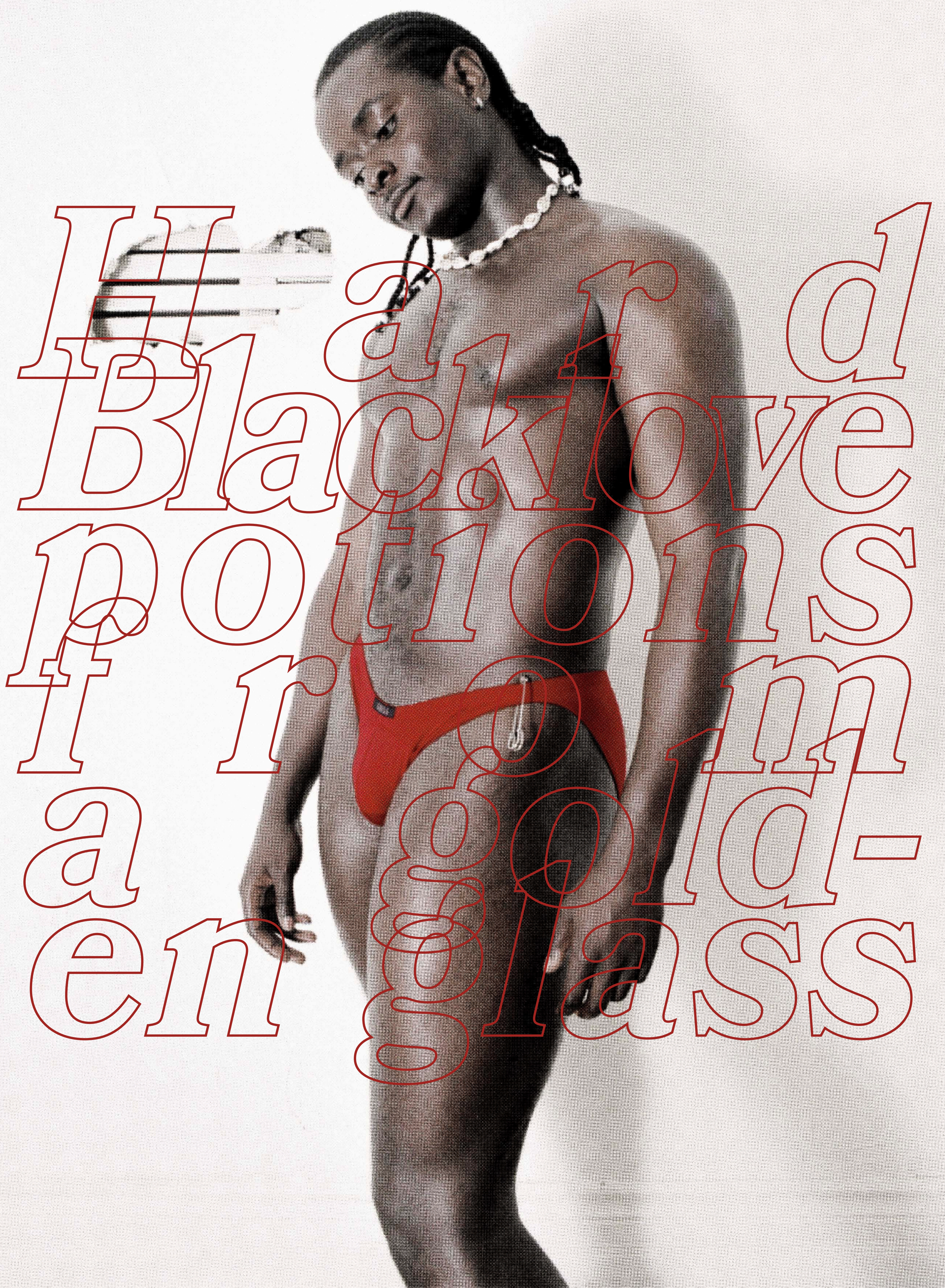




I and Black love
positions
for a good
time in
glasses



HAMILTON ARTISTS INC.

Intimate Orientations

1. Photography has long occupied an uneasy relation to time. A photograph arrives from a moment that has passed, yet continues to insist on a present tense. A strange temporal contradiction; something is here before us and unavailable to us all at once.

2. In *On Photography*, Susan Sontag describes photography as a form of acquisition – to photograph something is to claim relation to it, to transform the world into an image that can be collected, archived, circulated. Her writing remains compelling as it illuminates photography's participation in larger structures of power (*the camera enlisted in projects of classification and control – to photograph a body has often meant to situate it within an existing order of knowledge, to place it within a system that precedes it.*)

3. It is impossible to encounter photographs of Black life without also engaging with photography's role in producing racialized visibility and violence. The camera has frequently been asked to authenticate, categorize, and explain. It has been granted authority as a witness, while simultaneously participating in the production and dissemination of the realities it claims merely to record.

4. I arrive from a position outside the lived experiences of Black familial and social worlds held in Deion Squires exhibition, *Hard Black love potions from a golden glass*, and that distance does not resolve itself through looking. It remains entangled with the conditions of arrival, encounter, and viewing. Intimacy here is not something I assume access to – appearing instead to me as something the work produces in spite of the distance, and almost through it; a looking glass, through fragments and forms that refuse to settle into a single register of legibility, they expand and fold outwards.

5. I arrive to these images from elsewhere. The intimacies they hold are not mine, though intimacy itself is a language I recognize. As a queer settler-indigenous viewer, I return to the ways desire often organizes itself around fragments – queer life and intimacies frequently assembled from traces, learning to read what remains.

6. Images arrive in fragments: family scenes, gestures that hover between document and performance, they move into objects – chair, bed, floor. A surface that knows how to hold weight. Desire can arrive in fragments: a photograph that continues after you stop looking, a body that still sways on a screen once you walk away, an object that retains contact beyond its use.

7. I keep returning to the chair I cannot sit in. It faces a screen that I crouch to view, craning my neck and controlling my limbs to ensure I don't jostle the table as I watch the looping sway of a body. I think I return because the photograph refuses to stay still, and the video almost reaches towards stillness. The image leaves the wall and settles onto a seat, becoming something closer to furniture than image, something that occupies the space alongside my body rather than standing apart from it.

8. Squires' works repeatedly refuse the stable position of the image. A family photo becomes the seat of a chair, another settles into the creases and folds of a bed. Leaning against the gallery wall, dancing bodies are pasted onto a board of parquet flooring – the dancefloor was so good you just had to take it with you at the end of the night. Images merge with architectural fragments and domestic surfaces, no longer confined to representation, it enters the space of habitation.

9. In her work *Queer Phenomenology*, Sara Ahmed suggests that we inherit lines. We are directed towards certain futures, certain ways of inhabiting the world. Queerness involves deviating from those lines, turning toward what was not initially intended. Ahmed describes queerness as a reorientation, turning away from prescribed paths and towards other possibilities of relation. Queerness, in this sense, is a practice of inhabiting realities differently. It concerns how bodies gather, how they are shaped by one another, how they trace new lines of relationality and being.

10. Throughout Squires' work, queer Black intimacy emerges from these forms of orientation. The image is no longer fixed, the image is an ongoing practice of world-making. The works asked to be lived with, however briefly, inviting us into a space where memory, desire, and domesticity enmesh, without the pull to resolve into a singular flattened narrative.

11. If photographs, like Sontag wrote, turn the world into images, and bodies, like Ahmed wrote, are shaped by what they encounter, then what happens when the photograph resists their narrow function as images and start functioning as encounters?

12. I am looking at three children in the backseat of a car, the glow of the lightbox envelops me, and I feel my body slowly sway in place to the looping music from the monitor in the corner. The photograph is opening, away from a singular meaning of memory, or document, or archive. Squires' works are in motion, active participants in the creation of memory and intimacy itself, generated in the encounter between body, and object, and photograph. A shared act of intimate orientation.

Hard Black love potions from a golden glass

Deion Squires
Curated by Christina Oyawale
& Kelsey Myler

JUNE 5 - AUGUST 1, 2026



13. Roland Barthes defined the photograph as “that-has-been”, a physical trace and evidence of what once was. When I am in the room with *Hard Black love potions from a golden glass*, I find myself wondering if photographs speak in another tense altogether, not just what has been, but what remains possible.

14. This possibility swells in Squires' work, within the attention to Black intimacy. Not as spectacle, or confession, or evidence. Intimacy as atmosphere that accumulates around bodies and objects. Never wholly detached from lived experience, the ordinary becomes slightly estranged. Not the production of fantasy, an attunement to the strange coexistence of multiple realities, the photograph becoming a threshold between them.

15. The gallery becomes a place of passage: images move into objects, objects become archives, archives become environments. The photograph ceases to function as a window and begins to act more like a doorway, opening not onto a singular past but onto an unfolding relation with time itself.

by Eli Nolet