



TRUULEE
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8 October 2020 – 14 March 2021

American artist Trulee Hall's first UK solo exhibition is a playful fun-house panopticon filled with an unabashed 'erotic grotesque'. Presented in a series of self-contained vignettes, the exhibition debuts a newly commissioned project alongside works from the Collection and a number of videos, paintings and sculptures, where glory holes, peeping Toms, nightmare monsters and sexy bodies jostle for attention.

At the centre of the exhibition is *Tongues Duel the Corn Whores, An Opera*, a commission that began as a [performance](#) of the same name, realised in this building in March 2020. An exploration of ritual and female sexuality, Hall enlists her signature mediums of CGI, animation

and live footage to create a dual screen video that dissolves hierarchies of reality and the rendered.

Reappearing tropes populate the exhibition: stylised female nudes with mouths agape; bodies of many ages, genders and sizes relishing their physicality; and phallic serpents and corncobs. Not one to pass judgement or be constrained by binaries, Hall prods the oppositions of real and fake, male and female, object and subject, dominant and submissive, good and bad, dirty and clean, silly and serious. Her multi-layered works topple in on themselves like so many wobbly movie set backdrops, burying the viewer in unorthodox representations, and ensuring they probe their own paths and assimilate their own unique experience.

Hall's work is informed by her childhood in the Southern state of Georgia, her current home of Los Angeles, and a background working on film sets, in artists' studios and as a technician for major theme parks. These experiences fuel the alchemy of her practice and her embrace of lavish

simulacra. The worlds Hall creates are enchanting and enticing, retaining an underlying uneasy seediness and inviting the viewer to question if the discomfort they feel is warranted, or a result of their own internalised prejudices. At a time when the fate of our bodies, governments and planet feels particularly unstable, Hall's vision offers an alternative perspective. While forthright about the presence of the dark and untoward, her approach encourages us to turn and look in the direction we choose, to up tools and forge something fantastic and celebratory.

[Trulee Hall](#) (b.1976) received her BFA from Atlanta College of Art in 1999 and her MFA from CalArts in 2006. Hall's first gallery solo exhibition, [*The Other and Otherwise*](#), was held at Maccarone, Los Angeles in 2019.

Zabludowicz Collection Annual Commission, *Trulee Hall, Tongues Duel The Corn Whores, An Opera* (2020). Supported by Maccarone Gallery Los Angeles. Exhibition curated by Antonia Blocker and Elizabeth Neilson.

The exhibition is accompanied by Hall's first monograph and a specially created artist's tour. Events will be announced throughout the exhibition, please check our [website](#) for more details.

MAIN GALLERY

Golden Corn Entryway with Boob Fountain, 2018

Gold leaf, polystyrene, wood, carpet, fish tank rocks, papier-mâché, ceramic, acrylic, fountain pumps, milk substitute

292 × 920 cm × 168 cm

Like a relic from a lost civilisation or a riotous celebration of a near-future, the installation introduces Trulee Hall's favourite themes: representations of sex and sexuality; how female bodies are depicted; the importance of discomfort and humour in creativity; and ultimately how narratives are formed and, from whose perspective.

Hall's reoccurring motifs of sweetcorn and stylised feminine bodies loom large, realised in a bombastic DIY

aesthetic. Alongside snake-limbed, big-breasted figures with mouths agape, the double-height corncobs are unavoidably phallic; lascivious suggestions of fertility and abundance. Yet they are much more. In Hall's visual lexicon they provide a playful smirk towards a down-home Southern wholesome-ness, as well as a subtle nod to human's manipulation of nature, driven by our desire for glossy, swollen ripeness.

With a literal portal at its centre, this work acts as a threshold between outside reality and Hall's inner sanctum. Both an orifice and an aperture, *Golden Corn Entryway* beckons; immediately Hall implicates the viewer, revealing that their participation is an essential aspect to her work.

Tongues Duel the Corn Whores, An Opera, 2020

MDF, wood, fixings, paint, carpet,
mannequins, cushions, artificial plants.

Two-channel video, 51:38 minutes

Dimensions variable

Commissioned by Zabłudowicz

Collection, 2020

This new commission was first realised as a live performance staged here in March 2020, as part of *Hot with Excess: A Season of Contemporary Artists' Opera*. The performance wove together Hall's original score, libretto and choreography with an elaborate set, costumes, and props. Here these elements are repurposed to create a large-scale installation. The dual screen video is rendered in Hall's signature trifecta of Computer Generated Imagery (CGI), clay stop motion animation and live footage from the performance.

An exploration of ritual, the narrative revolves around two female archetypes: the conservative and spiritual 'Madonna' and the hedonistic and provocative 'Whore'. The libretto and score create a rambunctious fable as

these two feminine 'modes' confront one another. Careering around erotica and sensuality, the opera uses humour to pick apart cultural expectations and the supposed duality of women as 'dirty' and 'clean'. The story culminates in a celebration of female fertility and sexuality, presenting a sacrificial virgin, an all-seeing goddess and a soon-to-be mother, all to be worshipped and revered.

MIDDLE GALLERY

Serpent Dance for the
Red Witches, 2018

Carpet, wood bench, fabric, cotton
stuffing, fish tank rocks, foam, wood,
braided steel string, spray paint.

Two-channel video, 7:24 minutes.

Dimensions variable

Eve and Eve (From Serpent Dance
for the Red Witches), 2018

acrylic, oil, collage on board

163 × 163 cm

The dynamic of bold colours that
structures this installation underpins
the conceptual tussle of the work.

As with all of Hall's work, nothing is
wholly black and white (nor red and
green). The dual Eves of the eponymous
painting instigate the confusion and
allude to a doubling of the singular

‘first woman’ responsible for the fall of man. At first, the notion of the original mother seems at odds with a scarlet sorcerer, but look more closely and the two entwine; an evil temptress, snakes’ familiar, destroyer of man. These Eves embody the conflicting archetypes that woman are expected to conform to; the virginal Madonna or the sinful whore.

Hall flattens these Eves in her painting; caught in a choreographed gesture, their bodies are backdropped by a swarm of intersecting snake like forms. In the dual screen video, the duo of female bodies – one old, one young – mimic each other, performing a slow choreography like a moving meditation, while snakes in the opposing colour encircle them. Male figures in Chroma key suits hold these floating serpents, and it is not totally clear who performs for whom; did one conjure the other into being?

Across the split screen, each woman parts her lips to accommodate a snake that descends from above, fully ingesting its length, subsuming its serpentine form. In the final moments, only the snakes remain, wriggling

and writhing across the screen.

Has temptation trumped the witches
or are we witnessing a gestational
usurping through consumption.

BACK GALLERY

Polkadot Bedroom, Nightmare Set
(Girl/Monster), 2018

Papier-mâché, resin, wood, carpet,
synthetic grass, acrylic, bedding,
dressing table, nightstand, lamp,
motorized doll, foam. Two-channel
video, 10:33 minutes.

371 × 381 cm

This work's environment serves as film set, sculptural object, and viewing installation all at once, creating a space for embedded narrative and overlapping points of view. In the dual-screen video, filmed inside the bedroom, a mother and child bedtime routine quickly spirals into common fear-fodder: ghosts encircling the bed; a creepy peeper hiding in the bushes outside; a monster banging on the window, then suddenly inside the

room. In this fever-dream, the polka-dots become main characters.

The narrative avoids a clear conclusion; the maiden may be saved from the monster's arms by a masculine strongman, or perhaps the monster was the child all along.

The Boob Dance, 2018

Single-channel video

1:08 minutes

In *The Boob Dance*, Trulee Hall uses tongue-in-cheek satire to reveal the overt sexualisation of the female body. Hall outfits her actors in oversize sculptural boob costumes, a literal nod to the way in which women are reduced to their body parts. *The Boob Dance's* range of characters speaks to clichés of femininity: the bohemian, country girl, nature goddess, and warrior. Through hyperbole the artist illustrates the absurdity of this gendered objectification.

Two Heads, Two Ways, 2020

Papier-mâché, resin, wood, polystyrene, acrylic paint, carpet, expanding foam, sex doll, fabric. Painting, acrylic, oil, and collage on board, 152.5 × 152.5 cm. Single-channel video, 10:33 mins
Courtesy the artist, video
commissioned by [Daata Editions](#), 2020

Realised here for the first time, this installation spirals from an existing painting, as with many of Hall's projects. The painting, video, relief sculpture and adapted sex doll flesh out a narrative where multiple personalities and possibilities of self are visualised via the metaphor and physicality of a two-headed body.

A dark onanistic fantasy of sex dolls and self-love unfolds by means of an out-of-body experience. The central character divides, seeing her body as a disembodied object. Her body multiplies and her other self – her alter ego – becomes her lover. She is at once monstrous, sexy and wonderful.

Hole in Rock (Swollen Body,
Decorative Face), 2018

Chicken wire, wood, papier mâché,
resin, fish tank rocks, acrylic, gold leaf,
velvet, ceramic corncobs, wooden stool
177.8 × 78.74 × 66.04 cm

Humbly Flattering (Pink Head,
White Skirt), 2018

Papier-mâché, metal, acrylic, fish tank
rocks, resin, wood lace
170 × 66 × 56 cm

Combining the found object with Hall's signature mediums of papier mâché and fish tank rocks, these discrete sculptures flirt comfortably with the art historical lineage of Duchamp's ready-mades and Franz West's adaptives. Referencing snake-like forms, gaping orafices and non-conformist bodies, Hall imbues the work with a humour, sex and femaleness in a manner all of her own.

She/He, Down/Up, In/Out,
White/Black (Relations), 2018

Collage, acrylic, and spray paint
on board

122 × 152.5 cm

Courtesy the artist

In this painting the two headless figures, one white and one black, are connected by a green 'snake': an energetic form emanating from the pink phallus on the black form before winding its way around the canvas to peek into the gaping black hole on the white form. It is not a sexy painting, or a painting of sex. The stylised stencilled figures are less pornographic, more evocative of 1950s design. The snake-like form – a recurring feature across the exhibition – symbolises fertility, life force, transition and communication between states or worlds. The painting acts as an indicator of a threshold to another state of being or possible alternative world.

Tunnel Wall Studies, 2018

Collage and ink on paper

43 × 35.5 cm

These studies for the *Golden Corn Entryway with Boob Fountain* (2018) give insight into Trulee Hall's working process. While the end result may be a large-scale and bombastic installation, she often starts with intuitive and swiftly executed sketches, collages and drawings. These ink drawings with eyes clipped from magazines show how Hall assimilates the world around her, ingesting the media's trite and limited representations of women and recalibrating them for her own brand of celebratory female sexuality.

Corn Fetish / Snake Fetish
(Corn Video), 2018
Single-channel video
01:16 minutes

Corn Fetish / Snake Fetish
(Snake Video), 2018
Single-channel video
00:34 minutes

In this video diptych, a nude woman poses and jiggles her bottom for another naked blond. The unabashedly feminine form assumes both dominant and submissive roles, turning the female gaze onto itself. A feminine perspective pervades the work, with the male presence in the phallic form of the corncob and snake taking on purely supporting roles.

In the colourful, cartoonish *Corn Fetish/Snake Fetish (Corn Video)*, the corn's presence is innocuous; both too large to pose a threat and too small to warrant concern. The suburban setting and soundtrack gives a 'readers' wives' feeling, a sort of safe domestic pornography. In contrast, the dark *Corn Fetish/Snake Fetish (Snake Video)* is a nightmarish, psychedelic ritual.

Drumming and chanting accompany the model's chair gyrations as snakes surround her, before she turns her blank CGI face and swallows us whole.

PROJECT CREDITS

Golden Corn Entryway with Boob Fountain
Fabrication: Molly Allis, Wayne Atkins,
Maddie Coven, Hiro Goto, James Hapke,
Anna Ialeggio, Re Mac, Nayeli Nava, Pecos Pryor,
Paige Schlosser, Molly Shea, Desi Stewart,
Ellie Tremayne, and Chris Warr

Tongues Duel the Corn Whores, An Opera
Actors: Sebastian Angelique, Jonathan Luke
Baker, Michelle Buckley, Bonnie Callaghan,
Carman Mon Oxide, Kate Cox, Tylor Deyn,
Jessica Emmanuel, Chloe Levailant, Freddie
Love, Rose Lucas, Madame Grace Marie,
Lucas Marcheselli, Marv Radio, Phoebe Pimlott
and Georgie White Winter

Musicians: Charlotte Amherst, Alex Fryer,
Sophie Haynes, Sarah Hughes and Merlin Jones
Conductor: Michael Coleby

Choreography: Jessica Emmanuel

Producer: Lara Monro

Sound: Gabor Halasz

Lighting: Liam Cahill

Sets/Props/Costumes: Rosana Antolí,
Wayne Atkins, Antonia Blocker, Olivia Brazier,
Ronan Cusack O'Brien, Bianca Forte,
Rosalind Howdle, Giuseppe Lana, Anna Marsh,
Heather McNeill, Lara Monro, Anthony Parkes,

Chris Spear, Francesca Telling and
Richard Waterton

Hair and Make-up: Bianca Forte
and Heather McNeill

Dressers and Costume: Rosalind Howdle
and Francesca Telling

Camera and photography: Wayne Atkins,
CONTENT

Recording (London): Lomond Rooms

Recording (Los Angeles): Elias Berezin,
Mia Camoagna, Grant Carey, Willey Frick,
Julie Hinton, Jenny Jacques, Louis King,
Grayson Mandell, Arielle Marmom, Nayeli Nava,
Lana Sternick, Nathan Sonenfeld

Claymation Set: Mark Hayward, Pecos Pryor
and Amia Yokoyama

Claymation: Phoebe Hart and Jenny Nirgends

CGI: Jessica Catarino, Kayla Harbeiner,
James Morr and Nathan Sonenfeld

Serpent Dance for the Red Witches

Dancers: Steven Davis, Andrew Diego,
Carol Hannan, Sarah Jacobs, Iris Karina,
Julienne Mackey, Justin Moore, Darrian O'Riley,
Michael Parker and Ron Schultz

Choreography: Jessica Emmanuel

Camera: Wayne Atkins, Chase DuBose
and David Parks

Sets and Costumes: Sarah Benedict,
Allana Espinoza, Nayeli Nava and Desi Stewart

Makeup: Gina Deangelis and Dennis Rameriz

PA: Aliko Cooper, Mark Hayward,
Justin Olerud, Clair Quilala Benison
and Jim Raminez.

Photography: Simon Seez

**Polkadot Bedroom, Nightmare Set
(Girl/ Monster)**

Actors: Molly Allis, Hayley Barker, Lux Beaulieu,
Carrie Cook, Levi and Sunny Davey-Smith,
Jessica Emmanuel, Joshua and Jeremiah

Gonzales, Rebecca Green, Sarah Jacobs,
Jen Lacy, Jessie Lee Thorne, Julienne Mackey,
Aurora Norbut, Madison Olandt, Page Person,
Robert Rexx, Zyaira and Zianna Roberts,
Raul Ruiz, Keon Saghari, Ron Shultz,
and Jaiden Smith

Cameras/Lighting: Wayne Atkins,
Chase Du Bose, Mark Hayward, David Parks
and Jacquie Ray

Sets/Props/Costumes: Nayeli Nava, Pecos Pryor
and Desi Stewart

Costumes/Makeup: Gina Deangelis,
David Gutierrez and Dennis Rameriz

PA: Gina Clark, Justin Olerud and Jim Raminez

CGI: Fredrick Brown, Ellie Tremayne
and Benny Vargas

Claymation: Bona Bones and Samantha Gurry

Photography: Simon Seez

The Boob Dance

Dancers: Brissa Breezy, Jaime Felton,
Carol Hannan, Cathy Kutz and Julienne Mackey

Choreography: Jessica Emanuel

Costumes: Nayeli Nava and Desi Stewart

Camera/Lighting: Chase DuBose, David Parks
and Jaquie Ray

Costumes/Make-up: Gina Deangelis,
David Gutierrez and Dennis Ramirez

PA: Mark Hayward and Jim Raminez

Photography: Simon Seez

Two Heads, Two Ways

Actors: Melanie Aluyon, Agent Wednesday,
Lorraine Caley and Kayla Tange,

Fabrication: Mark Hayward and Anna Ialeggio

Camera: Wayne Atkins, George Lambriodes
and Matt Macur

Sets/Props/Costumes: Nayeli Nava

Painting: Gabriel Sanchez

CGI: Jessica Catarino, Kayla Harbeiner
and James Neal

Claymation: Rose Carr and Jenny Nirgends
Photography: Simon Seez

Corn Fetish / Snake Fetish (Corn Video)

Actors: Mary Ackerson, Robert Galeva,
Sarah Littman and Page Person

Camera: Wayne Atkins and Chase DuBose

Costumes: Karen Lembke

Animation: Ellie Tremayne

Corn Fetish / Snake Fetish (Snake Video)

Actors: Page Green, Sarah Littman
and Cooper Moll,

Camera: Wayne Atkins and Chase DuBose

Costumes: Karen Lembke

Animation: Nathan Steer

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8 October 2020 – 14 March 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Installation and build team: Chris Spear, Marc-Antoine Filippini, Giuseppe Lana, Ronan Cusack O'Brien, Anthony Parkes, Patrick Readings, Sophie Smith, Francesca Telling, Richard Waterton, Billy Closier | Pure Bristle

Design by Burgess & Beech

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Executive Assistant to Anita Zabludowicz:

Caragh Quinlan

Collection & Communications Coordinator:

Gemma Donovan

Design Collection Assistant: Cassandra Ash

Front of House & Retail Manager:

Shirley McNeill

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Anna Marsh, Francesca Telling, Chiara Zocco

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176 Prince of Wales Road
London, NW5 3PT

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