

**52 Artists**

**A Feminist  
Milestone**

Activated by QR codes throughout the show, anonymous messages are shared and archived. Like an interactive phone-messaging service, it offers participants a range of options and outcomes. Shvarts models *Hotline*, its endless permutations and elected interactivity, she says, on Clarke's *Bichos*, which too are endlessly manipulable and implicate the audience. As Shvarts makes clear: "You cannot fully control what it will be, and you are no longer really its authority. This has always felt to me like a poignant parable of creation, and something I wanted to use as a model for this work."

LJ Roberts has been taking photographs of queer landscapes and objects they discover on their travels around New York City and the US for many years. Roberts then stages these images in light boxes, combining them with found, gathered, and imagined objects to create installations that commemorate queer communities and histories. Together, they form a visual poem or meta-narrative, Roberts says, about "time, place, power, and love across varied geographies and political terrains." The work included in *52* is new and titled *Anywhere, Everywhere, 2022* (pp. 138-39). It consists of a "stonewall" with a two-sided lightbox that simulates an illuminated billboard. On one side is an image of a building in Detroit, where the artist grew up, sprayed in all-caps on its façade with the colossal word DYKE. The reverse side displays a photo of a red and pink fabric encrusted in soil. Roberts collected the stones from The Aldrich's grounds and the property of a close friend in Ridgefield. Their actions, recorded and played on a loop inside the wall, suggest "a 'Stone Wall' can be made anywhere and everywhere . . . [and] acknowledges friendships as revolutionary."

Alanna Fields collects anonymous photographs of Black queer people. Her archive, amassed through images she acquires on eBay, various online auctions, and flea markets, aims to "investigate the concealment, fragmentation, and configuration of the Black queer body."<sup>9</sup> For her *Mirages of Dreams Past* series, 2021-ongoing, of which *Come To My Garden, 2021* (p. 121), is a part, she selects and scans a photograph from her growing archive, manipulates it digitally through a technique of repeating and overlay, and then enlarges it. She coats the surface in strokes of pigmented hot wax, both cloaking and accentuating her subjects, to interrogate a persistent history of erasure and suppression.

Modeling the role of cultural anthropologist and detective, Lizania Cruz investigates the expurgation of African legacy within her native Dominican Republic through a body of work titled the *Investigation of the Dominican Racial Imaginary, 2020-ongoing*. The video *Opening Statement, 2021* (pp. 114-115), and her new sculpture, *Evidence Shelf, 2022* (pp. 114-115), operate, in Cruz's

words, like a "criminal investigation."<sup>10</sup> Combining testimony from on-site research she conducts in Santo Domingo and various other locations throughout the DR with archival footage and material evidence she gathers, Cruz uncovers "the state-sponsored way in which the Dominican imaginary is shaped in order to maintain oppressive racial constructs." Her guerilla actions offer a counternarrative that both excavates and opposes the displacement and destruction of African tradition on the island and within the greater Dominican diaspora.

Artist, activist, and writer Tourmaline, through film and photography, celebrates the Black, queer, and trans imagination. She exhumes overlooked, absent, and expunged histories and forgotten notables, to resist and change the dominant white, hetero-patriarchal narrative. Her 16mm short film *Salacia, 2020*, tells a novelized story about the Black trans sex worker Mary Jones, who lived in New York City's free Black Seneca Village community in the 1820-40s. The community was destroyed in 1857 to build Central Park. In a related series of color photographs, Tourmaline casts herself within an imaginary Seneca Village. Attired in space-age costume but standing on this planet at the edge of a drying cornfield, Tourmaline imagines a more inclusive and desirable future, absent of tyranny and struggle (p. 147).

## 5. Future Monuments and Liminal Strength

Several artists in *52* spotlight sidelined histories, formulating their own creation stories to counter censorship and prejudice. Incorporating themes of liminality, queerness, and mythmaking, Amaryllis DeJesus Moleski's visual world is fueled by her Puerto Rican American heritage and a peripatetic upbringing spent crisscrossing the US. Her expansive body of work, including drawings, video, sculpture, performance, and installation, uses a fabled symbolism, starring a pantheon of Black and Brown femme protectors and crusaders who venture across time and space, exercising their magical powers to protect and prevail (pp. 116-17). Her influencers span art history, popular culture, and higher realms, from comics, ancient cuneiform, and Caribbean Surrealism to the occult and alchemical diagrams. Roused by lived and imagined experience, DeJesus Moleski's utopian stories talk about adversity, redemption, repair, and reinvention.

Towing the line between sculpture, installation, performance, and object making, Pamela Council creates shrines to marginalized experience, providing spaces for self-care, healing, and empowerment. Council's largest public artwork, *A Fountain for Survivors, 2021*, once installed in New



