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## Artist Statement: Tutorial on Radiance

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# [ARTISTIC WORKS AND CULTURAL COMMENTARY]

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## Artist Statement

### Tutorials on Radiance

**Kearra Amaya Gopee**

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<https://kearramaya.com/tutorials-on-radiance>

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*Tutorials on Radiance* explores a queerness beyond the physical body and extends to the lived environments of queer people. I am particularly focused on Anglophone Caribbean cultures of queerness. I will be looking specifically at the boundaries of the 2D image in relation to queerness, portraiture and visibility. Thus far, I have manifested this in a series of environmental portraits where the person being imaged performs a calculated refusal of my lens; be it a diverted glance, an intentional shift of the body or even a trace of the person themselves that is left in the space being photographed. I believe that working in this way shifts the viewer's' focus from the singularity of the oft (de)sexualized queer Caribbean body and allows for consideration of the elements that surround and subsequently constitute parts of their lived experience as well. Furthermore, they are printed on sheets of untreated iron and made to rust over time, denying the viewer access via form. Accompanying *Tutorials on Radiance* is how to break a horizon: a memory as retold by

the sum of its residue (2019), an installation that considers queer Caribbean futurity for its diaspora in the face of impending ecological and social collapse. I emphasize on Anglophone nations here because the English language is the common denominator between us: we were both colonized by the British and use that language to articulate a shared history. These islands have thriving underground and public queer communities which has brought the question of visibility into play. With them in mind, I consider the questions that arise when we prioritize visibility: how valuable is visibility in our communities? What are the benefits of a queer body becoming legible in a region that is still struggling with traces of a colonial past which manifests itself in a hostile present for bodies deemed unnatural or antithetical to the projects of nationhood and tourism? Furthermore, where is this push for visibility coming from and who does it comfort? Subsequently, one must also question the merits of invisibility as well. The two are not necessarily different from each other. They seem to work together as opposed to them being competing opposites. What is most common between the two, though, are their influence in the ways in which people perform a given identity in order to affirm/protect the self. Doing this requires me to be able to hold the multiple, often conflicting truths of those being imaged: that visibility just might be a trap; that visibility is not strictly bound by the rules of portraiture that often demand that a body is present for immediate consumption by those watching; that the choice to be visible is not a luxury across the board in the region and is heavily influenced by class strata and racial classification; among others. In order to challenge visibility, I draw focus to objects that live and die to create queer spaces by imaging still lives that also function as portraits of the people who brought them into being. With these questions in mind, I aim to challenge the limits of queer Caribbean visibility in this body of work.