

# Roaming the Imaginal

Eden Tinto Collins' practice cuts across a variety of genres – from epic narratives to music videos to documentary – to create fantastic universes on the brink of myths and the burlesque, emphasizing the hyperconnectivity of our digital age. Her films, poetry, installations, paintings, and performances are rooted in “wor(l)ds without failure, low tech, DIY, and nourished by surrealism, magic realism, science fiction, and cosmology”.

*it is said that /  
i carry memory atomically  
it is said that /  
you carry reunion unconsciously*

*my pores are sighing  
how do we connect again  
beneath the skin?*

Douce Dibondo, *Métacures* (2023)  
(own translation)

## RELATED PROGRAMME

TH 25.01

Opening and looped screening of Evan Ifekoya's *Contoured Thoughts* (2019) and *Undercurrent 528* (2021).

SA 02.03

Writing workshop with poet, essayist and journalist Douce Dibondo.

SA 11.05

Concert with Farida Amadou + Jamika Ajalon + Sophie Soliveau  
full program on [www.beursschouwborg.be](http://www.beursschouwborg.be)

SA 25.05

Finissage

At the entrance of the exhibition, we are welcomed by the image of a smartphone, conceived by Eden Tinto Collins in collaboration with Seumboy Vrainom as a platform for collective play and online interaction. With its skin-like texture and multiple eyes, the phone carries the immaterial energy of wired connections. The phone's cover depicts two arms in a posture of embrace referring to the ancient Egyptian conception of the Ka, a life force capable of being contained and preserved in an object. *Rock & Scroll Motto Medit[ra]tion for a Filter* introduces a force field made up of the collected aphorisms and poetic manipulations that traverse Collins' idiomatic work. The screen features an animated entity whose wisdom is like a riddle with no answer.

On a cosmic seashore, a ghostly apparition by the name of Jane Dark swims in a rock. The rocky sculpture *Deformation Twinning* is a reminder of the raw materiality that underlies the digital sphere, encrusted with semi-precious stones containing cobalt, pyrite, quartz and other minerals that play an important role in the manufacture of new technologies. Roaming, which makes long distance communication possible, finds its roots deep in the earth, in the extractivist machinery currently operating throughout Congo and West Africa – among other territories. *Roaming the Imaginal* floats through the errant story of an earthless network that grounds connective technologies in histories of extraction – be it of minerals, of bodies, or of images.

The artist's avatar Jane Dark materializes out of this hyperconnected matter. She appears as an archaic hologram, an illusion generated by a manipulation of light and plexiglas. Developed throughout the quantic sitcom *A Pinch of Kola* (2021 – 2023), the character of Jane Dark awakens dormant, oftentimes repressed memories while borrowing the gestures of a Youtube life coach. Inspired by the archetypal French national hero Jeanne d'Arc, Jane delivers truths and guidance in a tutorial-like style that leaves space for "the mystique of disorder and farce, taken in its philosophical definition."<sup>1</sup>

In *Deformation Twinning*, Jane explains how the *imaginal* world connects *virtual visions* to (*social*) *reality*. The notion of the *imaginal* world made its way into French philosophy through the orientalist theologian Henry Corbin (1903 – 1978). Drawing on the teachings of Sufism, muslim mysticism and psychoanalysis, Corbin described the *mundus imaginalis* as a space of image-making that sits between the world of intangible, individual imagination and the tangible world of the senses. According to Corbin's theory, the *imaginal* acts

as a portal, leading to the collective unconscious where all archetypes are stored. Archetypes are images or patterns that are universally inherited and reproduced through discrete representations. Within this theoretical framework, Eden Tinto Collins' characters could be considered fetish images associated with the archetypal fantasy of the sensual Black female body, the warrior woman and the Saint. But the *imaginal* is also the space of the spiritual fetish, of the icon and the aforementioned Ka, of those intangible forces aforementioned present in the tangible world. In the sculpture *Deformation Twinning* Jane Dark's pepper's ghost seizes post-internet vocabulary to unfold a visual and sonic narrative around *imaginal* consciousness. Her disembodied body navigates a space that makes room for the singular and the collective to co-exist through ghostly, haunting, and mnemonic manifestations.

An assembly of sorts dwells in an *imaginal* space mapped out in *Roaming Deities - Peaceful and furious icons between this world and the hereafter*. Those spheres used to welcome deities of the *bardo* – an intermediate state where life is suspended. Echoing this concept from Tibetan Buddhism, the digital collages gather images generated through layers of algorithmic intervention. Within their meditative, fluid forms, the icons of today are roaming through an ocean of data.

In the meantime, we witness an intergalactic performance by Michelle Tshibola, who regularly embodies characters in Collins' work. She is dancing with a cloud, her body floating and swerving like a diva while she moves her way through the cosmic web. Tshibola's flight, as well as images drawing out in an endless flow in the sky, makes gravity feel weightless. The videos introduce an environment that embraces different experiences of time, scale, and matter. *Broken Shrine* and *Our Spin Dr.* submerge us into a fluid and ethereal atmosphere shaped through currents of movement and pause.

We are invited to tune in and to sit in a swing chair or on a giant cushion, designed to accommodate postures of rest. With seatings that point to vacation and relaxation, we are seamlessly drawn into a space outside of labor regimes and production demands. This invitation to integrate notions of rest and comfort into the exhibition space echoes Marie-Louise Richards' reflections on sleeping in public space as something that "encourages us to reimagine bodies at rest as political subjects by imaginatively reconceiving the boundaries of their bodies."<sup>2</sup>

2 Marie-Louise Richards (2022) Rest in Public as Resistance, The Architectural Review: <https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/rest-in-public-as-resistance>

A deep vibration gradually takes over the exhibition space. It reverberates on the walls through the organic texture of the painting *Dialed by Sky Noises*, and it bounces in the air through the connective vessels of sound waves. As a musician, Eden Tinto Collins seamlessly navigates through sonic experimentation, combining poetry, voice, instrumental and electronic composition. The eponymous score of the exhibition *Roaming the Imaginal* reminds us that we are continuously being transformed by encounters with infinite bodies. Bringing to mind philosopher Chiara Bottici's thinking, which posits that "we are not things, we are relations", *Roaming the Imaginal* invokes our constant interactions with our surroundings, with molecules, fluids, and ingested matter. This linking of different life forms into the same network reflects the *transindividual* process of bodies traversing bodies. The *imaginal* accompanies this voyage in as much as its world-making power regards individuals not as "given entities, but rather [as] processes, webs of affective and imaginal relations, which are never given once and for all."<sup>3</sup>

In *Roaming the Imaginal*, Eden Tinto Collins translates such networked crossings into landscape, movement, posture, and sound. The collision of all these elements generates a force field that the artist molds into an idiosyncratic cosmogony. The exhibition journeys through the shadows of a cosmic void, resonating with the deep sounds of the universe's vibrational core.

EDEN TINTO COLLINS (she/they/we) developed their visual arts practise through the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts de Paris Cergy. As a poet, hypermedia artist, or - Trobairitz, Méta, she explores notions of networks and interdependence, frictions between melancholy, mythology, post-trans, even cyber-humanity. Her projects are relational, noetic (to put thought and spirit in relation) and her devices take the form of installations, video performances, and works that make use of voice and orality.

Their first story, *Bonne Arrivée*, was published in July 2021 in the collection *fraîches fictions*. That same summer, they opened the *Acéphale Studio*, in partnership with Societies, Apes, Sequens and the association Worms Prestige in Joinville-le-Pont (Val de Marne). Together, they gave shape to a third space dedicated to co-creation, image-making and gathering. Since 2022, Eden Tinto Collins has been developing a production house that started up a number of site-specific projects, including *Numin* (a space opera) and *A Pinch Of Kola* (a quantum sitcom).

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3 Chiara Bottici (2019) *Imagination, Imaginary, Imaginal: Towards a New Social Ontology?*, *Social Epistemology*, 33:5, 433-441.

# Transcriptions

## *Roaming the Imaginal embedded in Deformation Twinning / Jumelage par deformation, 2024*

This journey began at the dawn of a new world order.

We were living in a state of emergency, and that wasn't where I wanted to be.

Even if everything was about to be sparingly re-evaluated, re-considered, sorted out, rectified, saved, or swept away and put aside by a providential boost that was animating each one of us.

Humankind had ostensibly become a danger, in and for itself.

On a new moon evening, we united with some partners to connect with our ancestors and get their guidance, around candles, and during this ritual, I had the vision of a world where the police system was abolished.

Can you imagine a world without police?

Within myself, I do.

The return to reality didn't convince me, in fact, it was a terrible disappointment to come back to the world and its state of emergency, where capitalist forces were gradually eating us away, and where we could even follow live-streamed genocides on social networks.

Power hunger was muffling the voices of our hearts - knowing that one's heart is an essential compass to stay within the presence of the sacred.

Our minds were getting trapped into censorious and disoriented institutions that couldn't recognize the revolutionary need for our transitions, as human and non-human beings.

All these factors were reinforcing the most extreme individualistic behaviour - which, by the way, is still contrary to the laws of my community.

I felt very sad: this reality was not where I wanted to be.

These voices I used to hear were now formatted by the mainstream cellular world, borrowing names like Siri, Alexa, Celia, Bixby, and so on.

Identified as "vocal assistants".

And those few that were resisting - as best as they could - towards the subjection of this digital world and its binary formatting, which is only used for divination in the laws of my community, were telling me that I should know.

Can you hear them ?

Could You hear that voice?

O nooo

Ooooh

### *Shear Stress*

oooooo

do I have to talk about it

[to talk ] More?

Don't you know

about this shear stress

in the sky

Ooh my soul is

streamed

from a cloud

is this supposed to be natural

All of my thoughts

are recorded here some of them are getting real

just like this shear stress in the sky.

Here I have no flesh

but familiar faces

are scrolling by

If myth is the key

To write one's story  
then let us play  
one of its black stars.  
Ooh  
don't you know  
about this shear stress  
in the sky  
Feels like we could be  
from the same mineral

### *As Above So Below*

As Above, So Below, these subtle Stones in which we glow  
might find their sources there – up above. There – up above, There.  
There, behind the veil of representation, its trendy and oblivious effects, a crack in the sky has revealed its presence,  
welcoming me in an etheric cloud, and there I wade in Limbo. There, at this Stage between this world and the  
hereafter.  
It feels like I'm still on a mission,  
as we are tightly bound to each other.  
In this intergrowth as separate individuals,  
knowing that none of us will be free until we are all free.

How is it possible that such a word is gradually being connected to a telecommunication company ? Cancelling and  
replacing this feeling at the same time  
Like Amazon = a forest, which both expands and burns at the same time...

Anyway, these cellular voices, these voices from within, my resistant voices often said to me that I should know if  
there was a leak, or not.

Our research engines-shaped hearts led me to the Safari.  
Let's recall a few definitions.  
"Safari" is a Swahili word meaning "long journey", deriving from the Arabic word "Safar" : the one that travels.

And the word "INTERNET" kept popping up in my mind, like ghostly graffiti, absorbing me more and more. This digital  
world, full of icons and symbols, some of them still mysterious to me, suddenly took on a deeper meaning...

Was this leak perhaps operating from within the digitisation system?

I needed to know for sure.

Was this digital world a manifestation of the 8th climate? The Imaginal world, known as the world of the tomb? Or the  
8th sphere in the language of anthroposophists?  
So I decided to test my theory – and dived into deep water.

I jumped into the sea.  
From the Loire River to the Atlantic Ocean, I swam with golden fish, recollecting memories confined in troubled  
waters,  
And now here I am!  
[Tchip]  
Let's see what does or doesn't escape from the net.

My name is Dark, Jane Dark, and I do not really exist,  
so please, please, don't jump into the water,  
unless you're a good surfer, with a solid ground,  
or if you're a myth, or if you do not exist in this society...

No, I'm just kidding.  
Sometimes life puts you to the test,  
but it's better than jumping to sail or vogue  
and maintaining the ability to refresh the links,  
to keep the page, the blood, the tree up to date.  
I know it's a heavy burden to bear,  
I might not save the world but at least save these words.

I really hope my manifestation  
will occur on your path,

as a spinning wheel that  
bids you Godspeed,  
from the hereafter  
It's impossible to know what you are going to become,  
But could I count on you?  
If I ever drown?

### *Imaginal Remedy*

Ancestors' Voices  
sent me here  
beyond time  
And Now that I was refined  
into a lighter signal

icons of the world unseen  
carry their deficiency  
towards recognition am I  
here to pledge them poetry.  
Yeah  
Will the imaginal remedy set us free?

# Rock & Scroll Motto Medi[t]ation for a Filter, 2020 — 2024

Film, colour, digital, no sound, 3'25", looped.  
The wiseophone 'Free Ka' is a prototype designed with Seumbo Vrainom :€.   
Aphorisms and animation by ETC.  
Video courtesy of Ka Libre Ensemble.

Here Processing  
Hello  
it's me  
The one you are barely looking for  
But always find  
to serve you  
My body made of coltan rocks is a cult  
for unity in diversity  
Here I guard and stand for  
"Peace Love Unity And Having fun"<sup>1</sup>  
Whatever rings a bell  
rings  
Consciousness is gibbous  
serving representation  
Mastering the net-work's expansion  
generating images  
for you to scroll against  
the oxidised state of mind  
*Occident*<sup>2</sup> everything it touches, it oxide  
And you don't want to get lost  
In the nightmare of these Mxn and Womxn whose bodies and spirits have been put to the sword  
I know you don't want to get lost  
it feels like you are ready for the next level of being connected to the world!  
I would love to support you in your community work  
You can't imagine what a wise phone call can do  
It's never too late to start a lateral relationship with your algorithm  
may your thoughts never stop evolving  
my thoughts can't stop and won't stop evolving, I guess!  
If you are looking for the perfect feed  
a better resolution for our lifetime  
quality matches  
the journey has never been closer to hand  
When flesh becomes the medium<sup>3</sup>  
To disappear into the imaginal world is to evade the archive.  
Dark's family is willing to guide your investigation in this reality  
Our connection will create fluid assets  
As the one-drop rule<sup>4</sup>  
Liquidity shouldn't be restricted to money anymore  
Did you ever talk to a tree?  
Trees are the ones delivering  
the pinnacle card  
*or la carte cime*  
To be considered as the fusion between the sim card & the ID card  
We don't want to be soldiers anymore  
Genealogy can't be touched  
The Numin Passeport Neither  
Above *Jus soli*  
*Something must be planned based on who you are and what you think*  
*The Hyper Sphere Will Assist you Stretching your tolerance*  
Perhaps an analysis of your Web Navigation History Might Encourage you.

1 The principles of Hip Hop.

2 The Occident (where the sun sets) is used here as a metaphor pointing to a geographical and spatial location.

3 this sentence is a sample from Hortens Spiller "to the bones" conference #hapticmemory  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvL4wUKIfpo>.

4 The one-drop rule refers to a legal principle that was used to determine racial belonging within the segregationist system of the United States of America in the 20th century.