

abstraction / abstracting
obstruction / obstructing
access / refusal
redefine, reimagine

together and apart

“the struggle in language entails an interminable discursive antagonism in which subjectivity and identity are at stake. where meanings and values are never finally fixed, but constantly subject to antagonistic efforts of articulation from one discourse to the next”

– Kobena Mercer

redefine, reimagine

how can we disrupt language as a gateway for critical discourse? recognizing and capitalizing on the malleability of language we can use it as a powerful force to redefine; to reimagine our most true selves.

our subjectivity and agency depend on it.

we're also able to apply the practice of re-defining through images. whether it's showing or withholding images that already exist (as we see fit) or offering only fragments of ourselves through the image—we're refusing to give away the image as a whole. this process is regenerative and provides the opportunity where interpretations are limitless

access / refusal

why would we want to give away the full story? our stories have been stolen, made up, and co-opted by the enemy!

abstraction / abstracting

what's the difference between *abstraction* and *abstracting*?

We are abstractionists.

Not in the way that one might imagine.
We are not abstractionists because we make our likeness in to abstraction -

We are not reductionists;
We are not generalists;
We are not monoliths.

We are abstractionists because we take on the role of abstracting -

We redact;
We obstruct;
We omit.

We do so as a of resistance.

We forgo the notion that art is anything but abstracting;

We affirm that everything we make; everything we depict is but a fraction of reality.

A part.

We recognize that representation is a means of sharing our interpretation.

We proclaim that portrayal is an instrument for unfolding our subjectivity.

We recognize that the way the world sees us is through a broken lens

One that has reduced us

To line;

To form;

To colour.

Together and Apart

We are but fractions of possible images

Untethered to trope

infinite and boundless

Together / Apart, Rebecca Bair and Karice Mitchell share the desire to unapologetically redefine representation, re-imagine Black womanhood, and refute your gaze. Exercising agency by only offering snippets they seek to situate the Black female body as a site for life in its purest and most dignified form. refusing to be held down by the confines of the gaze these works offer a chance for re-imagination, and re-definition, to see themselves and what could be.

Bair's work is rooted in her ancestry, the Diaspora and her existence as a Black Woman; her hair, skin, and voice as all manifestations of deep love and resilience. Seeing Sun as inherent to her body and connecting her to her roots, she uses hair in particular as a guide. Her representation of self and figure is abstracted, made complicated by her process of creating interdisciplinary work. She exposes hair to sunlight, leaving prints that evoke movement; their marks are precise, ambiguous and allusive. Here, scale and perspective shift continually, showing shadows or traces that allude, linger, shift and disappear. They create a space for impermanence that is unending, constantly changing, and steeped in possibility.

Mitchell's practice uses vintage Black erotic publications and digital manipulations to engage with issues relating to the Black female body and sexuality. Through her process of cropping photos and employing multiple material explorations, she looks to reclaim pre-existing images in pursuit of redefining and re-imagining Black womanhood and sexuality detached from the white gaze. Along with altering the scale to offer new perspectives, Mitchell uses text in several works to reference phrases and quotes that insist on self-care as self-preservation. Her work gestures to the importance of Black women carving space to take care of themselves and how that can be a radical act.