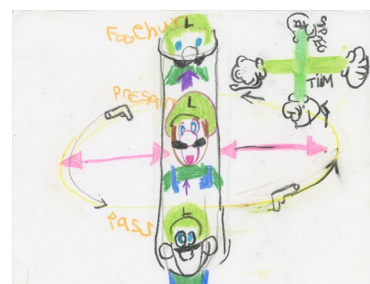
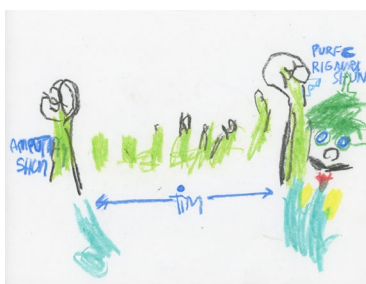
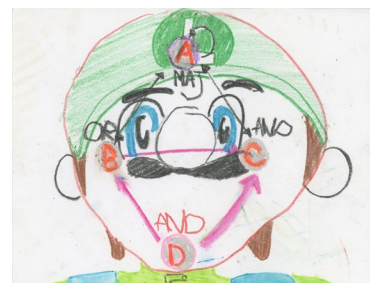


VAULT KAJE



KAJE

VAULT

KEVIN HERNÁNDEZ ROSA, MARISA WILLIAMSON
and ARIEN WILKERSON

KAJE is pleased to present VAULT, a multi-faceted exhibition and performance project by artists Kevin Hernández Rosa, Arien Wilkerson, and Marisa Williamson, accompanied by an artist publication and auxiliary programming. Rooted in the shared traumatic material histories of Hartford and Gowanus, VAULT explores the deep legacies of environmental racism and infrastructural neglect that have shaped these communities.

Nine years in the making, VAULT emerges from nearly a decade of interdisciplinary, collaborative research. The project draws inspiration from the shuttered John C. Clark Elementary School in Hartford, CT, closed in 2015 after dangerous levels of carcinogenic PCBs were discovered in its construction materials—products of Monsanto’s (now Bayer) mid-century building supply sales to American municipalities. The abandoned school stands as a stark monument to systemic neglect, racism, classism, and the enduring impact of toxic infrastructure on Black and Brown communities.

The Gowanus Canal, once one of the most polluted waterways on earth and a site of historic industrial dumping, serves as a parallel landscape for VAULT. As chronicled by Juan-Andres Leon, the canal’s transformation from a natural creek to an industrial artery left behind a

legacy of contamination, including PCBs and the infamous “black mayonnaise” sediment, more than 20 feet deep in places: “As New York City grew over the second half of the 19th century, its industries, which would simply bury their waste next to their residential neighbors, faced pressure from locals to relocate. Bad odors produced by these businesses were particularly feared as a cause of disease (at least until the rise of microbial explanations of disease in the 1870s), and so as a matter of public safety, the city encouraged industrial relocation to lowland areas, such as Gowanus. And as industry grew, so too did its need for large amounts of water, while the rapidly growing commerce in raw materials and finished products—from molasses to sugar, coal to artificial dyes—depended on water transportation.”

We are currently living in a time where discussions about education, safeguarding our boundaries, engaging with spirituality, religion, and sexual orientation dictate how we should educate or call in. At KAJE and near the Gowanus Canal, we are creating a notable history, one that addresses the contamination affecting not only the land but also the communities that often go unseen and unheard in a city troubled by militarized policing and fascism. VAULT confronts these hidden histories and the

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ongoing structural violence that persists in schools, homes, and neighborhoods. The project proposes a new space, neither transient nor fixed, for radical art. Drawing on performance, mark-making, and participatory programming, VAULT embodies a vision for sustaining creative, cultural, and spiritual ecologies in the face of fascist, racist, and environmental adversities.

At KAJE, the exhibition, performances, and publication challenge audiences to confront, not a sanitized moment, but a relentless, ever-shifting force of thought, praxis, and action. Offering prompts, affirmations, and alternative pathways that rethink, cut through complacency, and serve as a tool for environmental and social repair. VAULT is both an alarm and a call to action, urging communities and institutions to realign their practices in confronting environmental injustice.

VAULT builds something new from the wreckage. It's not a haven or a neutral gathering place; it's a living, breathing site, where art is a weapon and rally-

ing cry. The performances, publication, and exhibition at KAJE demand that we witness, remember, and act. We're not interested in comfort or easy answers. We're interested in survival, in radical honesty, in using art as a tool for realignment so institutions and individuals alike are forced to reckon with their complicity and their power. We are not waiting for rescue. VAULT is for those willing to get their hands involved in the process of sustaining what can be, to follow the cracks, to find beauty and meaning in the struggle. This is a call to all who refuse to be forgotten or poisoned in silence.

The system is working exactly as designed: erasing histories, stifling self-determination, and keeping Black and Brown communities fighting for air—literally. If you think this doesn't affect you, look closer. The toxins are in our homes, our schools, our bodies, refusing to let you look away. We live in a war one waged not with guns but with zoning laws, building codes, and the silent violence of environmental racism.

Additional support for VAULT | KAJE was provided by the Jackie McLean Fellowship at the University of Hartford.

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VAULT

**KEVIN HERNÁNDEZ ROSA, MARISA WILLIAMSON
and ARIEN WILKERSON**

BIOS

KEVIN HERNÁNDEZ ROSA (b.1994, Caguas, Puerto Rico) is a sculptor, writer, and educator. He received an MFA from the Yale School of Art in Sculpture in 2021 and served as the 2024-2025 Jackie McLean Fellow at the Hartford Art School. Select exhibitions include SculptureCenter (Long island City, NY), Rogue Car Gallery (Brooklyn, NY), D.D.D.D. Pictures (New York, NY), Austin Art Center (Trinity College, Hartford, CT), Fall River Museum of Contemporary Art (Fall River, MA), Hunt Gallery (Toronto, Ontario, CA), Weather Proof (Chicago, IL), Hatred 2 (Brooklyn, NY), and Slough Foundation / Public Trust (Philadelphia, PA)

MARISA WILLIAMSON is a project-based artist who works in video, image-making, installation, writing and performance around themes of history, race, feminism, and technology. Williamson's work maps the past onto geographies of the present. Her work has been featured in exhibitions throughout the US, as well as Rome, Berlin, Switzerland, and Buenos Aires. She was a 2012 participant in the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture and the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program in 2014-2015. Williamson holds a BA from Harvard University and an MFA from

CalArts. She is an Assistant Professor of Visual Art at the University of Virginia.

ARIEN WILKERSON (they/them) is a Black, queer, HIV+ choreographer, filmmaker, and installation artist. Raised in Hartford, CT, Wilkerson trained with Deborah Goffe and at The Artists Collective. They continued their education at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts and the Earl Mosley Institute of the Arts, as well as internationally in Cape Verde, Europe, and Tel Aviv. They currently co-curate Black Aesthetics at Judson Memorial Church and have served as a professor at Parsons School of Design. Wilkerson has presented work in various spaces, residency's and presentations including the University of the Arts, Vox Populi, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Quick Center, Icebox Project Space, and Yale School of Art. A recipient of numerous grants, including those from The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in Fine Arts The Velocity Fund, The Sachs Program for Arts Innovation, CT office the arts and NEFA's Rebecca Blunk Fund, they continue to champion experimental, community-driven performance. TNMOT AZTRO, founded by Arien Wilkerson, is a Philadelphia-based multidisciplinary performance company exploring the

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intersections of dance, film, sculpture, sound, and installation. Rooted in Black queer radical thought, the company redefines fine art's colonial, white supremacist, and institutional constraints,

centering themes of race, gender, labor, identity, and environmental justice. Their performances construct immersive, alternative worlds where audience engagement is integral.

ABOUT KAJE

KAJE was originally formed in the space between two artists' studios as a revolving-door dedication to the intermingling of attitudes, imaginations, and artwork. Over time, KAJE operations have evolved to achieve greater autonomy as an outright entity. Our mission remains—to support creative impulses that are difficult to define, and in need of participatory testing grounds. KAJE seeks to invoke new styles of audienceship through nontraditional programming and a spirit of spontaneity. Results range from dance to dinners, to books and their launches, and sculpture and drumming, research and meetings, and screenings and speaking and saxophone, indoor and outdoor moods, and language, et al.

Access to unconventional outlets within New York City continues to challenge artists, across disciplines. In a climate where the vast majority of exhibition making is market driven, we envision KAJE as a place to suspend belief, and develop experimental voices beyond the anxieties of the marketplace.

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Kevin Hernández Rosa
Untitled

Custom 3D crystal made from a pdf created by the Instagram account @gta860, found entertainment system
39 x 49 x 14.5 in
2025



Kevin Hernández Rosa
Untitled

Mimicry of whiteboard created by YouTuber @caseyzander in his video titled "Women consider all forms of day to day communication as the man being desperate for a relationship!", resin, pigment, deck screws
48 x 10 x 72 in
2025



Kevin Hernández Rosa
20 minute figure study

graphite on paper in float frame
18 x 24 in
2014



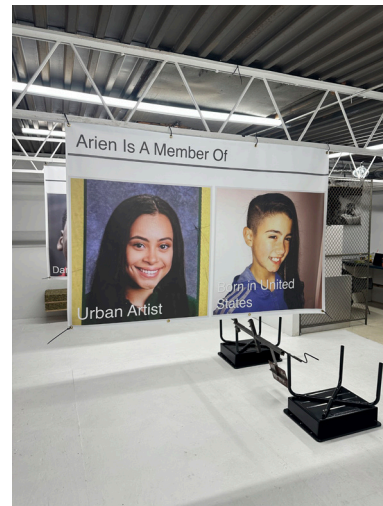
Kevin Hernández Rosa
The Computational Boundary of a "Luigi": Developmental Bioelectricity Drives Multicellularity and Scale-Free Cognition

Crayon drawings on printer paper based on the style of Luigi from Mario Brothers and power points by biologist Michael Levin, Ph.D., hemp, wooden clothes pins, nails
dimensions variable
2025



Kevin Hernández Rosa
Spit

steel, children's desks
25.5 x 70 x 25 in
2025



Kevin Hernández Rosa
Roast

Four vinyl banners
48 x 72 in
2025

OCT 25–NOV 30, 2025

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Catherine Telford Keogh
Benthic Archive No. 1.5
 Hermetically sealed scientifically blown glass ampoules, pasteurized sediment* from Gowanus Canal, DSTVITOLux-f Thermoplastic, UV-DTF transfer, custom stainless steel tray
 45 x 32.5 x 5.75 in
 2025



Kellen Grissom
Mr. Punctuality
 Steel
 7 x 32 x 7 in
 2025

Kellen Grissom
Untitled
 discount camera
 3.5 x 9.5 x 6.5 in
 2025



Marisa Williamson
Vault | Handbook
 2017–25
 The Vault|Handbook is a collection of writings, conversations, notes, and images documenting the creation of VAULT between 2017 and 2025
 Dimensions variable
 Blue 1/3, Green 2/3, Red 3/3



Arien Wilkerson
In memoriam
 Three insignia televisions, SD video, color, no sound, custom powder coated steel and aluminum frame
 60 x 41 x 28.5, minutes, seconds
 2025



Nyoka.now
Core Concepts of Living Work
 8.5 x 5.5 inch saddle stitched zine
 2025

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