

# PASSING / PARADES

**Frances Barrett (NSW), Justin Shoulder & Bhenji Ra (NSW, USA) Hissy Fit (NSW), Claudia Nicholson (NSW), Elliott Bryce Foulkes (NSW), Torrie Torrie (NSW), Liam Colgan (WA), Anna Dunnill (WA), Anna McMahon (NSW), Salote Tawale (NSW)**

**Curated by Kate Britton**

*PASSING / PARADES* explores visibility in relation to queer bodies, spaces and communities. Visibility signifies an emergence; a coming out. To see - what we choose to make seen - what we as a society permit to be seen; these are matters for politics and aesthetics - those two great and inseparable forces.

For queer communities, visibility is fraught. From invisibility (passing as straight, institutionalisation) and suppression (don't ask, don't tell), to pride parades and highly stylised aesthetic and embodied practices (vogue, drag), the infinite ways in which we choose to make ourselves visible - or not - colour our experience of the world.

In the age in which we are caught - one of white, colonial, patriarchal, heteronormative aggression - queerness exists in the shadows, waiting to be known, heralded by brief luminescent flashes (the sun on your face at the end of winter).

## PROVOCATION

What does it mean to be queer? What are our markers; our signs and signifiers?

What are our languages? How do we make ourselves heard - seen - known?

Is it our tattoos? Our spaces? Our coded desire?

Our grand gestures of romantic love?

Is it our refusal to become the machinery of the nuclear family?

Our fragile bodies, repeatedly misread, mistaken, & mistreated?

Is it the families we choose; the histories we record - those from which we are excluded?

## AFFIRMATION

Queerness reaches beyond gender and sexuality.

Queerness is these things, but it is also a refusal -

Queerness is an act of resistance;  
a methodology for survival.

Queerness is the thing you've never seen,  
the feeling you've never had before,  
the flutter in your stomach,  
your discomfort.

Queerness is sweat on the dance floor,  
dilated pupils, tongues in mouths,  
ink, blood & spit.

## EXTENUATION

Each of the artists in *PASSING / PARADES* address visibility in some way. Frances Barrett, Justin Shoulder & Bhenji Ra push the limits of what the queer body can be and do. Whether through transgressive physicality and the murky line between pleasure and pain, or through imagining beings and relations that are yet to come, their works exist at the boundaries of corporeal possibility.

Elliott Bryce Foulkes and Torrie Torrie offer glimpses into the hidden codes & shadowy spaces of queerness - imagery drawn from 'fitness' magazines circulated when homosexual media was illegal; a cruising sauna, reclaimed for the feminine. In Hissy Fit & Anna Dunnill's works, queer memory is enacted through stories we tell & marks we make; the communities & histories we inscribe on & with our bodies. Across cities & skin, we record stories as an act of survival.

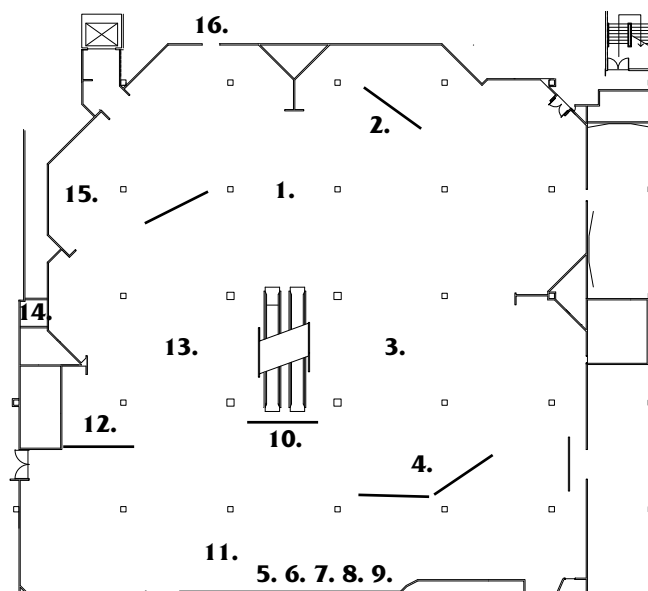
In their work, Liam Colgan takes the photocopier - the ultimate reproductive machine - to the club, queering the office under the lush glow of disco lights. Likewise Claudia Nicholson's work celebrates the performance of queerness in vivid colour with her *alfombras de aserrín* & series of 'blingee' self-portraits. We invent ourselves through desire.

*PASSING / PARADES* exists both in shadow & light. Anna McMahon's untitled work from her '*There's no easy way to say this*' series recalls the suspended moment before bad news is communicated; the numbness, aggression & sense of puncture that hangs in the air, performing an anxiety common to us all. In Salote Tawale's *Creep*, isolation & exclusion figure in her defiance of them; her intimate self-portrait pushing back against the invisibility of queer people of colour.

*PASSING / PARADES* does not just make visible the individual work of these extraordinary artists; it seeks to make visible a community I am deeply indebted to. In the face of histories of invisibility, exclusion, violence & oppression, queer communities continue to thrive. We see & are seen. We are together. We are everywhere.

Kate Britton

Kate Britton is an artist, writer and curator based in Sydney.



1. Claudia Nicholson  
 Lost Without You (2016)  
 Alfombra de aserrín (sawdust, glitter)  
 400 x 400 cm (variable)

2. Justin Shoulder & Bhenji Ra  
 Deep Alamat (2014)  
 Single-channel video  
 00:49

Co-devised and Performed by Justin Shoulder & Bhenji Ra  
 Director of Photography: Bonnie Elliot  
 Camera Assistant: Michael Filocamo  
 Composer: Nick Wales  
 Editing & Visual Effects: Bec Stegh  
 Costume Design: Justin Shoulder, Matt Stegh & Bhenji Ra  
 Makeup: Mat Hornby  
 Bestboy: Jackson Stacy  
 Commissioned by Artbank for the series 'Permutations' curated by Daniel Mudie Cunningham

3. Anna McMahon  
 Untitled #6 from the series 'There's no easy way to say this' 2016  
 Tie-down strap, glass, elastic tie-down strap, clear suction hook, concrete, palm, flower  
 Dimensions variable

4. Elliott Bryce Foulkes  
 Borderline (2016)  
 Two-channel video  
 08:00 min loop

5. Claudia Nicholson  
 Jungle love song dedications 2016  
 Single-channel video  
 00:26 loop  
 Commissioned by Runway Experimental Art

6. Claudia Nicholson  
 María, llena eres de gracia 2016  
 Single-channel video  
 00:33 loop  
 Commissioned by Runway Experimental Art

7. Claudia Nicholson  
 New World Order (2016)  
 Single-channel video  
 00:52 loop  
 Commissioned by Runway Experimental Art

8. Claudia Nicholson  
 Ele o Boto (2016)  
 Single-channel video  
 01:11 loop  
 Commissioned by Runway Experimental Art

9. Claudia Nicholson  
 JLo Glow (2016)  
 Single-channel video  
 00:46 loop  
 Commissioned by Runway Experimental Art

10. Frances Barrett  
 My Safe Word is Performance (2014)  
 Live performance with Ivan Crozier as part of 'Restaging Restaging' (curated by Sarah Rodigari, Brian Fuata and Jessica Olivieri) at Alaska Projects, Sydney.  
 15:00  
 Videography: Kate Blackmore and Cindy Rodrigues  
 Edit: Kate Blackmore

11. Anna McMahon  
 You are always on my mind (2016)  
 Performance documentation, 2 September, 2016 at Success Gallery, Fremantle  
 08:45

12. Liam Colgan  
 Playing On The Surface of Our Bodies (2014)  
 Single-channel video, Canon IRC3080i, paper, mother-in-law's tongue, stapler, hole punch  
 4:45 min looped

13. Hissy Fit  
 19.12.15 (2015)  
 Single-channel video  
 1:01:40  
 Commissioned by Campbelltown Arts Centre

14. Torrie Torrie  
 Sauna 2016  
 Two-channel video, pine, heat lamp, heater, vaporiser, CD player  
 Dimensions variable  
 Soundtrack mixed by Sveta Gilerman

15. Anna Dunnill  
 Slow Monuments (2016)  
 Embroidery & needle-felted wool on linen, tattoo on the curator (live performance, video documentation), text on tracing paper  
 Dimensions variable

16. Salote Tawale  
 Creep (2014)  
 Single-channel video  
 03:10