

Transnavigation: Coming into the Body as Home

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

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. 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.³ In this space, bodies are denied material interactions but elicit desire nonetheless. These works create trans temporalities that interrupt cis time.

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

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>

³ p. 96. Muñoz, J. E. (2009). *Cruising utopia: the then and there of queer futurity*. New York, New York University Press.

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.

— rae richards