

UNREFFABLE BLAZE



INDEFINABLE BLAZE

11
January

-

03
March
2018



Trinity
Square
Video



Kiera
Boult

Jasmine
VK
Carr

Danièle
Dennis

Marcelline
Mandeng

Dainsha
Nugent-
Palache



With
texts
by

Jared
Brown

&

Aurel
Haize
Odogbo



Curated
by
Jessica
Karuhanga

“Our clearing is patrolled as a series of air, spirals in conjunction made by pointed running. It was affirmation

where we learned how to talk by walking pointedly, to organize air offstride by tapping, like a lion. My touch,

my mouth all fixed to say these words, my listening in winter, my mirror glancing. Big-eyed cartoon, all this in

there as an audible surface that my eye wants to help you think about as you feel me. Feel me? That’s why I always ask you if you feel me. Because I know you feel me. I ask you if you feel me because I know you feel me.”

MOTEN, FRED. *THE LITTLE EDGES*
WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2014

I have had a recurring vision since I was a child. The intervals vary. It may be days or years. I am in space, floating silently in jet-black nothing. In the distance, I see a faint projection in black and white. I try to grasp the details. The task is impossible. The most recent iteration came to me after several years leaving

me in darkness. The image is faint and blurred, and I cannot tell if I am on the ground looking up at tall buildings and falling bodies are flailing toward me, or if I am looking down and there are bodies gesticulating in frenetic movements. I want to feel out this impossible image. I want to feel out the possibility that when we wail or move our bodies, it is because we cannot form our mouths into shape. We cannot bend them around the contours of a word.

In a deep space, between parting lips, sparks a blaze.

Yet you, sister, feel my vibration through your digits scaling the interstices between glass screens and metal plates. It is through your aura I learn how to fix my edges. I feel you.

Ineffable Blaze meditates on the exhaustive labours of self-articulation that cast the Black femme subject as dispossessed. Their subjectivity is an untraceable spectre. Their Blackness vibrates within the splits of a social system designed to keep its force at the fibril margins. Black femme subjects

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are constantly compelled to imagine, self-define, and then externalize their existence. Why must they envision the possibility of their own livelihoods, and then engage in the additional labour of translation?

As if humanity for the Black femme were a dream.

As if humanity for the Black femme were virtual.

In death and its looming shadow, the Black femme subject is flattened. In our call to cultivate safe space and self-actualize, are we ever truly free of threat or violation? Safety, softness, and joy are designated temporal glitches within the system. They glisten. Beyond the limits of the system, Black femme vulnerabilities radiate through virtual mediations. Through touch. Refusal. Loss. Through flesh encounters and landscapes of grief. What do these sites look like? These sites are not places one may easily locate, map, or demarcate. However, within these sites, women and femmes embody their Blackness, softness, and sensuality,

unfolding into selves as they always and already are — unwavering.

Ineffable Blaze positions itself in defiance of self-defining as a means of actualization. In these splits and breaks, like water forcefully and resiliently weaving through earth, a network of Black femme affinity signals a futurity where they are alive – pulsating and thriving.

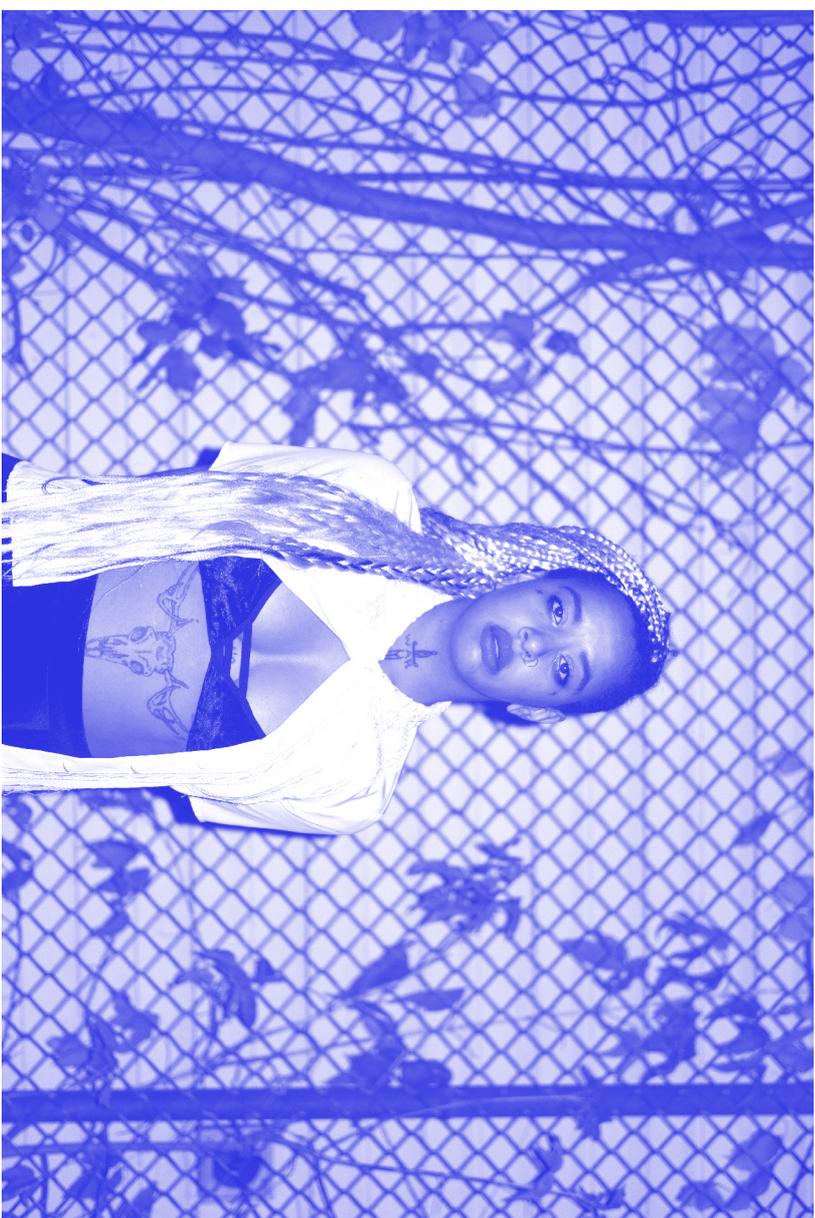


Jessica Karuhanga
Curator

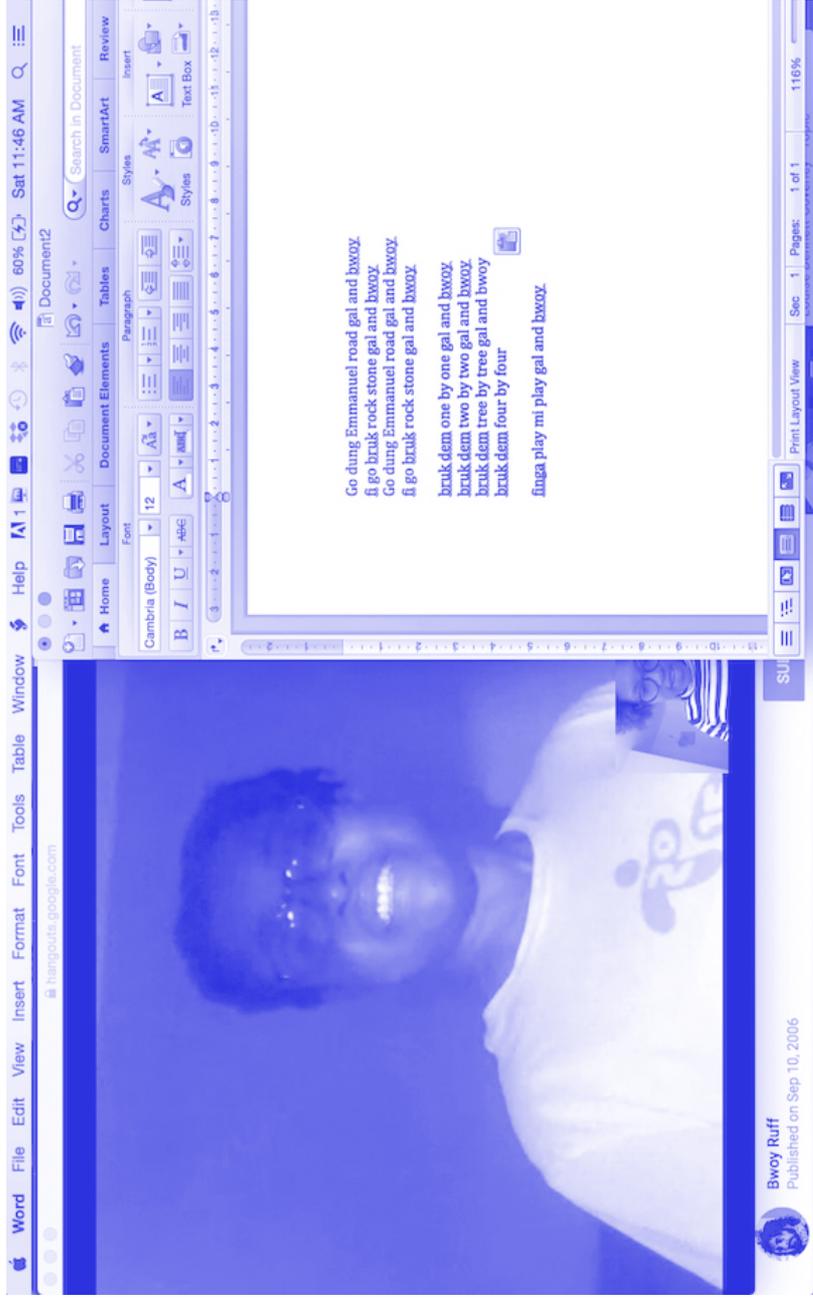
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Kiera Boulton, *Testimony for the Unrequited* (still), 2017. Image credit: Alex Jacobs-Lum



Jazmine VK Carr, Image credit: Andrea Flores



Danièle Dennis, *Sound Clash* (sketch), 2017

Marcelline Mandeng, Image credit: Shoog McDaniel





JARRED BROWN

Dainisha Nugent-Palache, *Scandal Bag Series*, 2017.



I.

I look to the west as the sun sets, fantasizing about the day
I'll get revenge on all the white people that did me wrong.
All of the white people that took capital away from my pain.

That was my story to tell. That was my secret to keep.

That was his story to tell. That was his secret
to keep.

That was their story to tell. That
was their secret to keep.

That was her story to tell.
That was her secret to keep.

That was
our story to
tell. That was
our secret
to keep!

Being white was just a normal state of being for black men.
Black men put their best foot forward when courting
(anything) white.

Where are the white people that truly understand what
it means to be white?

This city compliments my beauty with questions like:
"What're you mixed with?"

As if black can't be beautiful while unrefined.

"Is black enough?" I asked
"Of course it is," he says. "I just have a soft spot for
redbones, that's all".

So I hopped off that nigga (quick).
Clothes (back) on, no explanation given.

Told you I aint no:

Redbone,

High yellow or

Anything else except black

Black like tar

Black like night

So black you'd say Goth

Except Siouxsie Sioux is who comes to mind first

Not Poly Styrene

I'm not begging you for attention

I won't beg you to stay

Leave!

The white girls can have you, nigga!



Yesterday a woman was found lifeless along the seashore
No identification, just scars.

Bruises and wounds,

Filled with salt

Signs of a struggle, the detectives say

Before they place

Her body in the bag

Yesterday a woman was found lifeless along the seashore
No identification, just scars,
Bruises and wounds,
Filled with salt
Signs of a struggle, the detectives say
Before they deliver the
Tragic news to her family

Yesterday a woman was found lifeless along the seashore
Her family buried her,
Using her dead name
A dead name etched in stone,
Tethered to a lifeless body with blood relatives that favor
Dead names, secrets, shame and
The Holy Ghost



The chosen sisters returned to the tomb where their sister
rested,
Incorrectly accounted for.
A line of pink spray paint
Across the dead name to
Pay respect to their sister who still very much exists

Lavender, Indica, and Cajmere charge the circle
As the divas howl at the moon
Their sister was taken too soon

The divas howl at the moon because
Their sister was taken too soon

The divas release their sister from this treacherous sphere
With love and excitement for
Their sister's journey on
The divas are bound by the night.
They'll see their sister again.
After all, they're night queens.

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II.

If a light came on every time femmes had to restore themselves from the impact of disappointment, it'd be a lit-ass world, wouldn't it?

Mother to daughter
Daughter to grandmother
Grandmother to granddaughter
Auntie to niece
Sister to Sister to Sister to Sister to
Friend
To sister to sister to sister to
Lover
To partner to sister to sister to
Beyond

We pick ourselves up (from low)
Because nobody else can go that deep
Without getting lost

We build ourselves back up (from nothing)
Because we never needed data
To measure success

We fall in love with what one can't see through
Tolerant tinted glasses
Because many lack the vision(s) but are consumed
with seeing
The future

It's a privilege to have sisters. I don't have a sibling but I have many sisters. Right now, most of us live single. We are living single. In a post-apocalyptic kind of world, I'm glad I got my girls. Who else would I call when he's not acting right? Who else would I call to celebrate my accomplishments with? Who else would I call in a crisis? Who else can I trust to roll up the sativa, cue the Mary J. Blige and let me unravel?

☉ Ineffable Blaze ✨ Jared Brown ✨

All I can say is in words is thank you. All I have to give is love. There are flaws in us all but thank you for being kind to my mistakes, for letting me grow, for having my back, for letting me cry, for letting me carry, for letting me be ugly when I need to and for letting me be pretty the rest of the time. Thank you for making sure that I got home safely after our wild night(s) out. Thank you for paying the cover. Thank you for letting me crash at your house that one time(s). Thank you for correcting me. Thank you for challenging me.

We live in scary days. A night out with you(s) is platinum. I ask the universe to keep you safe. I feel your love in the wind, when I look up at the moon, when Kima, Keisha and Pam sing on the radio, when I think about that one crazy-ass time at the club, when I see other sisters outside.

III.

Maybe I don't have what it takes to be the next great black radical. I think that I'll be ok.

Like Chaka Khan without Rufus,
My black is enough on its own

My Femme is enough on its own,
Like Tina Turner without Ike

My blackness is so much more than confronting whiteness.
The same way my Femme was never meant to stand equal to my Masc.

(My) Femme stands on its own
But (my) femme is never alone
Like girl 6 without the phone



Jared Brown

PORTALS UPON
ME ✨ AURIEL
HAIZE ODOGBO

empathy conceived itself in the shell of a butterfly whose chrysalis shines silver in the face of moonlight and gold at the sight of the sun. i found her there pushing herself out with the help of my sister, holding my hand, patience in tow. (i'm writing this as i sit on the toilet and am dividing my attention between the strength of my strains to push the shit from my body and a grounding of my self from the perpetual state of momentum i exist in) empathy was the first of many children i'd given birth to in the ways that i was physically and psychically capable of: design

the divine defense mechanism was named disassociation simply because it offered one of the purest forms of divination to my corporeal form, leaving the flesh behind and levitating forward for a swift escape to the things that come and go with ill intent. wings that become as soft as silk in idle positions and as hard as diamonds in flight, cherub feathers as white as milk, cold as night.

i'm sewing, sealing, and actively working to sustain the link between us two. one where you feel what i feel in both states of conscious and

unconsciousness - a two-strand twist that is at once wispy, almost translucent gold that starts at the base of my supra marginal gyrus and ends at yours but there's tears in the middle.

captain of the cheer squad who's learned to suck her tail into her ass so that she's capable of maneuvering the way a captain ought to. pom-poms made from ivory-colored ostrich feathers with Desert Eagles at their bases as handles, an active decision and defense mechanism for the secrets that may spit up and out of bitter, threatened mouths. a life and identity built off the foundations of concealment, detection/undetected, the need to go above and beyond while remaining in a shadow lined with red and a truth all bled their way into who she has become and is becoming.

i'll have become a girl with a bandaged gash for a pussy by then, inserting my Chakrabandilator from my set, which vary in girth and length, when i wake and before i sleep. in between the insertion of my rose quartz 34 mm and my jade 30 mm i stop to stare at my index and middle fingers on my dominant right hand,

PORTALS UPON PORTALS UPON ME ✨ Aurel Haize Odogbo

nails freshly cut and filed down to the beds. i start to rub on the outside of my new wound... attempting to tickle the architects clitoris which is gaining sensation. i finally take my two fingers and insert into my gash and feel my walls begin to expand and pull me in. it's then that i realize that my fingers are all the way in and i begin to open up wider to envelop the entirety of my hand. the hollowing out of a lie that i told as a truth until it manifested as one, the idea of speaking your desires into existence in the flesh in my flesh - crystallized dreams with an almost viral charge that i pull from my sub to my conscious mind, chew it up, and shit it out.

the same ambiguous sense of gravity felt while there's a lougee at the base of your throat that wants to push itself up and out, is the same immediate and urgent feeling i get when i saw myself before and knew that a brand new bitch could and would be stitched together. that same night he was supposed to be picking me up to head to the tracks for the race. a race track, similar in set up as a monster trucks race course but instead there they race

Hellhounds and that's what's monstrous. the seats are crowded and the hounds are howling. my stomach was bothering me so i got up to go to shit again. sitting upon the toilet i realized that i wasn't experiencing a bowel movement but something that felt more violent and even more hectic, inside my body. i notice blood and water starting to come out of my pussy with a specific pressure that i've never felt before (it's only been a month and a half since surgery so i assume that this is normal?) and at the same time the eruption of micro explosions in my gut. the feeling was what i think it would feel like to float at the center of a ring of naval mines in the dead sea that all were detonating at once, the push and sheer pressure of the bursting of one triggering the other to destroy itself, all at the base of my stomach. my self-hallowed out womb, a catalyst for chaos and destruction showing itself for the first i sat on the toilet seat in the bathroom of a Hellhound arena.



Aurel Haize Odogbo

PORTALS UPON PORTALS UPON ME ✨ Aurel Haize Odogbo

Kiera Boulton (artist) is a Hamilton-based interdisciplinary artist with a BFA in Criticism and Curatorial Practice from OCAD University. With a background in stand-up comedy, Boulton's performative practice is playfully reliant on camp and approachability. By using the trope of the therapy booth, she posits the artist as facilitator; opening conversations surrounding indigeneity, race politics, class, intersectional feminism and relational aesthetics, all the while skeptically addressing issues that surround the role and/or identity of the artist and the institution.

Jared Brown (writer) Jared Brown is an interdisciplinary artist born in Chicago. Their work constructs a mythology around their origins and archives their existence as a black celestial being. In recent work, Jared Brown is broadcasting audio and text based work through the radio, in live DJ sets, and on social media. Jared Brown is a data thief, understanding this role from John Akomfrah's description of the data thief as a figure that does not belong to the past or present. As a data thief, Jared Brown makes archaeological digs for fragments of black American subculture, history and technology. They repurpose these fragments in audio, text, and video to investigate the relationship between history and digital, immaterial space. Jared Brown is interested in exposing the contradictions and complexity within black American subculture. They consider these gaps and slippages as a type of code that holds the key to a personal and

collective future. Jared Brown holds a BFA in video from the Maryland Institute College of Art and moved back to Chicago in 2016 in order to make and share work that directly relates to their personal history.

Rashayla Marie Brown (mentor) is the inaugural Director of Student Affairs for Diversity and Inclusion at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), fostering queer Afro-feminist narratives across institutions. RMB holds degrees from Yale University and SAIC, advised by Paul Gilroy and Barbara DeGenevieve respectively. Her work has been commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; and Yale University, New Haven, CT. Her work has shown at the Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago, IL; Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago, IL; Calumet Gallery, New York, NY; University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA; Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, CA; Centro Cultural Costaricense Norteamericano, San Jose, Costa Rica; and other venues. She has received numerous awards, including the City of Chicago's Artist Residency, the Hyde Park Art Center Flex Residency, the Roger Brown Residency and the Yale Mellon Research Grant. Her works and words have been featured and published in Art Forum, Blouin Modern Painters, Chicago Magazine, Hyperallergic, Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art, the Radical Presence catalog and the cover of the Chicago Reader. RMB's essay "Open Letter

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to My Fellow Young Artists and Scholars on the Margins: A Tribute to Terry Adkins" was shared over four thousand times online as of 2016.

Jazmine VK Carr (artist) is a multidisciplinary artist, who received a BFA in Printmaking from OCAD University. Carr's work explores human behaviour through the assessment of culture, identity and femalehood. She uses sculpture and installation, integrated media, performance, assemblages and photography to uncover her focus. Identity, sexuality and perception are the foundations of her works, which are aimed towards exposing the absurdity of reality. Often associated with vulgarity and rawness, she commands a collapse of traditional environments and relationships, asking the viewer to reconsider themselves through their perceptions of her works.

Danièle Dennis's (artist) experiences as a Jamaican-Canadian woman prompt her investigation of racial and cultural issues through the use of time-based media, material exploration, and installation. She attempts to disrupt and dismantle social norms and constructs by employing process-based experimentation, often situating her body as sculptural material. Her practice embraces absurdity, remaining fluid in expression. Currently an MFA candidate at the University of Pennsylvania, Danièle holds a BA in Studio Art from the University of Toronto Scarborough. She is a co-

founder of Y+ contemporary. Her work has been presented across Canada including: The New Gallery, Latitude 53, and Xspace Cultural Centre.

Jessica Karuhanga (curator) is an artist working through drawing, movement and video. She has presented her work at the Art Museum at University of Toronto (2017) Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2016) Goldsmiths, London (2016). She has delivered lectures at the Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, the Royal Ontario Museum, Harvard University and elsewhere, including during the Tisch School of the Arts' Black Portraiture[s] II: Revisited. Her writing has been featured in BlackFlash Magazine and C Magazine. She has been featured in esse and Canadian Art. She earned her BFA from Western University and her MFA from University of Victoria. Karuhanga lives and works in Toronto, Canada.

Marcelline Mandeng (artist) is a Cameroonian-born artist based in Philadelphia using their body as a primary medium and subject alongside video, sound and sculpture. Situated within the marriages of protest, autonomous props and the infinite ways we preserve history, analog and digital, their choreographed performances question the socio-political landscape that informs the experiences of a newly naturalized citizen. They explore how living in America as a black trans woman, an existence at the intersections of blackness, gender non-conformity and

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difference, demands autonomy; how one's journey to selfhood is a form of myth building and spiritual self care for coping with trauma.

Aurel Haize Odogbo (writer) is a multidisciplinary artist from Baltimore, Maryland but based in New York, New York. She attended Parsons: The New School For Design and studied Fine Arts during her time there. In her work, Odogbo explores and interrogates ideas around the multiplicity of identity ie. gender, race, sexuality and how they all intersect, usually told in very abstracted narrative forms. The mediums that she uses to manifest these abstracted narratives of navigating the world are writing, performance, video compilations, and illustrations.

Dainেশa Nugent-Palache (artist) is a Canadian artist based in Toronto who creates performative video works and photographs. Dainেশa's practice explores the dichotomies and paradoxes present in Jamaican culture. Most of Dainেশa's work is concerned with representations of society, self, and black diasporic identities, in relation to both the past and present; she also expresses an interest in the ever present cult of the consumer within a Post-Ford capitalist society, fixated on glamour and excess. She holds a BFA in Photography from OCAD University.

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11 January - 03 March 2018

Trinity Sqaure Video
Toronto, Canada

Kiera Boulт, Jazmine VK Carr,
Danièle Dennis, Marcelline
Mandeng, Dainেশa Nugent-
Palache

with parallel commissioned texts
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Odogbo

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