

“WHAT CAN
PEOPLE DO
TOGETHER
THAT WE
CAN'T DO
ALONE?”

WHAT CAN WE
DISCOVER IN
OURSELVES
ONLY BY WAY
OF OTHER
PEOPLE?”

Gabrielle Civil's *Experiments in Joy* celebrates black feminist collaborations and solos in essays, letters, performance texts, scores, images, and more. Following her explosive debut *Swallow the Fish*, Civil now documents her work with *From the Hive*, *No. 1 Gold*, and *Call & Response*—whose collaborative *Call* inspired the title. The book also features her solo encounters with artists and writers, ancestors and audiences. Here you will find black girlhood, grief, ghosts, girls in their bedrooms, lots of books, dancing, reading, falling in love, fighting back, and flying. With lots of heart and the help of her friends, Civil keeps reckoning with performance, art and life.

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Experiments in Joy is a **transformational literary work of material magic.** [T]his collection enacts (rather than professes) trans-disciplinary theories on inter-being, inter-rupture, and inter-becoming for the subtlest, hungriest and wisest organ of admittance – the mind-heart, which will not suffer bullshit.

–ANNA JOY SPRINGER, author of *The Vicious Red Relic*, *Love*

Civil has made a book into a performance space and living archive. Words dance and bodies speak: together they invent languages of keen pleasure and ardent thought...

Read, watch, listen and dream. Be transformed.

–MARGO JEFFERSON, author of *Negroland: A Memoir*

Civil's *Experiments in Joy* invites readers to trace the idea of 'gesture' from the body to the page and back, to follow her footsteps to the various entryways into **Black Girl Studies**, and to witness the role of friendship in the making of art and survival. Reading it, we are also reminded that the blues is not just a document of trouble, but also **a journey to the pleasure on the other side of it.**

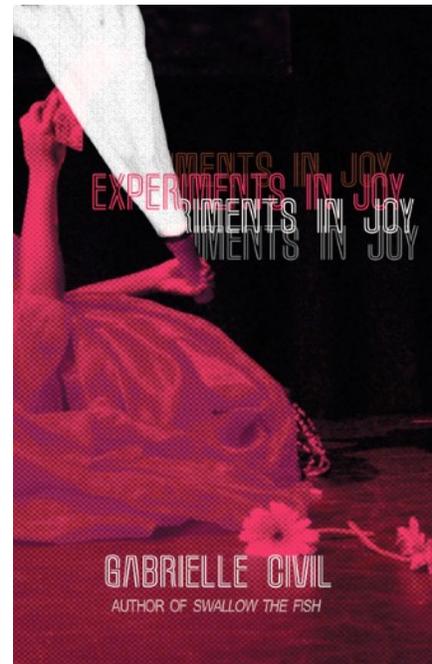
–MENDI + KEITH OBADIKE, creators of *Four Electric Ghosts*

Experiments in Joy

by Gabrielle Civil

Civil Coping Mechanisms
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Creative Nonfiction / Memoir /
Performance Art / Black Feminism



Gabrielle Civil is a black feminist performance artist, originally from Detroit, MI. She has premiered fifty original solo and collaborative performance works around the world. Signature themes included race, body, art, politics, grief, and desire. Since 2014, she has been performing “Say My Name” (an action for 270 abducted Nigerian girls) as an act of embodied remembering. She is the author of *Swallow the Fish* and *Tourist Art* (with Vladimir Cybil Charlier). She currently teaches Creative Writing and Critical Studies at the California Institute of the Arts. The aim of her work is to open up space.