

# Qualeasha Wood

code\_eden

November 10, 2025 -  
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In her textile practice, Wood brings together traditional craft techniques and contemporary technology. Her own image acts as a point of departure for works that explore racial, sexual and gender identity as they relate to the Black femme body. Woods' tapestries combine cybernetic and analog processes; in her work, a pixel is equivalent to a stitch, each stitch an analogy for the past, present and future of Black femmehood, both on- and off-line, pre- and post-internet.

guest curated by  
Leandra-Juliet Kelley

ROWAN UNIVERSITY  
ART GALLERY & MUSEUM



*Leandra-Juliet Kelley* is an art historian and curator based in Durham, North Carolina. Originally from Dayton, Ohio, Leandra earned a BA in Ethnomusicology from Earlham College where her love of art and music culminated in a documentary on Cincinnati's electronic music scene. In 2014, Leandra earned an MA in Ethnomusicology from King's College London (United Kingdom) with a dissertation that integrated interviews and a photographic series of the local grime music scene.

While abroad, Leandra traveled extensively throughout the UK and Europe, residing in Rome, Italy for a time. Upon returning to the U.S., she lived in Cincinnati, Ohio, working for the Cincinnati Art Museum, Taft Museum of Art, and Contemporary Arts Center, before relocating to Charlotte, North Carolina in 2016. After working at the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art for 3 years, Leandra returned to the UK in 2019 to earn a MSc degree in the History of Art (Theory & Display) from the University of Edinburgh (UK). Once back in Charlotte, Leandra worked as the Director of Collections + Curatorial Affairs at the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture until 2024. While at the Harvey B. Gantt Center, she curated exhibitions such as *Visions: A Study of Form* (2023), *Kennedi Carter: Sight Unseen* (2023), and *Qualeasha Wood: code\_anima* (2024). Leandra currently resides in Durham, North Carolina as she pursues a PhD in Art, Art History, and Visual Studies at Duke University.

*Qualeasha Wood / code\_eden* explores the vibrant worlds crafted by digital architects—realms that thrive beyond the looking glass and behind the screens of technological devices. Featuring Wood’s textiles, tuftings, and new video works, *code\_eden* transports viewers to the artist’s meta-paradise. The show serves as a companion to Wood’s premier museum exhibition *code\_anima*. Where *code\_anima* examined identity and the process of individuation, *code\_eden* delves into bespoke online habitats. These spaces serve as both places of refuge and modes for self-expression, while the grounds beneath retain roots of temptation inherent to their corporate infrastructure.

Wood’s artistic practice blends human and technological capabilities, revealing the emotive side of life’s “technical gestures.”<sup>1</sup> In *Deus Ex Machina (What Was I Made For?)* (2024), Wood explores ideas of divine intervention and self-determination through imagery of fauna and iconography of virtual and religious sacraments. Wood’s tuftings, such as *Into the Blue* (2023), visualize the journey of adolescence and introspection through bold colors and pillowy textures. Her digital edens are dynamic spaces where she engages, shapes, and activates her cyber surroundings, what theorist Gilbert Simondon describes as “the relational activity” between a person and their environment.<sup>2</sup> The result is a continuous and mutual feedback loop that spurs personal and environmental evolution — “The energy of the technical gesture, having passed through the environment, returns to [the person],” allowing them to modify themselves and “evolve.”<sup>3</sup> *Qualeasha Wood / code\_eden* examines the artist as a world-builder. Wood’s multimedia art practice cultivates digital landscapes, demonstrating one’s ability to mold the technical into organic expressions of life.

*-Leandra-Juliet Kelley*

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert Simondon, “Culture and Technics,” *Radical Philosophy* 189 (January/February 2015): 19.

<sup>2</sup> Simondon, “Culture and Technics,” 19.

<sup>3</sup> Simondon, “Culture and Technics,” 19.

*Qualeasha Wood* (b. 1996, Long Branch, NJ) lives and works in Philadelphia, PA. She received her BA in 2019 from the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI and her MA in 2021 from Cranbrook Academy of Fine Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI. In 2025 Pippy Houldsworth Gallery presented *Malware*, Wood's second solo exhibition at the gallery. In 2025 she was included in *Design and Disability*, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London; *Virtual Beauty*, Somerset House, London; *Voyager 2000: Worldbeing & Wonder*, Firstsite, Colchester; and *I Still Dream of Lost Vocabularies*, Autograph, London. In 2024 she presented her first solo institutional exhibition, *code\_anima*, at the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Art + Culture, Charlotte, NC, which was reimagined as *code\_eden* for Rowan University Art Gallery & Museum, Glassboro, NJ (2025). Other recent solo and group exhibitions include Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN (2025), travelled from The High Museum, Atlanta, GA (2024-5) and The Brooklyn Museum, NY (2024); The Peeler Art Center at DePauw University, IN (2024); Salon 94, New York, NY (2024); Art Institute of Chicago, IL (2024); Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, Atlanta, GA (2024); Kendra Jayne Patrick, New York, NY (2023); Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London (2021, 2023); Hauser & Wirth, Somerset, New York, NY and Los Angeles, CA (2022-3); MoMA PSI, New York, NY (2022); and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY (2022). Her collections include Art Institute of Chicago, IL; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; The Rennie Collection, Vancouver; The Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, RI; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, CA; and The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX.



In her textile practice, Wood brings together traditional craft techniques and contemporary technology. Her own image acts as a point of departure for works that explore racial, sexual and gender identity as they relate to the Black femme body. As a digital native, Wood deftly navigates an internet environment that is at once a space of celebration and recognition for Black femme figures,

as well as a politically loaded site for the ongoing marginalization and exploitation of their selfhood and culture. Wood's tapestries combine cybernetic and analogue processes; in her work, a pixel is equivalent to a stitch, each stitch an analogy for the past, present and future of Black femmehood, both on- and off-line, pre- and post-internet.

While Wood's tapestries blend images from social media with religious, specifically Catholic, iconography, her 'tuftings' represent cartoon-like figures that recall the racist caricatures widespread in popular family programs of the early-mid-20th century and beyond. In them, Wood adopts a naïve aesthetic that calls on the nostalgia of cartoon animations and their association with racial stereotyping to unpack notions of Black girlhood. Despite their formal simplicity, the tuftings reveal a lurking tension drawn from the artist's own experiences of consuming media rife with anti-Black prejudice throughout her life. Where the tapestries are absorbed in consumption and cyber culture, the tuftings speak to inherited trauma and necessarily implicate accountability in the viewer.





*Deus Ex Machina*

(What Was I Made For?), 2024  
woven jacquard, machine embroidery  
and glass seed beads  
62 x 84 inches  
Courtesy Mark J Bevington collection



*Kirk Franklin Type Beat*, 2024  
woven jacquard, glass seed beads and  
machine embroidery  
59 x 83.5 inches  
Courtesy Mark J Bevington collection



*K.M.B.A.*, 2023

woven jacquard and glass seed beads  
84 x 62 inches



*playdate*, 2024  
tufted wool and acrylic  
51 x 55 inches



*Visions of a Life*, 2025

single-channel video, 4 min. 11 sec.



*Malware*, 2025

single-channel video, 4 min. 10 sec.



*i believe there's meaning /  
i believe there's nothing, 2024*  
woven jacquard, glass seed beads and  
hand embroidery  
53 x 74 inches



*Into the Blue, 2023*  
tufted wool and acrylic  
50 x 64 inches  
Courtesy of Arte Collectum, Sweden



*bed rot, 2024*  
woven jacquard, glass seed beads and  
hand embroidery  
55 x 70 inches



*don't touch nothin  
(thats not my name), 2024*  
tufted wool and acrylic  
25 x 25 inches

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301 High Street Gallery  
301 High Street West  
Glassboro, NJ 08028

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[rowan.edu/artgallery](http://rowan.edu/artgallery)  
[artgallery@rowan.edu](mailto:artgallery@rowan.edu)

Gallery Hours  
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