

## A collage of various objects including a green patterned top, a red skirt, a blue bird, a crown, a red apple, and a white mask, all pinned together with yellow clothespins and white paper scraps. The background is dark blue. The text "TRANSITION" is written in large, bold, white capital letters at the top, and "110" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. The artist's name "Fais Do-Do" is written in a white, sans-serif font at the bottom right.

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**TRANSITION**

110

Fais Do-Do



## Transition 110

Hutchins Center  
2013

### About the Cover

#### Xaviera Simmons

Xaviera Simmons likes to show us what lies beneath and beyond, just around the corner, and slightly out of reach. In Index Three, Composition Two, *Transition's* cover image for this issue, we witness the possibilities of secret image worlds, taped, clipped and clothes-pinned together, to be secreted beneath the skirts of barely seen figures. In this image, and others in the series, a figure stands at center, bare legs partially covered by a girdle made of string to which have been affixed magazine clippings, drawings, pieces of animal skins, and other resonant items. Behind this gathering of detritus, we see two slim legs extending toward the ground, knees locked back, they stand solidly in place. Above the waist we see only the green, white and black patterned fabric of a skirt that has been drawn up over the torso, arms and face of the figure. A physical identity is hidden from us at the same time that the material is revealed.

By denying the viewer access to the face of the figure, Simmons pushes us to reconsider the possibilities for selfhood that lie as much within the image worlds that we engage in our daily life as in our past histories. We take with us scenes in fragments, flashes from the past, pictures in our minds, knitted together by time and spatial association into a symbiotic mass that covers the generic fleshiness of our original selves. And yet, by its very nature as memory and recollection, so much of this visual history lies forever hidden from those around us, only shared when we expose ourselves to one another, as if lifting a skirt to show our drawers.

This type of intellectual and personal exposure, a sharing of deeply personal space and experience, is a hallmark of Simmons' work. A New Yorker by birth and in practice, she is best known for her large-scale photographic works and installations that seek to immerse the viewer in a visual world as complex and sensorially stimulating as the city in which she lives and works. Music, its place within our own lives and our larger cultural histories, is also a significant component of her work, featuring in the concept and realization of pieces as well as the execution and experience of them. For example, in her 2010 show *The Record* at the Nasher Museum at Duke University, Simmons exhibited a group of photographs that featured herself, often accompanied by an acoustic guitar, in various North Carolina locations that had important links to that state's musical past. These included a shot of her standing at the convergence of two lines of railroad tracks adjacent to the wooden house in which jazz great Thelonious Monk was born. *The Record* culminated with a funk concert by the band Superchunk and a BBQ listening party attended by members of the Duke community.

Xaviera Simmons' work was most recently seen in a group exhibition, *Dark Flow Lurking* (November 16 – December 31, 2012), at the David Castillo Gallery in Miami, Florida. She is currently developing an artist experience for the Museum of Modern Art.