

The Persistence
of Memory

Art by
Anthea Hamilton

Costumes by
Jonathan Anderson

34 Photographed by
Seraphina Neville

Text by
Xerxes Cook

Inspired by the French avant-garde playwright Antonin Artaud's call for a "physical knowledge of images," when artist Anthea Hamilton struggled to locate a photograph needed to inform her latest body of work, she didn't abandon all hope and head back to the drawing board like some might be tempted to do. Instead, the 2016 Turner Prize nominee turned to her memory of a photograph capturing a scene from a 1960 dance by Erick Hawkins, an American choreographer who was interested in Native American philosophies—and in particular, a costume inspired by the Hopi tribe's Squash Kachina totem which celebrates the nutrition of the marrow—and worked from there.

Titled *The Squash*, Anthea Hamilton's installation spans the entirety of Tate Britain's Duveen Galleries in London, and sees seven performers explore their own interpretation of the artist's memory of the image and how it might feel to imagine life as other—as vegetable—every day, for six months. Their costumes, designed in collaboration with LOEWE creative director Jonathan Anderson, are also inspired by Anthea's memory of the Hopi totem.

Some of these vegetal evocations in Jonathan's designs are more literal than others: one bodysuit is printed with markings that recall the skin of a marrow, while the wide-ribbed leather boleros worn atop others suggest the segments of a pumpkin. Other costumes, with silhouettes referencing the era of Anthea's research—the improvisational theatre and participatory art practices of the 1960s and 70s—are more esoteric: a leather trouser and ruffled-silk shirt combo with a psychedelic marble print; a bodysuit adorned with green chiffon tendrils; and another in *commedia dell'arte* monochrome stripes.

To finish everything off, the textures of cucurbits like squash and pumpkin were translated into fabrics such as suede, ostrich skin and Nappa calfskin and made into giant vegetable headpieces. All seven looks are laid out on a rail backstage, and each day a performer picks out whatever matches their mood that morning, and are then left alone to inhabit a space the artist calls their "garden."

And what a garden—over 7,000 white tiles laid out to span the entirety of the neo-classical hallway form a monochrome set reminiscent of both municipal swimming pools and the digital dreamscapes of sci-fi classics like *Tron*. These tiles also encase a series of large structures that serve as plinths for a number of works from Tate's collection—bronzes by Henry Moore, a 1948 statue of a female body by Henri Laurens, the Arnold Machin terracotta figure, *Spring*, for example—chosen by Anthea for the ways in which their organic forms and colours distil the dialogue between animal, vegetable and mineral. They act as silent witness to the performers' bodily responses to her lost photograph.

A *gesamtkunstwerk*—a total work of art—that brings sculpture, costume and performance in dialogue with architecture and the subconscious, *The Squash* may well be undefinable, or at the very least, best described in Artaud's terms—as a reimagining of "our place between dream and events."

Anthea Hamilton: The Squash is on view at Tate Britain, London, until 7 October 2018.

Fibreglass head covered in dark grey ostrich leather.
Orange hand-painted leather bolero. Knitted tracksuit in vegetal
hand-painted texture with Swarovski hand stitched stone.





Fibreglass head covered in green buffalo leather and vintage effect calf leather. Multicolour printed silk crepon nightgown. Green velvet cuff/collar and purple velvet marble print top panel.



Fibreglass head covered in calf leather marble print. Vest and trousers in stretch calf leather marble print. Shirt in hammered silk crepon marble print.





Fibreglass head covered in green stretch fabric with ruffles and light gold sequins. Jersey gauze tracksuit with ruban in light gold sequin. Reconstructed leather braided cord codpiece.



Fibreglass head covered in white hand-painted Nappa. White leather bolero. Tracksuit in white knit with hand painted squash texture.



Fibreglass head covered in black and white stretch velvet. Black leather bolero. Tracksuit in white swimwear jersey and black velvet stripes. Printed silk crepon scarf. Long gloves in white Nappa and tabi long socks in white calf with black and white hand painted stripes.



Fibreglass head covered in black lamb suede and black stretch Nappa. Tracksuit in black lamb suede and black stretch Nappa.