

Anna Avent

### Arca: Mutant;Destrudo

To experience Arca is to experience pop in its most mystical form. In the vast space of Park Avenue Armory Arca transformed the venue into a hybrid mix of performance and art. With five separate stages, one including the floor of the crowd itself, Arca used every step and move with intention and artistry. Arca's "Kick" album series explores the alienation felt by many in the trans community, including Arca herself. Through her technological aesthetics, she explores the experience of being a transwoman in a non-conforming society. The five-night-only performance titled, "Arca: Mutant; Destrudo" broke the boundaries of what a concert is by inviting the audience into a world of technological fantasy.

At the center of the main stage stood a demonic-like dentist chair. In an interlude of the performance low synth played as Arca was strapped down and "did-up" by her crew. They embellished her with hair extensions, makeup, and high heels. This mode of performance was not only visually exciting but also incredibly intentional working as a visual representation of Arca's transition. In accompaniment to her performances were projected visuals showcasing various modes of her experimental artistry. Through the absurdity of Arca's vision came an immense variety of projections, some showing instances where she was covered in blood while others showed her as an AI-generated robot. The variety of visuals during the show acted as a mode of showcasing the intricacies of Arca's music and the stories that hide between the words.

In Arcas explorations of the various stages came new and exciting productions. On one of the mini stages was a jungle gym of poles and platforms I would soon learn were meant to be climbed. During her song titled "El Alma Que Te Trajo," she ascended the platforms eventually

reaching the top and screaming the lyrics into the crowd. She whipped her long extensions to the point of destruction as rainbow pieces of tinsel hair flew into the audience.

Later in the performance, she ended up on the far right stage. This stage, slightly smaller than the left, sat underneath a swinging turntable. The turntable was swung by two large silver chains allowing it to be pushed over the audience. During this segment of the show, Arca cultivated a mix of eerie sounds overtop a rhythmic beat. Each time a beat was sounded she would push forward the chains and watch the turntable glide over the crowd's heads. With the mix of immersive performance, colorful lights, and intricate visuals, Arca did all the things necessary to win the title of a *performer*.

Arca is a performer who strips the binary of what it means to perform. Through her meta-exploration and commentary, she dissects the genre of pop to see where she can fit inside. In the vein of “pop,” Arca stands at its edge, challenging the genre in all its forces and abilities.