



## Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility

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The increasing representation of trans identity throughout art and popular culture in recent years has been nothing if not paradoxical. Trans visibility is touted as a sign of a liberal society, but it has coincided with a political moment marked both by heightened violence against trans people (especially trans women of color) and by the suppression of trans rights under civil law. *Trap Door* grapples with these contradictions. The essays, conversations, and dossiers gathered here delve into themes as wide-ranging yet interconnected as beauty, performativity, activism, and police brutality. Collectively, they attest to how trans people are frequently offered “doors”—entrances to visibility and recognition—that are actually “traps” accommodating trans bodies and communities only insofar as they cooperate with dominant norms. The volume speculates about a third term, perhaps uniquely suited for our time: the trapdoor, neither entrance nor exit, but a secret passageway leading *elsewhere*. *Trap Door* begins a conversation that extends through and beyond trans culture, showing how these issues have relevance for anyone invested in the ethics of visual culture.

## Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility Details

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# From Reader Review Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility for online ebook

## Eamon says

essential - particularly recommend the Sara Ahmed, Evay Hayward, Miss Major, and the archival materials

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## ralowe says

first off i want to regrettfully express my personal disappointment with the otherwise outstanding editors reina gossett, eric stanley and johanna burton. basically, for the last year or so, my close colleague and spiritual confidant, eric, had maliciously left me under the impression that this entire 500-page anthology was comprised of various essays written about the towering genius of craig calderwood, my dearest longtime companion. i'm personally deeply humiliated to have spent all that time looking forward to see what some of my favorite thinkers, creatives and activists had to say about craig's massive catalog of artistic splendor. but friends, i'm ruined. it was simply not meant to be. there is in fact only one essay, by loyal devotee of the exhilarating outer horizons of taste, nicole archer, that features craig's work (pg 294). while i am grateful to see that it was obviously objectively absolutely necessary to open the essay with craig, there is so much more to explore. pretty much 500-pages worth. instead the diligent editors gather together voices that collectively produce the effect of weilding the body as a frequently ungovernable, illegible and unruly active material relation in motion with/in/through/among/beyond/before/to frustrated institutions of legalistic state power. these pieces in diverse and indirect, accidental and conversant collaboration seek to deeply unsettle and delay capture within the violent, reductive, simplifying and commodifying order of authoritarian knowledge production. transgender in this anthology is plainly nothing less than a site of limitless insurgent and fugitive possibility. aside from the let-down of there literally maybe only being 3 pages out of hundreds that have anything to do with craig, i predict that this will be one of those books that will be owned, perhaps gifted, but not actually read. this has to do with it being a book published by a museum. it will look traffic-stoppingly gorgeous on a coffee table and is jawdropping to flip through. what most will most likely miss is the amount of careful attention the editors put into the content of the essays. the forceful poetic manifesto of transgender as lived and embodied potential is no more artfully described than in the essay collaboratively written by park mcarthur and constantina zavitsanos (pg 235). also definitely not to be missed are the more anthropological pieces like treva ellison's amazing piece about sir lady java, stamatina gregory and jeanne vaccaro's co-authored piece about the conflicts transpeople endure in the art world, and abram j lewis' piece about older radical trans organizing. in particular lewis' essays gets across the body's mutinous amorphousness in the company of interspecies and extraterrestrial others, where inspiring anti-authoritarian collective labor that knows no boundary can happen, where flourishings that transgress kind to find kin can be sought and fulfilled. \*trap door\* seeks to affirm transgender enduring beyond its alleged tipping-point as incessantly anti-institutional anti-normative anti-state. this is no more clear than in fellow gay shamer toshio meronek's conversation with miss major and cece macdonald (pg 23). i close with a quote from major that describes the situation: "right now, we're the flavor of the month——we're the neapolitan——but mainstream gays and lesbians still don't care about us; they're not doing things to help keep us safe or to help promote us. they spent millions and millions of dollars [lobbying] for the right to get married. 'oh yay, let's get married.' ok, what about taking some of that billion dollars to get kids through school without [being bullied], to help transgender people keep it together through all the stuff that they have to suffer and get the help they need to become stable... i don't want [a logo tv's 'trailblazer honors'] award; i'm not in it for all that shit. i'm here to make sure that my girls avoid the crap that i had to go through; you don't have to

turn a trick and suck dick and sell drugs to survive. so, i would have wanted the award's producers to at least show that they care about us. marsha, sylvia, and i were friends, and they're calling me to speak on film, but posthumous awards aren't the same as care."

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### **Sarah Furger says**

As RuPaul's Drag Race becomes more main stream, this is an important reminder of how entertainment has been dramatically changed drag/transsexual people for a long time. Important read, but it is pretty scholarly-not a criticism, but may not be a read accessible to everyone!

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