

*a recollection of dreams*

Amina Ross | dana washington-queen

Curated by Zion Douglass

May 8th - June 12th, 2021

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“Beauty is not a luxury; rather it is a way of creating possibility in the space of enclosure, a radical art of subsistence, an embrace of our terribleness, a transfiguration of the given.”

- Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*

Springsteen Gallery and guest curator Zion Douglass are excited to present *a recollection of dreams*, an experimental exhibition that stages a conversation between artists Amina Ross and dana washington-queen. The exhibition explores dreaming as a sensory experience that can articulate freedom sourced from the ancestral and autobiographical. Through the use of sculpture, video installation, and sound, the artists construct speculative worlds that are rooted in Black queer modalities of healing.

Amina Ross’ sculptural experience *Etheric Bridge (Spring’s Sutures)* merges a 4-channel video with machine made and natural materials. Composed of steel, cups from friends and family, rain water, tap water, and reclaimed cedar wood from New York City water tanks, this newly commissioned work conjures an architecture that extends the artist’s physical and material interest in collaboration. Together with **Jared Brown** and an ephemeral group of hand embroiderers — **Samantha Kerr, Savannah Wood, Sienna Kwami, Savannah Imani Wade** — Ross’ practice invites us to seek beauty in the undoing of anti-Black capitalist labor systems.

dana washington-queen’s two-channel video installation, *Circular Metafictions: what remains unbound is gathered*, is the first presentation of an in-progress hybrid documentary that excavates personal historiography and colonial fragmentation. The three-part film journeys from a speculative origin story through the ancestral and into the present, providing a nuanced constellation of Black life that uses sensory elements to exceed the limits of representation as a visual strategy. The film introduces “Black Noetic Theory” (BNt), an audiovisual method in development by washington-queen. BNt “seeks to push against the bounds of genre and production strategies, collapsing distinctions between documentary, cinema, video, and performance, echoing the incoherencies of Black life, history, and memory.”<sup>1</sup>

Amina Ross and dana washington-queen pivot between spiritual, digital and physical realms; between the embodied and the emotional; jostling us towards habitable dreamscapes where fragmentation evolves into a holistic process of knowing, feeling, and breathing into liberatory possibilities.

*a recollection of dreams* is curated by Zion Douglass, an MFA candidate in Curatorial Practice program at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). The exhibition has been generously supported by MICA’s MFA in Curatorial Practice and Springsteen Gallery. For more information, please contact Springsteen Gallery at [info@springsteengallery.com](mailto:info@springsteengallery.com).

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<sup>1</sup> dana washington-queen, “Circular Metafictions: what remains unbound is gathered” *UC San Diego Electronic Theses and Dissertations*, 2020, p.13

**Amina Ross** creates boundary-crossing works that embrace embodiment, imaging technologies, intimacy, and collectivity in physical and digital spaces. Amina makes videos, sculptures, sounds, and situations that question how systems of power condition reality and how Black queer femmes navigate, resist, reimagine, and refigure these systems to survive. Ross is currently an MFA candidate (graduating May 2021) at Yale School of Art within the sculpture department.

Select exhibitions include Prairie, Chicago, IL (solo); Ditch Projects, Eugene, OR (solo); Roots and Culture, Chicago, IL; Centro De Cultura Digital, Mexico City, MX; Transfer Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; among many others. Ross has participated in numerous residencies and fellowships including the Center for Collaborative Art and Media Fellowship, Yale University; Critical Practice Fellowship, Yale School of Art; ACRE (Artists' Cooperative Residency and Exhibitions); Close to there <> Perto de Lá Residency, Salvador, Brazil; Artist-In-Residence at Arts & Public Life and the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture, University of Chicago; among others.

**dana washington-queen (they/them)** is a research-driven writer and lens-based artist exploring narrative, blackness and visual culture to examine systems of power, memory, spirituality and place. In working across video, experimental cinema, photography and time-based media installation, washington-queen is developing Black Noetic theory (BNt), a methodology that brings intuition and experimental strategies into dialogue with Black Studies, Black Aesthetics and Film Studies to negotiate with freedom and confinement. washington-queen received their MFA from University of California, San Diego.

Select exhibitions include Jeffrey Deitch Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Anonymous Gallery, New York, NY; 98 Orchard, New York, NY; San Diego Art Institute, San Diego, CA; among others. Their films have been screened at the Toronto Short Film Festival, the DTLA Film Festival, and the Outfest Fusion LGBT People of Color Film Festival, among others. washington-queen is the recipient of numerous awards including the prestigious Foundation of Contemporary Arts, Ellsworth Kelly Award which coincides with their forthcoming solo exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2022.

**Zion Douglass** is an anti-disciplinary curator, writer, and educator from Baltimore, MD. Grounded by the practice of Black study, Zion's interests dovetail across experimental Black aesthetics in cinema and performance, the sensory qualities of digital technology, and Black feminist knowledge-formations. Zion has worked in various programming and administrative capacities at the Baltimore Museum of Art, Transformer (DC), the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Parkway Theatre. He is currently an MFA candidate in Curatorial Practice at Maryland Institute College of Art, graduating May 2021. In early 2020, Zion was awarded a grant by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts to carry out a film programming series titled *Breaking Codes*, launching at the Parkway Theatre in late 2021.

MICA's **MFA in Curatorial Practice** prepares students to determine how curators will shape the cultural life of our global society. The first MFA of its kind in the country, the program offers a hands-on curriculum that balances collaboration and socially engaged practices with academic research in history and theory. Students work in a variety of experimental contexts and formats, proposing alternative models of exhibition-making, institution-building, and social justice through art. Designed to forge connections among artists, institutions, and communities, the program fosters contemporary art and culture in collaboration with diverse audiences, and links local issues to international discourse.