

ANTHONY CUDAHY, LIANG FU, ERIN M. RILEY, MADDALENA TESSER, KEIOUI KEIJAUN THOMAS AND KRISTIAN TOUBORG.

## *Peripheries*

June 18 — August 6, 2022

Narratives of self-existence have not historically included women, queer, or trans bodies with equal agency as male figures, thus resulting in restricting constructs of identity and self-worth. In *Peripheries*, a group exhibition featuring artists **Anthony Cudahy, Liang Fu, Erin M. Riley, Maddalena Tesser, Keioui Keijaun Thomas** and **Kristian Touborg** societal norms of selfhood are challenged through representation, while the body emerges as a site for exploration and transcendence.

Wielding a diversity of visual practices, the artists present works where figures loom large and abstractions give way to representations of the corporeal. The exhibition is unveiled through painting, performance, assemblage, and textile works. Oil, acrylic, and watercolours on canvas reveal a plethora of ideas waiting to be discovered; intimate contradictions of the self, transformation through memory, and healing trauma through the body. Digitally printed fabrics, weaved and hand-dyed tapestries, and a single film coalesce emotively, inviting viewers to imagine the limitless potential of the body as both a tool and a subject. Many of the artists presented seek to circumvent limiting social principles of belief by sharing untold stories, and celebrating the emotional fragility of the human experience. Each artist, in their unique practice, works to upend that which we think we know about ourselves and the world.

Anthony Cudahy and Kristian Touborg root their respective practices in depictions of the figure, oftentimes, enveloped in elusive dreamlike environments. The surrounding interiority gives rise to an ethereal quality where imagery hints at a pointed narrative that is often implied, not explicitly stated. Cudahy depicts images of human transformations as he ruminates on romance and intimacy through the lens of queerness. With a practice that references vernacular photography, Cudahy incorporates art history, gay iconography, and personal stories into his work.

Touborg illustrates figures as they emerge and fade in colourful compositions. A montage of textures and colours expand and reconstruct his canvases, often of unusual shapes. Whether through abstractions that subtly hint at the figure or through arrestingly detailed representations, ideas relating to the body have always been central to Touborg's practice. In *Void Portal*, 2022, a lone figure lies on a bed, tranquil and serene. A large vase with flowers dominates the foreground while the perspective and scale lend itself to the surreal. A richly saturated domestic scene is illustrated in piercing magenta and purple. Here, the artist combines classic mediums with contemporary tools. The surface of the canvas appears to weather strange and uncanny effects due to Touborg's processes of manipulation of digitally altered fabrics and industrially treated materials. The works evoke provocative sensations where the familiar and foreign coalesce.

Liang Fu presents hauntingly detailed watercolours where the figure evolves through abstraction. Each work begins with investigations in form, colour, and texture as pigments are applied to canvases before tiny droplets of water are added in slow methodical steps. Fu dwells in the comfort of uncertainty where an interplay between transparency and the opacity of colours are displayed. In *Evaporation*, 2022, a chilling white-eyed face commands the canvas. Streams of transparent blue and white water envelop the figure as a sombre expression is unveiled through the interplay of watery light and shadows.

Explorations of womanhood are intimately explored through the work of Erin M. Riley and Maddalena Tesser. Tesser has built a practice rooted in painting and drawing that subverts reality through imaginary narratives of self-actualizing identity and transformation. On the contrary, Erin M. Riley centres her lived experiences and her body, through self-portraiture in skillfully detailed hand-woven tapestries. Self-portraits are integral to the work, as she reveals the ways in which childhood

trauma has led to growth. "Implicating myself," she says, "was a natural progression from using images of other folks." In *Reflections 6*, (2019), we see a reflection of Riley's tattooed back and posterior in a black thong. Her face is hidden from view, as long black hair weaves down her back. The imagery is sexual and erotic, yet tranquil and serene in its depiction of a personal moment of solitude. The interiority suggests a domestic space as the figure is kneeled down on a rug with her back displayed in a large framed mirror.

In her practice, performance artist Keioui Keijaun Thomas centres her experiences and hopes for the future through sound, film, and poetry. Her multimedia installations address Blackness free from the refrains of the gender binary. In her approach to storytelling, the body emerges as a vessel for exploration, a space to inhabit the future, and a reclamation of identity through form. Her film, *Come Hell or High Femmes: Act 2 | The Last Trans Femmes on Earth: Dripping Doll Energy*, 2022, sees Thomas in pastoral scenes across America, dancing gracefully, as a recorded monologue of her voice plays in the background. The scenes depicted represent a future narrative where Black trans life is free from violence and persecution, where self-expression is fully realized, and dreams reimaged.

In each work of *Peripheries*, the artists define new realities by rethinking, reinventing, and questioning the tenets that guide our world. Identity is deconstructed and reconstructed over and over again, through the body. Reality is challenged, memory revealed, and histories rewritten through new narratives that take precedence over archaic modalities. The body becomes a site to examine social constructs. By exploring these constructs, the artists push beyond the peripheries of what is portrayed in each work of art.

words by Folasade Ologundudu

**Anthony Cudahy** (b. 1989, USA) weaves imagery culled from photo archives, online platforms, art history, and personal photographs to explore themes of queer identity. He holds a BFA from Pratt Institute, NY, and MFA from Hunter College, NY (2020). He has participated in several exhibitions across the US and Europe most notably at Perrotin NY; Semiose Gallery, Paris; Flagart Foundation, NY; and the Athens Institute for Contemporary Art, (GA). He lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

**Liang Fu** (b. 1993, China) lives and works in Paris. He received his BFA and MFA from National Fine Arts School of Nantes, France. Recent exhibitions include *Intangible*, Nicodim L.A.; *petit beurre*, Maia Muller Gallery, Paris; *Emergence*, Riseart Gallery, London, UK; and *Cabinets of Curiosities*, Natural History Museum Nantes, France.

**Erin M. Riley** (b. 1985, USA) received her BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design and MFA from the Tyler School of Art. Her work has been part of solo and group exhibitions at P·P·O·W, NY; Galerie Julien Cadet, Paris; Kohn Gallery, L.A.; Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden. She is the recipient of the US Artists Fellowship Grant, 2021 and American Academy of Arts & Letters Art Purchase Prize, 2021. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

**Maddalena Tesser** (b. 1992, Italy) is a figurative painter based in Venice, Italy. She holds an MFA from the Fine Art Academy of Venice (2019). Her work has been part of solo and group exhibitions at A plus A Gallery, Venice; Galerie Rolando Anselmi, Rome; East Contemporary Gallery, Entrevaux, France; ArtNoble Gallery, Milan; and Fondazione Malutta, Thomas Braida Studio, Venice.

**Keioui Keijaun Thomas** (b. 1989, USA) creates live performance and multimedia installations that address blackness outside of a codependent, binary structure of existence. Recent exhibitions include *Participant Inc*, New York; Perrotin, NY; and *The Wexner Center for Arts*, USA. She holds an MA from the Art Institute of Chicago and a BFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York. She is the inaugural winner of the *Queer | Art 2020 Illuminations Grant for Black Trans Women Visual Artists* and a 2018 Franklin Furnace Fund recipient. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

**Kristian Touborg** (b. 1987, Denmark) is mix-media artist whose figurative paintings are composed based upon a democratic use of technical reproduction and reconstruction. He holds MA from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, and he is the recipient of the Danish Arts Foundation working grant, 2017. Recent exhibitions include *Eduardo Secci Novo Projects* Milan; *Lundgren Gallery*, Palma de Mallorca; and the *Herning Art Museum*, Denmark. He lives and works in Copenhagen.

The exhibition will run from June 18 to August 6, 2022. Opening hours are Thursday, Friday & Saturday from 13:00 to 18:00 hrs or by appointment.