3. If we love ourselves and the people around us, we must also be committed to destroying the world in which we and they are actively harmed.

body as transformation *body in flux* *body in pride and grief*
body embedded with culture and community
body sexed, desired, & forbidden in cyberspace

body as skin and flesh and bone

Transnavigation: Coming into the Body as Home is guided by a radical commitment to keeping each other alive and toward ending the world that produces interlocking violences.