

El/yse Ambrose

artist & scholar | www.elyseambrose.com

Abridged Artist Statement: I employ images (still, moving, digital, and archival) and sound (spoken and found) to practice witnessing and recording the aliveness and possibility of blackness, transness, and queerness while retaining subjects' opacities, illegibilities, and refusals. Through my visual and aural projects, I foreground the profundity of quotidian world(un)making, of subtlety and slowness in movement, as well as themes of intimacy and connection, healing and the sacred. My praxis is grounded in black feminist, black trans, and black queer ways of knowing.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

stilled waters | "water overflows with memory", photo-sonic experiment in river water, black geography, and black feminist *pluripoesis* through photography, video, and found sound, in-progress.

Burying Lies, part of the series "Elemental Freedom Pursuits," video/a counterspell/countering ritual employed to destroy lies told across centuries to criminalize and demonize black children in justification of their murder by agents of the state, utilizing curse words upon Lizzie Durr (d. 1895) and Michael Brown (d. 2014) as a point of entry, 2026. Series in-progress.

Spirit in the Dark Body: Black Queer Expressions of the Im/material, photo-sonic experiment exploring black queer engagements with the sacred through photography, oral histories, and mixed sound, 2018-present.

SELECTED RESIDENCIES, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Black August Arts Residency, Tkaronto/Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2025.

Grant Project: Black Trans Ethical World(un)making Lab, Engaging Humanities Grant, University of California Humanities Research Institute, 2024-2025.

Center for Black, Brown, and Queer Studies (BBQ+) Fellow, 2024-2025.

Grant Project: "black queer subjectivity and the science of black queer freedom making," (collaboration with interdisciplinary artist, storæe michele) Art, Politics, and Publics of Black Faith Grant, Henry Luce Foundation and the Columbia University Center for African American Religion, Sexual Politics, and Social Justice, 2020-2021.

ART PRACTICE

Individual

Workshop, Living Liberation Lab, Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brasil, 2026.

Showing, Open Studio, Black August Arts Residency, Tkaronto/Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2025.

Showing, "Spirit in the Dark Body: Black Queer Expressions of the Im/material," IX Congresso Latino-Americano de Gênero e Religião, Faculdades EST, São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil, 2025.

Virtual Showing, "Spirit in the Dark Body: Black Queer Expressions of the Im/material," House of Mark West, Bronx, NY, June 2020.

Showing, "Spirit in the Dark Body: Black Queer Expressions of the Im/material," L Street Fine Arts Gallery, American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, San Diego, CA, November 2019.

Collaborative

Showing, Cinematographer, "a ritual for handwashing" (2020), *Outfest Fusion 2023 One Minute Movie Contest: ENVISIONING ABUNDANCE*, April 2023, Los Angeles, CA.

El/yse Ambrose

artist & scholar | www.elyseambrose.com

Showing, “release,” photo-sonic experience, *Animisms, Those Queer Transmissions*, Curator: Jaguar Mary X, 4 min, 59 sec., 2021. Local Project, Long Island City, NY, June 2022

Cinematographer, experimental archives as meditations/rituals from Lambda Literary Award Finalist *mama [rose.]*, written and performed by storäe michele, “ceiling | sky: a meditation, archive #293,” 2021.

Cinematographer, Executive Producer, and Co-Creative Director, experimental archives as meditations/rituals from Lambda Literary Award Finalist *mama [rose.]*, written and performed by storäe michele, “a practice in freedom-making, #28” featuring song performed by Be Steadwell, 2021.

Cinematographer and Co-Creative Director, experimental archives as meditations/rituals from Lambda Literary Award Finalist *mama [rose.]*, written and performed by storäe michele, “planets and stardust, archive #716,” 2021.

Contributor, Research and Development Workshop, *A Burning Church* a musical by Zhailon Levingston, Alex Hare, and Nehemiah Luckett, December 2020, Premiered at New Ohio Theater, New York City, NY, 2021.

ARTS-RELATED PUBLICATIONS

(Invited) “What’s Magnificent about It and What’s Miserable about It?: Blackqueer Ethics, Community, and the Abject-Sublime,” *The Message Is?* (an edited volume on black religion in the art of Arthur Jafa), eds. Jessica Davenport and Nathanael Homewood, in progress.

(Invited by editor) Co-authored with storäe michele, “Queer and Trans Performance and Ritual,” *Palgrave Handbook of Queer and Trans Studies in Religion*, edited by Melissa M. Wilcox (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2025).

Contributor, *Cane: A New Critical Edition Oracular Card Deck*, a project by Diane Exavier, Carlos Sirah and Anne de Marcke (Olympia, WA: The 3rd Thing Press, 2023).

Contributor, *sacred incantations: rituals of trans wisdom for every season*, deck and booklet featuring 70 trans, two-spirit, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, and other expansively non-cis contributors, a project of enfleshed, 2023.

"Aesthetic Intimacies: Reflections on Elle Pérez's Devotions at the BMA," BMoreArt, September 2022.

Co-authored with Benae Beamon, “From James Booker to Big Freedia and Back Again: Black Queer Expression, Agency and Potentiality,” in *Queering Spirituality and Community in the Deep South*, ed. Kamden Strunk (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2019), 139-158.

Contributor, *Queer and Trans Flesh: A Divine Encounter Vita Divina* deck, a project of enfleshed, 2020.

ART TALKS

Pre- and Post-screening Commentator, *Hell-Bound Train* (1930), SPOOKS: A Black Horror Film Series by Scary Black Folks (Dr. Courtney R. Baker and John Jennings), UCR Arts, Riverside, CA, October 2023.

Panelist (with writers Hari Ziyad, Donja R. Love, Kleaver Cruz, and storäe michele), “A Stoop

El/yse Ambrose

artist & scholar | www.elyseambrose.com

Conversation: "Writing Black Queer Life Stories," PEN America's Lit Crawl NYC, Brooklyn, NY, October 2018.

Panelist, "Lost in Lust" with Mike Albo and Ophira Eisenberg, Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn, NY, June 2018.

SELECTED ARTS-RELATED PRESENTATIONS AND MEDIA

Presenter, "Collage | Assemblage: Sensorial Worlding as Pedagogical Insurgence," American Academy of Religion, San Diego, CA, November 2024.

Co-Organizer and Co-Facilitator, *Insurgencies/Counterinsurgencies: A Conversation on Aesthetics, Archives, and Autonomy* with Shellyne Rodriguez and Orisanmi Burton, Center for Ideas and Society, University of California, Riverside, April 2024.

Interviewer, "*Keloid Reflections*," a performance exploring trans identity in Indonesia, Conference on Queer and Trans Studies in Religion, University of California, Riverside, February 2024.

Interviewer and Series Curator, "Feminism, Religion, & Art Mini-Series | An Invitation to Transformation/'New Skin'" with interdisciplinary artist storæe michele, *Feminists Talk Religion* Podcast, January 2022.

Interviewer and Series Curator, "Feminism, Religion, & Art Mini-Series | An Invitation to Ancestral Healing" with creative Isabel Mareş, *Feminists Talk Religion* Podcast, November 2021.

Interviewer and Series Curator, "Feminism, Religion, & Art Mini-Series | An Invitation to Rewilding," with playwright and director Monét Noelle Marshall, *Feminists Talk Religion* Podcast, May 2021.

Interviewer and Series Curator, "Feminism, Religion, & Art Mini-Series | Vessel of Mystery" with artist and singer/songwriter Autumn Brown, *Feminists Talk Religion* Podcast, April 2021.

Invited Panelist, "Our Lives: Art as Resistance," *Blaque Political Collective*, October 2020.

Panelist, "Redefining Black Intra-Relationality with Black Queer Women: The Dialogues between James Baldwin, Nikki Giovanni, and Audre Lorde," *Les Amis de la Maison Baldwin*, St. Paul de Vence, France, June 2020 (prevented by COVID-19).

"Decolonizing the Icon: Gabriel García Román's Queer Icons and the Deconstruction of Iconoclasm," Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, New Brunswick, NJ, March 2018.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Religion and Society, Drew University, Madison, NJ, August 2019

Concentrations: Ethics and African American Studies

Certificate: Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

B.B.A., Howard University, Washington, DC, May 2007

Courses toward MFA, Fashion Institute of Technology, 2018

CURRENT POSITION

Associate Professor, Department of Black Study & Department for the Study of Religion
University of California, Riverside