

RESILIENCE

Pauline Curnier Jardin, Juliette Blightman, Tourmaline,
Ada M. Patterson & Castiel Vitorino Brasileiro

The concept of resilience, which refers to adaptability or persistence, is gaining increasing attention across various disciplines. It has become a central topic of debate, particularly in psychology, public health, and mental well-being. Resilience represents the capacity of a system, organisation, or individual to respond to and recover from a crisis, disruptive process, or significant change. It is a term that typically gains relevance during times of upheaval. The many new challenges we face today, driven by the rapid succession of changes and crises in human life, compel us to seek effective responses. Coherent strategies, such as resilience, for addressing these challenges are becoming increasingly important. In both our immediate environment and globally, we observe actions, gestures, and expressions of ‘resilience’—such as strength, tenacity, elasticity, perseverance, and stubbornness—as alternative responses. In Studio S, *RESILIENCE* features a screening of video works by artists Pauline Curnier Jardin, Castiel Vitorino Brasileiro, Juliette Blightman, Ada M. Patterson, and Tourmaline.

Overall, the screening offers an idiosyncratic perspective on the potential meanings of ‘resilience,’ challenging prevailing entities, structures, and representations. The concept is particularly explored in relation to queer communities and marginalisation. The screening focuses on strategies that arise from the experiences of specific cultural and subcultural groups facing stress or exclusion. In this context, the notion of queer thriving—an idea that surpasses resilience—also becomes significant. Thriving, especially ‘queer thriving,’ goes beyond mere recovery or healing; it involves transcending the former self—a form of growth born from adversity that defies social norms.

The screening is presented in a scenography with seating designed by French textile designer and artist Emma Cogné (lives and works in Brussels). Objects and textiles she creates, often from recycled materials, bridge interior and exterior spaces and open new perspectives on and esthetical materialisations of space.

**Ada M. Patterson
Bikkel, 2019**

The video features a fictional character named Bikkel (a Dutch term for a man known for toughness or resilience). Through an immersive lament, he responds to certain constructs of masculinity. Using an inventive mask of tentacles, along with a jacket and sequins, the artist portrays a sea urchin in the guise of Bikkel. However, the prickly creature is depicted not as hard, brittle, and defensive, but as elastic and porous, allowing it to be held or even squeezed. Bikkel is inspired by the writings of Caribbean-American author Audre Lorde (1934–1992) and her vision of softness and vulnerability as means of survival and resistance against societal gender expectations.

Ada M. Patterson (°1994, Bridgetown, Barbados) is a Caribbean artist and writer whose practice involves masquerade, performance, poetry, textiles, and video. She explores the ways in which narratives can limit, enable, and complicate the formation of identity. In her recent work, she considers the writing of laments, mourning, and archiving as means to bring attention to the disappearance of communities affected by experiences of crises.

**Tourmaline
Pollinator, 2022**

The title of the film, *Pollinator*, suggests the crucial agent that carries life, moving through garden spaces expanding their lushness. Tourmaline assumes this role as the main subject of the film, becoming a metaphor for the pleasure and growth of her community. In some scenes of the film, the artist walks through a garden in a floral headdress—seemingly equal parts generator and receiver of creative forces—and floats on a zero-gravity flight. Additional footage features the funeral procession and community celebration of Black trans activist and performance artist Marsha P. Johnson (1945–1992). Appearing throughout the film and at its close, Tourmaline’s late father sings “The Cisco Kid” (1972) by War to the artist as she stands behind the camera. An original score composed by Danni Venne overlays the film, produced with tuning forks made for NASA that emit the frequency of Venus’s travel around the sun.

Tourmaline (°1983, Roxbury, Massachusetts) is an artist, filmmaker, writer, and activist whose practice highlights the experiences of Black, queer, and trans communities and their capacity to impact the world. Her films and photographs rewrite mainstream narratives and cultural histories to initiate a paradigm shift and imagine a more pleasure-filled future. Tourmaline’s practice invites us to fundamentally reshape our beliefs about what is possible. Tourmaline has been essential to the widespread recognition of Johnson’s profound impact on the modern LGBTQ rights movement. In 2012, she drew on years of community organizing and education work to publish a web archive, reanimating Johnson’s previously discarded history.

**Pauline Curnier Jardin
Fireflies (Lucciole), 2021**

Fireflies is a film made in collaboration with Feel Good Cooperative, a social collective founded by the artist, an architect and a group of sex workers in Rome in 2020. This in an effort to provide financial assistance to the sex workers of the Italian capital during the initial lockdown in the pandemic. The film was shot in the peripheries of Rome, where in ancient times there used to be fireflies, while today there is a freeway, and cars hitting the road with their headlights. Eventually, with their passing, they act like searchlights that occasionally spot sex workers walking or posing at the edge of the street. The film follows their erratic flashing and in a nostalgic night-blue light offers glimpses of visibility to the otherwise invisible bodies of these contemporary lucciole, to their braziers, their vinyl boots, bonfires and griefs.

Pauline Curnier Jardin (°1980, Marseille, France) is a multimedia artist working across installation, performance, film and drawing. With the instruments of the theater, she breathes new life into anthropological objects, discoveries, and images. She is especially interested in the female figure in mythology, history, folklore, and cinema. She deconstructs stereotypical representations of women as witch, mother, or mystic. Her work seeks a unique representational logic, in order to locate a separation between reality and fiction, rationality and emotion, man and woman, friend and enemy, human and objects, the sacred and the profane.

**Castiel Vitorino Brasileiro
Maybe calm is more important than freedom, 2022**

In the depths of discomfort, a whisper emerges, echoing through the body: “I need assistance, grant me more of this.” This sentiment sets the stage for Castiel’s immersive performance, spanning three weeks along the serene shores of Lake Lemán in Switzerland. Set against the backdrop of La Becque | Artist Residency, the video encapsulates a profound exploration into the symbiotic relationship between tranquility and freedom. The video captures fleeting moments of liberation and fluidity as Castiel’s body, mind, and the surrounding landscape converge in a harmonious dance of self-discovery and transformation. Each frame becomes a new geography of freedom, a testament to the artist’s profound journey towards emancipation and transcendence.

Castiel Vitorino Brasileiro (°1996, Vitória, Espírito Santo, Brazil) is an artist, writer and psychologist. Her work transcends from a double dimension: healing in the existential and bodily fields, and the reterritorialization of the body and the spaces in which it circulates and inhabits. Her pieces are articulated between performance, video, photography, installation, situation and pictorial practices, moving in an open spectrum between traditions common to the field of art, healing, encounter, macumba and other psychic-spiritual activities. Her image-ideas, magnetic and stunning, bring high energy intensity, causing cognitive shifts that dilute dichotomies between culture and nature, and discredit the structures that racialize and hijack the fluidity of experiences. Her actions give name to the traumas, so they can finally take their course.

**Juliette Blightman
Feux d’artifice/Burnout, 2023**

With this work, Blightman pays homage to the many marginalized artists, women in particular, who went against the idea of a heteronormative traditional family while continuing to make work, often in domestic situations. For long they were ignored or not taken seriously by the art market and institutions. This is what drew the artist to fireworks, as they follow – just like those artists – a not predetermined path. They are unpredictable, they are free. By slowing down the fireworks, zooming in, fragmenting them, and painting them, the film imagines the different paths one can take/choose in life. The film as well as the music is inspired by Kenneth Anger’s *Fireworks* from 1947. It is an experimental short film, made in his parents home in Hollywood. It is supposed to be one of the first American films to address queer identity/narrative.

Juliette Blightman (°1980, Farnham, Surrey, UK) works with various media and forms. Her paintings, drawings, performances, films, installations and texts juxtapose the ordinariness of everyday life and its ritualised dimensions. Rethinking notions of radical subjectivity and the personal and public, Blightman’s compositions are characterised by an objectivism that is gradually infected with the minute and shifting experience of passing time. Her work evokes moments of shared intimacy between friends and reminds the viewer that art and everyday life always happen alongside each other.

**Emma Cogné
Sun Traps, 2024**

Emma Cogné is a French designer who lives and works between France and Belgium, where she graduated from the textile design department of La Cambre in Brussels. Her body of work finds its process in the revaluation and transformation of used materials to highlight their intrinsic value. The textile medium is for her a means to widen the sensorial qualities that are specific to spatiality while engaging the personal experience of users. By showing the bare structures and layers of our houses, she reveals the unique aspects of matter and color as an attempt to reconnect humans to their built environment.

Videos in order of appearance:

- 1 *Ada M. Patterson, Bikkel, 2019*
digital video, color & sound, performance, 08:35
courtesy the artist and Copperfield, London
- 2 *Tourmaline, Pollinator, 2022*
digital video, black-and-white & sound, 5:08
courtesy the artist and Chapter NY, New York
- 3 *Pauline Curnier Jardin and Feel Good Cooperative, Fireflies (Luciole), 2021*
digital video of 16mm film, color & sound, 07:10
courtesy the artist and Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam
with support of Jacqui Davies / PRIMITIVE film, HKW Berlin & CRAC Occitanie
- 4 *Castiel Vitorino Brasileiro, Maybe calm is more important than freedom, 2022*
digital video, color & sound, 20:23
courtesy the artist and Mendes Wood DM, Brussels, São Paulo, Paris
- 5 *Juliette Blightman, Feux d’artifice/Burnout, 2023*
digital video, color & sound, 04:44
score and sound by Wayne Binitie
courtesy the artist and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam

Emma Cogné, Sun Traps, 2024
metal and woven plastic
180, 180 and 240 cm diameter
courtesy the artist