

## Art Agency, Partners

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## Pushing Boundaries

### Ten LGBTQ+ emerging artists of note



Installation view of "Hammer Projects: Math Bass" at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. Photo: Brian Forrest.

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This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the [Stonewall riots](#), which were a major catalyst for the modern-day gay rights movement, whose aim is to increase legal rights for the LGBTQ+ community. Despite certain milestones having been achieved over the past half-century, many individuals and groups are still fighting to have a voice, culturally and legally: to be recognized as equal and to be protected politically.

Recently there has been more recognition in the art world of the important role gender identification and sexuality play for artists who have advanced art-making. Exhibitions such as "[Trigger: Gender as a Tool and a Weapon](#)" at New York's New Museum in 2017-18 point to important, under-known histories and to pioneers and leaders whose work paved the way for the next generations of artists—who are still blazing trails and identifying new modes of cultural production. If any one characteristic defines the LGBTQ+ art community, it may indeed be its plurality.

To recognize and celebrate the voices of artists in the LGBTQ+ community, *In Other Words* presents ten emerging artists of note. Through humor, abstraction, figuration and new technologies, these artists are pushing boundaries, increasing

representation and poking holes in dominant power structures.

**Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Born 1982, San Bernardino, CA**



Paul Mpagi Sepuya, *Mirror Study* (2018). Image courtesy team (gallery, inc.)

One of the artists whose work is included in the [79<sup>th</sup> Whitney Biennial](#) (until 22 September), [Paul Mpagi Sepuya's](#) photographs are rich, sensual and angular. He makes intimate portraits, often fragmenting locations, objects and figures, describing complicated relationships between the artist and subject-collaborators. The artist implicates the viewer, too, in some instances by turning the camera towards the subject, within the already fragmented frame. However geometric, Sepuya composes with the softest touch. Torn photographs of body parts, scenes seen from the other side of a closing curtain and bodies in exchange, Sepuya builds his own world within the frame, queering the gaze.

## Morgan Bassichis, Born 1983, USA



Morgan Bassichis, June 14th, 2019, at the Whitney Biennial 2019, Whitney Museum of American Art. Photograph © Paula Court

Performance artist, comedian and activist [Morgan Bassichis](#) is having a big year. On the heels of his performances with musician [Ethan Philbrick](#) at the [Abrons Arts Center](#)—*Klezmer for Beginners*—which premiered in April, Bassichis is included in “[Nobody Promised You Tomorrow: Art 50 Years After Stonewall](#)”, a show commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall uprising on view at the Brooklyn Museum (until 8 December). Last month he performed [Nibbling the Hand that Feeds Me](#) as part of the Whitney Biennial.

Bassichis sings songs, sometimes made up on the spot and with the help of the audience. He tells jokes and plays the piano. His performances range in topic from pop culture to queer politics and identity, hitting all notes from the mundane to profound and making people laugh throughout. While he is a commanding and incisive performer, he is funny enough to have his own comedy show on TV.

## Troy Michie, Born 1985, El Paso, Texas



Troy Michie, *Hung Out To Dry/ This Land Was Mexican Once* (2019). Courtesy of the artist and COMPANY, New York

Commissioned to produce new work for the inaugural “Open Call” program at The Shed earlier this year, [Troy Michie](#) works in collage, paint, sculpture and installation. In dialogue with the historical tradition of collage-making, Michie’s work addresses race, class, gender and sexuality. His source material includes photography, fabric, paint, papier mâché and niche porn magazines from the 1980s featuring men of color. Michie’s collages often include images of the zoot suit: high-waisted, baggy pants and a long coat made popular in Harlem during the great depression among black and Mexican Americans. Michie’s use of the zoot suit engenders questions around identity and power and, within the medium of collage, there is the implication of disguise.

## **Brendan Fernandes, Born 1979, Nairobi, Kenya**



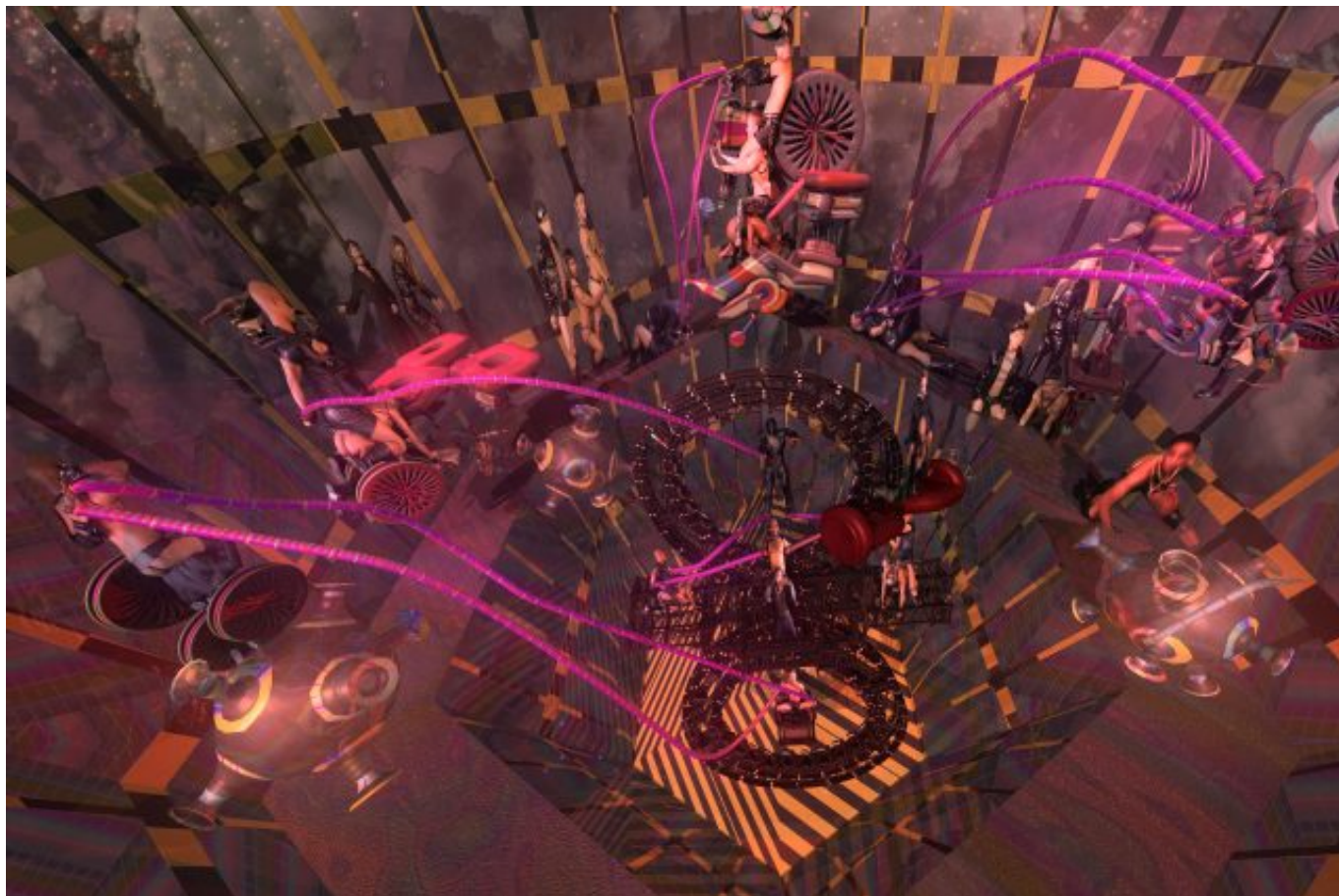
Brendan Fernandes, *The Master and Form* (2018). Performance view, Graham Foundation, Chicago, IL, 2018. Image courtesy the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. Photograph by Brendan Leo Merea

Brendan Fernandes has been called “a punk rock ballerina propelled by a queer, political ethos”. His installation-based performances are energetic even in stasis. Conceived for the Graham Foundation in Chicago and now on view at the Whitney, Fernandes’s installation/performance piece *The Master and Form* (2018) is part-cage, part-playground, animated at times by a group of formally trained ballet dancers. Mastery, submission and kink are at play within the sculptural installation made up of hanging ropes and a central cage. Fernandes’s performative acts of tension, release and rest within the fetishized structures are sexually charged and subversive.

## David Antonio Cruz, Born 1974, Philadelphia, PA

New York-based interdisciplinary artist [David Antonio Cruz](#) is concerned with gender and identity, queer culture, race and how the body performs within these constructs. Cruz’s paintings are rich and vibrant—the figure often built from a complex palette: large areas of the ground are monochromatic and thin, in stark contrast to other areas which have been so built-up, they appear to have left the canvas. The figure is often fragmented from the environment in which Cruz paints it, making the subject appear at odds, or hyper-present within the picture plane. Cruz writes that he is “interested in interjecting the portraiture canon with brown and black bodies, as well as gender-fluid and queer bodies, to complicate heteronormative perceptions of racial and queer identity and highlight intersectional identities not often discussed or represented in history and society.”

## Jacolby Satterwhite, Born 1986, Columbia, South Carolina



Jacolby Satterwhite, *Blessed Avenue Factory 5* (2018). Courtesy of the artist and Morán Morán

[Satterwhite](#) is a multi-media artist working primarily in video, performance, drawing, printmaking and masterful 3D animation. As a child, he went home every day after school to watch Janet Jackson videos: now his work is concerned with mass consumption, sexual fantasies and labor. Satterwhite creates hypnotic installations of imaginary worlds referencing video game and queer culture, dance and porn among many other influences. His own unique movement language, present in his work across media, from animation to performance and drawing, is electrifying and sometimes grotesque. Satterwhite's use of body and object, across media is often surreal and other worldly.

## **Tourmaline, Born 1982/1983, Massachusetts**

Based in New York City, [Tourmaline](#) is a writer, film-maker and activist for black queer and trans people and communities. Earlier this year Tourmaline released two new 16mm film shorts: *Salacia* and *Mary of Ill Fame*. Set in Seneca Village—an enclave of New York City that existed between 1825 and 1857 as a refuge for black people displaced by the city's plans for the development of Central Park—these films follow a black trans sex worker and outlaw called Mary Jones. *Salacia* is playing on a loop at the Brooklyn Museum until 8 December as part of the exhibition "Nobody Promised You Tomorrow: Art 50 Years After Stonewall".

## **Math Bass, Born 1981, New York, NY**



Installation view of "Hammer Projects: Math Bass" at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. Photo: Brian Forrest.

Los Angeles based artist [Math Bass](#) has created a unique language of abstract forms and stylized figures —modern-day hieroglyphs: cigarettes, bones, circles, letter Zs and alligators, among others. With a consistently flat color palette, Bass's geometric language is deliberately ambiguous and curious, like a haiku poem drawn in index. Working across media, Bass's language translates well from paintings and drawings and sculpture to installation and performance. Poetry, music and improvised action are often part of Bass's performance work, which sometimes include the artist's sculpture and architectural interventions.

## **Christina Quarles, Born 1985, Chicago, IL**



Christina Quarles: *...Tha Color of Tha Sky (Magic Hour)*, (2017). Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles and Pilar Corrias, London. © Christina Quarles

[Christina Quarles](#) is a queer, multiracial, cis-woman painter. She paints bodies in abstracted environments. By creating surreal horizons and with the use of painted fabrics (curtains, rugs, table clothes) she builds worlds where barely-rendered, transparent, exaggerated, fantastical, distended bodies move in and out of the picture plane. Her paintings are transitory, other-worldly and dislocating and yet they remain intimate. Quarles avoids readable signs of subjectivity in her figures, whose skin tones are sometimes painted blue, or yellow and are liminal in their relationships to their painted environment. Her subjects move in and out of expertly painted, discrete worlds—not confined to the canvas—where matter is fluid.

## **Marley Freeman, Born 1981, Boston, MA**



Marley Freeman, *Park Closes* (2016–19). Courtesy of the artist and Karma, New York.

The New York-based artist [Marley Freeman](#) is an abstract painter whose painted forms toe the line between legible shapes and pure abstraction. Sometimes a figure appears explicitly, or perhaps not. Freeman is a painter's painter who makes present the game of it all, building layer on layer and form over form. Having studied textiles in Southern California and New York, the artist references fabric patterns from another time: The artist's hand-mixed colors have a vintage feel. Even the small paintings have a presence bigger than their size. They are colorful and buoyant and absolutely of our time.