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EN

I wanna hold the hand inside you
Lauryn Youden

Opening
Friday 26 September 2025, 18:00
Opening hours
27.09–08.11.2025, Tuesday–Saturday 14:00–18:00
Public guided tour
Tuesday 7 October 2025, 17:30

In *I wanna hold the hand inside you*, Lauryn Youden engages with the furniture designs of Eileen Gray, drawing attention to the understated sensuality embedded in works often characterized through the lens of modernist austerity. In dialogue with four of Gray's pieces, Youden reorients their presence—interrupting conventional functionality and positioning them instead as sites of care, desire, and intimacy.

Eileen Gray's furniture, historically celebrated for precision and restraint, is framed by Lauryn Youden as something more porous: an altar, a resting place, a vessel of affect. Through a Crip lens, she reveals the corporeal dimension already present in Gray's practice, foregrounding the body not as a neutral user but as a desiring and unruly presence. In this reframing, Gray's modernism becomes an architecture of care—one that accommodates exhaustion, pleasure, collapse, and pain. Rather than evoking the cold assurance of chrome and utility, Youden highlights qualities of fragility, persistence, and relationality. These works are not redesigned but rearticulated, made permeable, and shifted toward intimacy.

What emerges is a reconsideration of modernism's resistance to affect—the possibility that form might yield to feeling, that the body itself could determine spatial meaning. Youden positions this tension not as an anecdotal departure, but as a structuring principle of intimacy: to relinquish control and acknowledge the vulnerability of inhabiting space.

Youden's practice often operates between ritual and recovery, ornament and insistence, foregrounding the ways bodies inhabit and transform space. In *I wanna hold the hand inside you*, she stages furniture as thresholds, adjusting objects that record touch, memory, and corporeal presence. Among these pieces, the *Daybed* is reimagined as an accessible sex swing, designed to invite collapse and become a sacred celebration of exhaustion, acknowledging the body's limits and pleasures. The *Bibendum Chair* and the *Transat Chair* are recast as emblems of femme domination, their forms articulated to amplify agency, posture, and relational power. The iconic adjustable tables, arranged as mirrored doubles, suggest intimacy and bodies in dialogue, evoking loving relations, mourning, and shared temporalities. Taken together, these interventions transform domestic objects into a Crip archive: a space where utility gives way to care, longing, and embodied interaction, and where furniture becomes both companion and witness to corporeal experience.

Alongside these interventions, Youden presents twelve framed pages from Peter Adam's biography of Gray, marked in red by her hand. The excerpts highlight Gray not only as a pioneering architect and designer but also as a queer creator whose life and work were shaped by intimacy, desire, and relationality. Her approach to making, her lovers, her tactile attention, and her position as a wealthy heiress are emphasized through these annotations. The frames, glazed on both sides and mounted from their edges, project into CIRCUIT's

exhibition space so that the text can be read from either side. In this configuration, the work functions both as an archive of queer history and as a spatial intervention, producing text that can be navigated, inhabited, and experienced bodily.

Foregrounding Gray's queer life is not anecdotal but political. It resists the historical erasure that reduces design and architecture to neutral form. In this context, design is coded, affective, and particular; it holds and responds to embodied experience. A faint echo of accessibility hums through these works, as Crip and queer sensibilities intertwine. In Youden's hands, Gray's legacy emerges not as a static relic of modernism but as a living archive of bodies—yielding, desiring, and shaping space in their image.

Lauryn Youden is a Canadian interdisciplinary artist that works in sculpture, performance and installation. Her practice derives from her research in and navigation through the medical industrial complex, 'alternative' healing practices and traditional medicine for the treatment of her chronic illnesses and disabilities. By publicly presenting her personal experiences and re-evaluations of history through a Crip Queer lens, her work illuminates and advocates for repressed, marginalized and forgotten forms of radical care and Crip knowledge. Her work has been recently shown at Number 1 Main Road, Berlin; CAN Centre d'art Neuchâtel; Migros Museum, Zürich; Tanzquartier Wien; Pogo Bar—KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Backrooms – Kunsthalle Zürich.

They are currently a participant in BPA// Berlin program for artists.

Support

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