

UrbanGlass

Form and Formless:

Constellations of Knowledge

Essay and Curation by Alpesh Kantilal Patel

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Diverse works from eighteen artists are installed throughout the gallery to eschew singular storytelling and instantiate multiple narratives for this fourth and final exhibition of 2023. Taking as its point of departure the fact that glass as a material fluctuates between solid and liquid¹, *Form and Formless* meditates on the slipperiness rather than the fixity of categories of identity, such as gender, sexuality, nationality, and race, among others). About half of the works incorporate glass; many are made specifically for this show. They are presented alongside textiles, watercolors, a zine, paintings, projections, audio experience, and beyond, covering almost every surface of the Robert Lehman Gallery.

(Form)less and Constellations of Knowledge

In 1929, French philosopher George Bataille wrote about l'informe (formless) in the short-lived surrealist journal *Documents*. To Bataille, l'informe was “about destroying categories and knocking art off its metaphorical pedestal so that it sat in the gutter.”²

The concept was re-introduced by art historians Rosalind Krauss and Yves-

1. Glass is technically an “amorphous solid” made by cooling a mixture of materials in such a way that it does not crystallize. So, when a glass object shatters, it does so very irregularly—unlike crystalline solids, which always break into fragments of the same shape as dictated by their crystal system. Any glassblower intuitively knows this, of course.

2. Tate, “Formlessness,” Tate, accessed October 12, 2023. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/f/formlessness>.

Alain Bois in 1996, when they used it in an exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in Paris (May 21 to August 23, 1996) called *L'Informe Mode d'emploi* (Formless: A User's Guide). They argued that artists throughout the twentieth century implicitly mobilized the performative “operative force” of *l'informe* to “pick apart certain categories that seemed...increasingly useless—even as they had become increasingly contentious—namely, ‘form’ and ‘content.’”³ While this show is implicitly about knocking the art of the work of white Western cisgender males off of their pedestal, it is primarily about intersectional social justice issues beyond the narrow confines of the art world. At the same time, following Bois and Krauss, this brochure is about how artworks—specifically those exploring identity broadly construed that was not a key topic of interest for these scholars—demand fresh frames and different language than what's out there to understand better the issues the works raise.

What has been helpful to tackle this task is several articles dealing with the idea of “constellations.” For instance, in his 2003 groundbreaking essay “The Postcolonial Constellation: Contemporary Art in a State of Permanent Transition” Okwui Enwezor argues that “contemporary” art must be understood not only through current discourses of globalization but also historical ones of imperialism: “Contemporary art today is refracted...from the standpoint of a complex geopolitical configuration that defines all systems of production and relations of exchange as a consequence of globalization after imperialism. It

3. Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, *Formless : A User's Guide* (New York : Zone Books , 1997), 9.

is this geopolitical configuration and its postimperial transformations that situate what I call here ‘the postcolonial constellation.’”⁴ Indeed, many of the works on display deal with uneven power relations and the ongoing legacies of colonialism throughout the globe. Given there are a lot of works exploring topics connected to LGBT*Q identity in the show, also of interest is Dianne Chisholm’s important work on conceptualizing “queer constellations.” I draw upon her work in my book *Productive Failure: writing queer transnational South Asian art histories*, one chapter of which “blast(s) part” the civic and commercial production of the city of Manchester, England’s Gay Village, named for its many LGBTQ-friendly bars and restaurants, and Curry Mile, named for its many South Asian restaurants, as mutually exclusive.⁵ More recently, Eng-Beng Lim and Tavia Nyong’o have called on scholars of queer studies to rethink the field through the concept of “queer reconstellations.” Illustrating the importance of constellating as a practice of home-making for minoritized subjects, V. Jo Hsu’s recent book centers on the voices of trans and nonbinary people, disabled people, and others often overlooked in conceptions of US citizenry.⁶ The work of Chisholm, Lim, Nyong’o, Hsu, and my own are about the importance of rethinking gender and sexuality, and this is an important thread connecting the works in this exhibition and the entire theme of all my exhibitions this year.

4. Okwui Enwezor, “The Postcolonial Constellation: Contemporary Art in a State of Permanent Transition,” *Research in African Literatures* 34, no. 4 (Winter 2003), 58.

5. See Dianne Chisholm, *Queer Constellations: Subcultural Space In The Wake Of The City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) and chapter five of my book *Productive Failure: Writing Queer Transnational South Asian Art Histories* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 109-150.

6. See Eng-Beng Lim and Tavia Nyong’o, “Afterword: Queer Reconstellations,” *Social Text* 38, no. 4 (145) (December 1, 2020): 149–56, <https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-8680490>; and V. Jo Hsu, *Constellating Home: Trans and Queer Asian American Rhetorics* (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 2022).

Finally, I invoke Walter Benjamin's "critical constellation."⁷ Benjamin writes that when researchers "abandon the tranquil contemplative attitude" towards their subject matter they can become the "conscience of a critical constellation" in which individual elements are brought into juxtaposition with each other for mutual illumination.⁸ To this end, I have grouped the artworks into eleven, often overlapping critical "constellations of knowledge" that I will describe in this brochure. I hope bringing these disparate works together will result in "mutual illumination." In the next section, I discuss the clusters of artworks I have conceptualized for this exhibition. The works are sometimes physically displayed very far from each other.

Exhibition constellations

(roughly moving clockwise from the projection of Meg Dyer's water projections)

On one of her aspirational LPs titled *Expanded Affinities*, which is on display for you to pick up, inspect, and read, **Andrea Ray** writes that "by acknowledging that belonging can take a multiplicity of forms, expanded affinities legitimates the creation of new kinship systems, affiliations..." This first constellation, *EXPANDED AFFINITIES* I describe, takes the name of Ray's work and includes the work of **Megan Dyer**, who presents mirrored glass versions of what she calls "biographs" that condense information about an individual into a structure in which a wide band refers to a good year in the subject's life. These

7. Benjamin's fragmentary ideas of the constellation can be found in a variety of his works, such as *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, translated by Howard Eiland (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019). Originally published in 1928; and "On the Concept of History" (1940), published as "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (Cambridge: Fontana, 1970), 255–66.

8. Walter Benjamin, "Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian," *Selected Writings*, edited by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland et al., vol. 3. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2003), 262.

bands are then transferred into concentric circles, resembling tree rings. Sometimes, Dyer digs deep into the life of someone who has passed away—such as activist Marsha P. Johnson, a self-identified drag queen and a prominent gay liberation activist—and other times, she works closely with a living subject. Dyer's works involve trust and engagement with the subject whose life is depicted in this radical way. On the mirrored glass, the works take on an additional valence—viewers can see themselves as they read, underscoring our connection to each other and the world around us.

Piles of what might appear to be chunks of earth overflow from the sunken space near a window. They are glass sourced by **Deborah Czerkso** from an abandoned factory. Several mushrooms, or the titular Fruiting Bodies, are emerging from these discarded shards, also made of glass, as are neon cordlike structures. Czeresko's Neon Mycelium gestures to the fascinating root systems of mycelium and fungus—both these words can be singular and plural. They have no center, beginning, or ending—they are everywhere and, therefore, difficult to destroy. It is thought that a large percentage of land plants are in a mutually beneficial relationship with mycelial networks. Without fungi - without mycelium - all ecosystems would fail.⁹ Philosophers like Deleuze and Guattari have invoked the rhizome as a foil for how knowledge in Western civilization has evolved.¹⁰ French writer and poet Édouard Glissant has evoked RHIZOMATIC THINKING, the conceptual thread connecting this constellation, too.

9. Merlin Sheldrake, *Entangled Life : How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds and Shape Our Futures* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2020) Accessed October 17, 2023. ProQuest Ebook Central.

10. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

He writes that “Rhizomatic thought is the principle behind what I call the Poetics of Relation, in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other.”¹¹ Czeresko’s neon mycelium networks pulse with light and are installed so that they appear to be reaching to make connections with branch-like appendages of their *Queer-delier*. While the latter is suspended from the ceiling, it barely hovers above the ground. As part of this constellation, consider also Amy Cousins’ textile works *Trumpets in Moss* and *I’m down in the garden; here’s coffee; I love you*. Both include representations of mushrooms alongside excerpts from the 1970s feminist magazine *Country Women* that allowed many queer women from disparate parts of the United States to talk to each other.

CHIASMUS/INTERTWINING refers to French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s observation that seeing involves both the viewing and the viewed subjects, who are, importantly, both the seen and the seer. He refers to the site of reciprocal interpenetration between and within embodied subjects as the “chiasmus.”¹²

Jessi Li’s sculptures, composed of suitcases, concrete, kiln-cast glass and clay, can be seen as material manifestations of this intertwining and are profound exemplars of the messiness of identity. And here, disorder is a good thing. These works also look as if they are not of this earth. In this way, the work is just as much about the intertwining of our planet with other bodies in the cosmos as it is about those on Earth. The titles of Li’s work *Transportal #1* and *#2* bring

11. Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 11. Originally published in French by Gallimard in 1990.

12. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible; Followed by Working Notes*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis, *Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology & Existential Philosophy* (Evanston [Ill.]: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 138, 140–1.

time and place into this conversation.

Chitra Ganesh's *Queer Power: A Time Travelling Coloring Book*. Per her website, "transports the viewer into the past and beyond," intertwining flora and fauna indigenous to New York City with 17th-century Lenape settlements and structures (among others) that have since been destroyed or erased. Temporal intertwining hopefully brings the past into our present for a more ethical future.

On the one hand, the constellation LIQUIDITY focuses on the formlessness of water evoked in Dyer's projections as well as literally in **Tsohil Bhatia's** cubes, bags, and containers of water that are positioned inconspicuously within the galleries, sometimes blending in within the architecture of the gallery itself. The table that is part of their *Surface Tension* is taken from the artist's domestic space but displayed here publicly. They incessantly treat it with coconut oil, which the wood absorbs but evaporates in direct sunlight. Indeed, Bhatia's work involves (largely unseen by the public) maintenance and care, labor critical to maintaining the fragile balance conveyed by the work. On the other hand, liquidity is also a financial term. **Paper Buck's** vertical wax sculpture *Forest as Kiln*, reminiscent of a candle but without a wick, evokes the rapid rise of industry in the late nineteenth century in the areas around the Housatonic River near which he grew up. Embedded within the sculpture are raw ore, limestone brick, embedded charcoal, and slag glass, a byproduct of the smelting process, that he found in the ruins of a former iron furnace that shut down in 1900 near this river. The work, more specifically, gestures toward the rapacious greed of

settler colonialism that has polluted the watershed. Remediation efforts have never fully addressed the environmental damage. Buck plans to melt the form and return its constituent elements to the site. Perhaps there is hope, though: Buck, for instance, was pleasantly surprised to find trillium, a plant native to the area around the Housatonic, thriving at the site of the former factory.

Some works in the exhibition invoke vaginas (such as **Carmel Dor's** *Burst or Yeast Infection* and **Katie Shulman's** *Totem, v. 2, Pelvis* which hangs from the ceiling), dildos/penises (**Max Colby's** *Privilege and Uncertain*), and incorporate scenes of intercourse and fellatio, such as that of Warsaw, Poland-based artist **Wojciech Puś** video works *Queer Landscapes | Segues from Endless*. But these works are best thought of within the context of discourses of POST-PORNOGRAPHY, a concept that first emerged in the sex-positive movement in the United States in the late 1980s and early 1990s.¹³ More recently, Tim Gregory and Astrid Lorange note that post-pornography is concerned with denaturalizing sex, de-centering the viewer, often is mobilized by queer and trans communities, and not dependent on stock narratives of procreation.¹⁴ Indeed, the materials of Colby's work, such as crystals, sequins, found fabric, and even a McDonalds Burglar figurine, subvert the oppressive power typically ascribed to such phallic forms. They take on a different quality — gentler, softer, but no less powerful. Puś' multilingual videos are loosely based on the life of

13. I am referring here to "The Post Porn Modernist Manifesto," authored by a cohort including Annie Sprinkle, which was largely seen as a response to the Reagan administration's silence on AIDS/HIV, which was ravaging queer communities and sex workers, as well as the coalition between anti-porn feminists and evangelical Christian groups. See Annie Sprinkle, Veronica Vera, Frank Moores, Candida Royale, and Leigh Gates, "The Post Porn Modernist Manifesto (USA, 1989)," in *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Scott MacKenzie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 382-382..

14. Tim Gregory and Astrid Lorange, "Teaching Post-Pornography," *Cultural Studies Review*, 24, no. 1 (March 2018): 137-149.

a trans woman who grew up in Łódź, Poland. Part of Puś' approach to identity is to mobilize abstraction. They do not completely eschew the representational. When there are recognizable bodies, they often become indistinguishable from the landscapes in which they are positioned. This strategy blurs both the binaries masculine and feminine as well as nature and culture. **Abbey Muza's** fabric work *Downrushing and Flare/egg/eye* (essays of Bataille inspire this title) incorporates screen grabs of light flares from the 1970s gay porn film *Bijou*. Light flares result when a strong light hits the camera lens. The weavings of Muza, who knows Krauss and Bois' writing on *l'informe*, consider, as they succinctly put it, "the potential of cloth to contain images and act as object in between (and in reference to) other objects."¹⁵ Muza's work completely upends the scopophilia typical of porn—that is, the work's shimmery quality scatters light and prevents objectification.

Genevieve De Leon's large-scale paintings, *Qanil and Imox (Gemini)*, *Ahau (Scorpius)*, *Comis Hearth I and II (Orion Nebula)*, are a result of their collaboration with Gina Kanbalam Miranda, a daykeeper who learned the Maya calendrical cycles from a Chortí elder named Ochi.¹⁶ They note, "Each square, like a Maya unit of time, operates as a fractal part of the whole and generates a visual field alive with interconnection."¹⁷ At the core, these works acknowledge Indigenous knowledge systems, allowing communities of color to lay their claim

15. Based on description provided by artist.

16. "Genevieve De Leon: To Order the Days / Para Ordenar Los Días" accompanying the exhibition of the same name at the University of Hartford's Donald and Linda Silpe Gallery, February 23 to March 25, 2023: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A33Yko-noYNz061r3ZO1G-Boew1mfju6f/view> (accessed October 16, 2023)

17. Ibid.

to the history of science and its ongoing development. Dor's paintings from their Mother Maps series and limited edition zine *רוּתִיָּה* loosely reference the contested geography of Israel and Palestine as much as the gendered body. Indeed, nation-building has always been a deeply patriarchal structure. Within this constellation **SEXUALITY, ECOLOGY, AND LAND**, the devastating ecological toll of map-making is of interest.¹⁸

Angel Favorite's obsidian mirror, part of **SUPER(NATURAL), SPIRITUALITY, AND MAGIC**, was made at the behest of De Leon. Obsidian mirrors are linked to ancient Aztec/Mexican practice, and some scholars conjecture that they may have been used to map the heavens in addition to their magical uses. For the ancient Mayans and Aztecs, mapping the sky married the scientific and the spiritual. Favorite's work reminds us that obsidian glass forms the core material of an ancient ritual tool, still broadly in use today, that may have had both spiritual and scientific applications for the ancient peoples of Mesoamerica.

Ren Mahon takes "defective" glass, such as that used to make objects such as the "Fenton Art Glass 2004 Black Witch and Scaredy Cat Set," deemed unworthy, transforming it into enigmatic rectangular press-molded glass pieces that feel supernatural, in other words beyond the scientific understanding of the laws of nature. Dyer's video pieces accompanying her diptych biograph and tree ring artworks depict moving water, which she describes as "mercurial" and "magical." Her bandmate and collaborator, Joshua Carothers, adds a natural sound component, the drums, which are

18. See Timothy Morton, "Queer Ecology," *PMLA* 125:2 (March 2010): 275-8; Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, editors. *Queer Ecologies: Nature, Politics, Desire*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

syncopated with the movement of water, “and is meant to remind the viewer of the inherent rhythm of the water, an auditory reflection that enables the viewer to join further the feeling of being one with water.”¹⁹ For Indigenous people, water also carries the memory of our ancestors, and is considered sacred. Recently, Dyer has joined women to sing The Nebe Water Song. This song originates from the Algonquin Nation, who have asked women, whom they see as Natural Water Protectors, to join in singing to fortify water.

Sit down in our listening station that is part of BECOMING/BORDERLESS and play the sound work of Puś. They are the result of the artist’s conversations with the curator about each of the exhibitions that took place this year, all of which pivot around the qualities of glass as a material as a jumping-off point to consider the “forever becoming” aspect of identity formation. Included are field recordings, drones, spoken word/poetry, electronic music, and even sounds from the hotshop, as well as ambient sound recorded by gallery manager Meg Wachs in the environs around UrbanGlass. The album covers presented next to Puś’s are part of the aforementioned *Aspirational LP series* of Ray. The word “aspirational” is a nod to the fact that the record is yet to be made, allowing you to imagine what the work might sound like. It is also entirely possible that the topics of Ray’s LPs (such as the one with an image of Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American woman in Congress) might conceptually migrate into one’s experience of Puś’ sonic landscape and, therefore, expand

19. Information culled from a document provided by the artist.

their own meaning-making. Both artists are delighted with the generative aspects of placing their work in contiguity. Also part of this constellation is Shulman's poignant site-specific installation *Hollow/Heavy v.2*, comprised of handmade rope, reed, and dyed elastic, that indirectly speaks of the precarious condition of her corporeal body after a miscarriage as being hollow yet still appearing as full. The work leads one to conclude that the becoming of life and the becoming of death are one and the same. In my informal discussion with Jessi Li about her sculptures in the gallery, we discussed how her work collapses the binary of life/death, too, and their connection to the depicted figure in **Shahzia Sikander's** glass mosaic, which is similarly amorphous—even extra-terrestrial. Indeed, Shulman's work, too, resembles something celestial, moving from something particular to universal. De Leon's paintings, of course, are all about mapping the heavens.

Color is often considered fugitive because it changes in intensity over time. The editors of *PANTONE®: The 20th Century in Color* assert that “fugitive” also applies to how color changes when photographed or digitally manipulated. To this, I would add that it could just as easily be applied to color's inability to stay fixed to the object it appears to be associated with.²⁰ Indeed, the shimmering rainbow colors of Colby's works on paper feel ready to escape at any minute. The complex, intricate figuration is based on the embroidery patterns of American Ruth Culver Coleman, who lived during the eighteenth century. Colby's work could be considered a metaphor for

20. Leatrice Eiseman and Keith Recker, *PANTONE®: The 20th Century in Color* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2011), 8.

the fact that official records of women who were not heads of households (like Coleman) are scarce. Within this work, part of the constellation FUGITIVITY, we (almost) grasp her presence. “Fugitivity is immanent to the thing but is manifest transversally,” a phrase that is often cited, is the title of a poem by philosopher and poet Fred Moten and was the basis for this year’s annual conference of the Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present (ASAP).²¹ The call for papers asks what happens when we look askance or sideways, as **Julia Kwon’s** works ask us to do regarding statistics connected to the rise of anti-Asian hate and the number of anti-LGBTQ bills circulating through various US states’ legislatures. Kwon abstracts the statistics but the richness of colors she mobilizes prevents them from being disembodied.²² The watercolor pencils accompanying Dor’s zine reference color mixtures from the Israeli flag (Light Blue), the Palestinian flag (Venetian Red), and the flags together (Burnt Carmine). As written on the back of the slipcase cover of the zine, “these become tools for exploring shifting boundaries and unsettling ideas of fixed nations. This zine is for practicing presence in the unknown.” The act of coloring can be meditative and cathartic. Invoking Moten, perhaps doing so can let us look sideways—or perhaps empathize sideways is a better way to put it—at a topic as fraught as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Dor was commissioned earlier this year to make a limited edition zine for this exhibition responding to its theme, and they chose the latter as their topic.

21. The poem can be found on the Poetry Foundation’s website, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53479/fugitivity-is-immanent-to-the-thing-but-is-manifest-transversally>. See also ASAP’s call for papers: <https://www.artsofthepresent.org/2023/01/27/asap-14/>.

22. In an email to the author, Kwon pointed out the following article that expands on this point in relation to climate data: Elaine Velie, “Can Art Change Attitudes Toward Climate Change?,” *Hyperallergic*, June 12, 2023, <http://hyperallergic.com/827074/can-art-change-attitudes-toward-climate-change/>.

A POROUS ARCHIVE is a bit of a contradiction. Archives are meant to be repositories of information to avoid erasure. But archives are always leaky, incessantly in progress, partial, and biased. Sikander's glass mosaic references a body, but it's an amorphous one. What could be a leg includes a representation of an eye. Moreover, Sikander's work often references bodies of knowledge presented to us as discrete and separate. Despite this, most of the language used to describe her work reinforces national and gendered boundaries, often conflating her biography with the meaning of the work, itself.²³ **Amy Cousins'** large-scale quilt work comprises snippets from an archive of overlooked issues of the 1970s feminist magazine *Country Women* that, as she notes, "were explicitly feminist and queer-leaning. . . . It was a lot of women who were making the choice to separate themselves from society and live off the land. Most of them were doing it, in part, to escape the heteropatriarchy in the places that they lived."²⁴ Through the format of a heirloom quilt, they make a generational connection by stitching quotations from the magazine alongside their own writing. Ostensibly, the quilt could be passed down so others perhaps would have access to queer knowledge that Cousins had to search for.

Glissant writes that the RIGHT TO OPACITY will be the birth of freedoms. The right to withhold sharply contrasts with most states' need to be transparent. Opacity does not necessarily mean obfuscation, but the entanglements that

23. A exception to this Gayatri Gopinath's "Promiscuous Intimacies: Embodiment, Desire and Diasporic Dislocation in the Art of Shahzia Sikander," in Shahzia Sikander: Extraordinary Realities, eds. Sadia Abbas and Jan Howard (Munich: Hirmer, 2021), 188-129.

24. "Artists Explore 'All Modes' in New Library Exhibition," Kansas City Public Library, accessed October 15, 2023, <https://kclibrary.org/blog/artists-explore-all-modes-new-library-exhibition>.

incessant “Relations” (another key term of his) produce must be partially unknowable for a creolized world to emerge. As Glissant writes, “Thus, that which protects the Diverse we call opacity.”²⁵ Consider, for instance, De Leon’s paintings that explore indigenous knowledge in a way that prevents essentializing it or even being wholly knowable. Muza’s Flame Print series of handwoven velvet absorbs light and privileges opacity. Moreover, fire, like the elements water and air, is formless. It is difficult to represent, underscored by their use of bright colors. It is already “partially unknowable.” Many works on display covertly deal with the weighty themes but often in ways that demand viewers to see differently and consider knowledge as partial.

What are your constellations?

Above, I’ve only discussed one or two. While the text above, alongside the checklist, will hopefully serve as a guide to further enrich your experience of the exhibition, you will likely make your own connections that I could have never imagined. Indeed, as a foil for my groupings and to make sure this brochure itself ideologically aligns with the idea of “form and formless,” I have relinquished some control by inviting my Temple University PhD and MA art history students enrolled in my “Historiography of Art History” course to contribute their written constellations. See below: the students’ names appear at the end of each constellation description.

Jessi Li’s sculptures, *Transportal 1* and *Transportal 2*, along with Angel Favorite’s *Connection Point*, defy the

²⁵ Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 62.

conventional notion of objectness by compelling observers to shift their focus. Through intricate reflections and strategically placed voids, these artworks encourage visitors to reposition themselves physically, redirecting their gazes onto others and introspectively onto themselves. While I viewed the exhibition, I observed how attendees instinctively adjusted their positions to gain diverse perspectives beyond and through these three artworks. Li's works enticed viewers to crouch down, allowing them to peer through the narrow viewing portals at the center of the sculptures. Meanwhile, Favorite's work skillfully mirrored the surroundings of the viewers, **RESISTING OBJECTHOOD** and instead placing the subjective viewer at the forefront of the experience. **By Danielle Dagon Rhodes**

As a viewer approaches Meg Dyer's *Biograph for Megan Dyer, River/Creek*, and *Tree Rings for Megan Dyer*, their reflection in the mirrored surface is imbricated in the life of another. Our image as viewers, in a way, becomes part of the artist's story, echoed in the tree rings that striate our form and the words of another's biography inscribed onto our body. These rings echo the oak frame surrounding the inky surface of Angel Favorite's *Connection Point*, where a viewer gazes into its depths and finds not only themselves but an infinite amount of possibilities for futures forthcoming. Thus, in utilizing our reflection, each artist calls forth an intricate web of knowing or **BEING/CONNECTING** between artist, viewer, and work. These works not only welcome viewers to search for themselves in their likeness but suggest new ways of seeing ourselves and

connecting to the lives of other things, people, and worlds. **By Gillian Yee**

QUEER ECOLOGIES (HUMAN/MATTER) is concerned with the realities of the climate crisis by imagining modes of caring for the future of the planet beyond heteroreproduction.²⁶ In *Tree Rings for Marsha P. Johnson*, Megan Dyer's visualization of the activist's life through dendrological convention elides the boundary between human and non-human life.²⁷ The mirrored glass includes the viewer in this relation, but also a layer of fragility: the survival of glass, nature, viewer, and queer life is implicated in one another. By transforming the vitreous detritus of industry while maintaining its recognizability as inorganic, Paper Buck, Ren Mahon, and Jessi Li's works also suggest the mutuality of possible futures in a medium that is simultaneously resource-intensive to produce and almost infinitely recyclable.²⁸ **By Ana Matisse Donefer-Hickie**

BODY-SCAPES constellation links together works engaging with corporeality and embodied landscapes, both personal and physical, forging relationships between individual and collective experiences. Wojciech Pus' *Queer Landscapes|Segues from Endless* (2016 –), Carmel Dor's *Mother Maps series*, Shahzia Sikander's *Demarcation* (2017), and Abbey Muza's *Downrushing* (2023) speak to this theme where the body becomes a landscape, a feeling in motion, and an abstracted terrain mapping experience. The body-scapes in this constellation imagine bodily forms in multi-media, ranging from fabric to film

26. For an introduction to Queer Ecology see Catriona Sandilands, "Queer Ecology," *Keywords*, January 12, 2016, <https://keywords.nyupress.org/environmental-studies/essay/queer-ecology/> and Timothy Morton, "Guest Column: Queer Ecology," *PMLA* 125, no. 2 (2010): 273–82; for a more comprehensive treatment of the theory, see Catriona Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2010; my formulation here is heavily indebted to Nicole Seymour's relation of queer ecology to the climate crisis, Nicole Seymour, *Strange Natures: Futurity, Embodying, Sexual Cultures*, New York: New York University Press, 2019.

27. "Queer ecology will worry away at the human-nonhuman boundary, too," Morton, "Queer Ecology," 277.

28. Joanna Platt, "Ren Mahon," *Intersections* 2022, Tyler School of Art and Architecture.

https://issuu.com/tylercom/docs/tyler_school_of_art_and_architecture_intersections; As Morton argues, an ethics of queer ecology might abandon organicist approaches and "regard beings as people even when they aren't people." Morton, "Queer Ecology," 278.

– including Sikander’s curving abstracted figure enveloped in blue mosaic landscape, Muza’s textile, weaving suspended light from pornographic films, Dor’s intimate watercolors of the female body, and the landscapes in Puś’s film relating sexually erotically charged memories. **By Miray Eroglu**

Artworks appropriate “reality” without any intention to return them to a mythical “original.” Instead, they can open MULTIPLE POTENTIALITIES of becoming. For instance, Andrea Ray’s *Aspirational LPs* include record covers, but by not incorporating the physical albums, they invite viewers to imagine how the written language will transform into an undoubtedly pluriverse of tracks. Max Colby’s sculptures *Uncertain* and *Privilege* reference recognizable things in the world—such as figurines for child’s play and a phallic form. But ultimately, the works are mysterious, referring to something we might still not fully grasp but is just a twinkle away. In so doing, they invite us to imagine infinite worlds. **By Srđan Tunić.**

Deborah Czeresko’s *Fruiting Bodies* extend their arms into the soil, reaching for each other, whereas their *Neon Mycelium* guides viewers through a simulated forest as warm light glows along its elevated root system. The person, the plant, and the fungus become one among many in a flourishing environment. Katie Shulman’s *Pelvis* does not hang on a wall but instead inhabits the space where guests move. It envelops us. *Pelvis* evokes the fragility of the single thread and the strength of those threads in a composite form. Czeresko’s and Shulman’s works

ask viewers to reconsider the rampant individualism to which we devote so much time and energy. Indeed, BEING PART OF A WHOLE can be much more enriching. **By Morgan Erutti.**

In Tsohil Bhatia's work, 40 glass vessels are filled to the brim with water, but the cohesive nature of water molecules prevents any spillage. The water is TOING THE LINE between the inside and outside of the glass—maintaining an uneasy equilibrium—like Max Colby's playful, colorful, penial-like forms, made of stuffed fabric, teetering between conventional constructions of masculinity and femininity. That is, the vertical, bulbous form resembles a dildo, but its materials effectively make it anti-utilitarian if it indeed is such. But we might even say that in Bhatia's work, the water molecules bind to each other and thereby hold their position—much like soldiers on the battlefield, at the front, defying retreat—similarly, Colby's paradoxically soft phallic forms refuse to surrender to a repressive binary-gender society. **By Robin Morris.**

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