

# ONE WORK: RINDON JOHNSON'S "COEVAL PROPOSITION #1: TEAR DOWN SO AS TO MAKE FLAT..."

By [Alicia Ajayi](#) June 8, 2021 12:43pm



*View of the exhibition "Law of Large Numbers: Our Bodies," 2021, showing 'A Round, Solid figure...', 2018–, and Coeval Proposition #1: Tear down so as to make flat with the Ground or The \*Trans America Building DISMANTLE EVERYTHING', 2021–, at SculptureCenter, New York.*

Skylights illuminate a wooden structure in a large and largely empty gallery space. Despite its lofty scale and rigid formalist design, the piece is not imposing. From afar, the sculpture, with its square black posts forming crisp and elegant angles, blends into the industrial black metal framing of the ceiling at SculptureCenter, where it is currently on view. Its title, *Coeval Proposition #1: Tear down so as to make flat with the Ground or The \*Trans America Building DISMANTLE EVERYTHING*, 2021, references San Francisco's iconic skyscraper, built for the Transamerica Corporation in the early 1970s. That forty-eight-story elongated pyramid pierces the urban skyline and was the tallest building in the city until 2018. Rindon Johnson, a Bay Area native, reduces that imposing phallic tower of concrete, glass, and

steel to a simple wooden frame interlocked with a second, smaller, inverted pyramid. In this new context, the pyramids evoke the LGBTQ symbol of the upside-down pink triangle and its complicated origin in a history of persecution; one of the exaggerated apexes soars upward while the other points toward the ground.

Johnson's ebonized treatment of the redwood enriches the grain with a spectrum of black tones. Pronounced joinery details and delicately carved voids emphasize the piece's hand-crafted nature. Along with the work's title, these material details suggest a new type of monument meant to be deconstructed and rebuilt over time, unlike traditional monoliths. Johnson's experiment in naming and craft also positions the sculpture as a playful yet serious work of reclamation: queering the emblematic architectures of capitalism (office) and power (monument), he asserts the presence of a trans America. The artist's clever reassignment of celebrated structures makes space for those long excluded from societal "norms" by fitting new forms of power into the country's horizon.