

"I don't ever want to get bogged down by the weight of a medium's history"

Jibade-Khalil Huffman spoke about his work at PSU's Shattuck Annex on November 11th, 2014. He later responded to our questions in an e-mail interview.

[STUDIO]: In your lecture you talked about pushing the medium of poetry through visual art forms. Do you give equal consideration to pushing visual art forms through poetry?

Jibade-Khalil Huffman: I'm generally interested in pushing everything to the limit in terms of doing what is best for that particular work or project. Because I don't ever want to get bogged down by the weight of a medium's history, I am resistant to the more conventional forms of dealing with a medium, by which I mean I am not interested in making photographs that deal with photography as much as I am in figuring out how to make a narrative that just so happens to be in the form of a photograph and at the same time can only take the form of that particular



fig. 1a

photograph. By which I mean I am both interested in medium specificity but could care less about painting or photography or poetry with a capital "P".

[S]: Your allusions to cinema evoke a relationship to its tradition and formal structures. Your work, however, seems to expand how timing functions in favor of a more conversational structure. How do you see the role of director? How does this shifting direction of time shape your relationship to your audience?

"I am resistant to the more conventional forms of dealing with a medium."

JKH: I am all for the director as author. Even in the case of large-scale, conventional narrative cinema, where there are more typical kinds of collaboration happening, I always imagine everything ultimately happening via the decisions of the director. Authorship, as opposed to just, say, filling the role of directing a film that someone else wrote, starring people who aren't you, entails

a connection to the script and to the role, even if one isn't literally also starring in one's own movie. In terms of an audience, I don't know that the particulars of my messing with time change anything any more than any other decision I make.

[S]: Do you memorize what you will say for a performance or do you always read your lines?

JKH: I rarely perform my own work and usually employ actors to deliver the lines. When I do, it is usually in the form of a lecture-performance, which lends itself to reading from notes. In truth, I am terrified of memorization. I refuse to do it. But I love collaborating with people who enjoy or are at least open to that sort of thing.

[S]: You often use actors whose genders and races are different from your own. At your lecture you said these differences are important. Would you explain why?

JKH: I've thought a lot about my response or non-response to this at the lecture. Simply put, the use of central performers who don't look like me is about working through otherness. It's one of the most charged aspects of that part of my work and yet I rarely ever talk about this. There also is the challenge of writing a different gender and race on a purely technical level. But for me it's more about dealing with the idea of the individual and identity via a different body. It's about displacing the expectations sur-

"The use of central performers who don't look like me is about working through otherness."

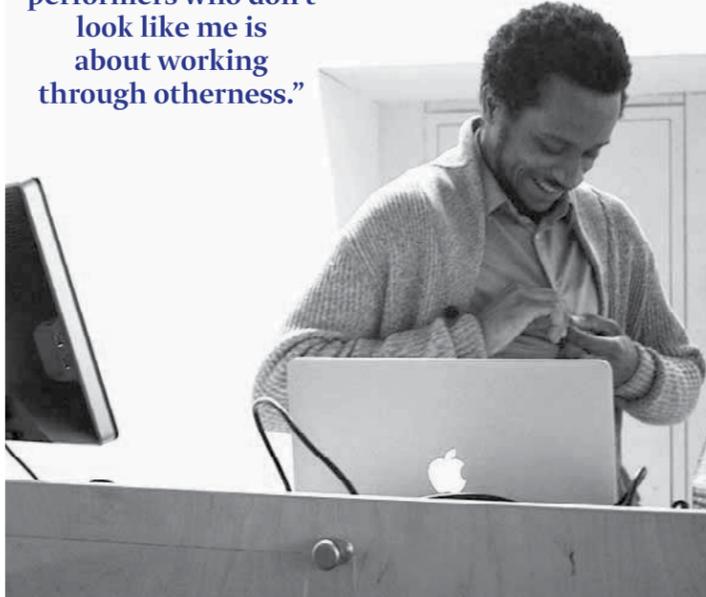


fig. 1b

rounding the use of the first person. And, perversely, speaking to an absence via presence. Or vice versa.

[S]: There are numerous references to pop culture in your poetry and artwork. If viewers have knowledge of these references, they set the tone. Do you feel that there is a particular demographic that relates to your work because of this? If so, would you elaborate on why you are attempting to attract this demographic?

fig. 1a: Huffman and students out talking
fig. 1b: Huffman at Shattuck Annex
fig. 2a: Jibade-Khalil Huffman, "Yesterday (Our Love Went Into A Coma)," 2012, monitor, dvd player, microphone, love poem
fig. 2b: Jibade-Khalil Huffman, "A Paramount Picture," 2014, 3 channel video, 10 mins, silent
fig. 2c: Jibade-Khalil Huffman, "We Don't Believe You, You Need More People," 2011-2012, performance view at Southern Exposure, San Francisco, CA



fig. 2a



fig. 2b

[S]: In your lecture you said, "I'm definitely a project-to-project type of artist." You alluded to visual artists maintaining a specific thread of inquiry throughout their work. Are there any drawbacks you find working from project to project?

JKH: I don't think it's problematic. I just think it's maybe easier? Perhaps easy isn't the right word. But when people can say you make paintings about cars as opposed to saying that you are a painter interested in depicting various technologies or something like that, I start to get nervous.

"I am deeply opposed to the many simplifications to be found in what passes for critical engagement."

I'm more into the vague and potentially pretentious sounding second version. I am, as you can tell from my responses here and in my lecture, deeply opposed to the many simplifications to be found in what passes for critical engagement.

[S]: Would you mind sharing one of your bad experiences or memories as an artist?

JKH: Most of my bad experiences as an artist are related to money and or being in my twenties and wanting to be free to make my work but also, of course, desperate to pay my bills. I think these are or, to an extent, were, the problems of most people I know whether or not they were or are artists. The actual making of work and the dialogue with curators and other artists has all been pretty rad.



fig. 2c

[S]: In regard to your paper and photoshopped collages, do you feel these works read similarly? I remember you said that the paper collages weren't the right direction for you. What was it about these images or this process that deterred you?

JKH: I think they read similarly, yes. The impulse to work digitally comes from both a desire to do things that you can't do with paint and pieces of paper and an interest in the quality of images - as opposed to craft - throughout history.

[S]: What artists, writers, filmmakers, and musicians do you draw from most often?

[JKH]: Irma Thomas, Harryette Mullen, Albert Oehlen, Jay Electronica, Amy Sillman, John Cheever, A.L. Steiner, Claudia Rankine, Stan Douglas, Preston Sturges, Kanye West, Pierre Huyghe, Alice Notley, Lydia Davis, William Eggleston.

Jibade-Khalil Huffman is an artist and writer based in Los Angeles. He is the author of three books of poems, *19 Names For Our Band* (Fence, 2008), *James Brown is Dead* (Future Plan and Program, 2011), and *Sleeper Hold* (Fence, 2014). His art and writing projects, spanning photography, video, performance and poetry, have been exhibited and performed at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, MoMA/P.S.1, Long Island City, NY, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, among others.

JKH: I'm definitely not interested in speaking to one particular demographic. Rather, there are certain things happening in my work that a certain demographic will immediately understand. Or, that demographic is able to accept these certain things without getting caught up in questions about 'technology' or 'nostalgia' and really deal with the work on its own terms.

[S]: In your works that use multiple slide projections to create one overlapping image, does

each slide have relevance on its own or do they become significant when combined as a whole?

JKH: The images are important individually as the individual parts of a scene in a film are important. It's like when a character delivers the big important monologue at the climax of the film. The actual monologue is certainly relevant on its own but doesn't totally work without the soundtrack or the way in which the director decides to shoot the scene.

Sponsored in part by Blick-Utrecht Art Supplies, the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art and MFA Happy Hour, the PSU MFA Visiting Artist Lecture Series brings together artists from a variety of disciplines to explore the subjects of their own work before a live audience. Lectures are held throughout the year, most often in Shattuck Annex (SW Broadway at SW Hall on the PSU Campus) on Wednesday nights at 7:00 PM. Lectures are FREE and open to the public.

PSU's MFA in Contemporary Art Practice/Studio program is dedicated to interdisciplinary experimentation and the exploration of ideas through the experience of making. Students are supported in a range of research and production, from the traditional to the emerging, as they consider the multiple ways art can live in and beyond the studio.

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- 4: Emily Lewis
- 5: Chris Freeman
- 6: Amanda Wilson
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1: Anything is possible in his world
 Jibade-Khalil Huffman is reading a poem

He is entering into dialogue
 He is communicating in writing

Art speaks the language
 Communication leads to collaboration
 He is doing performances with others
 He is collaborating in performances
 He is entering another dialogue with the viewers

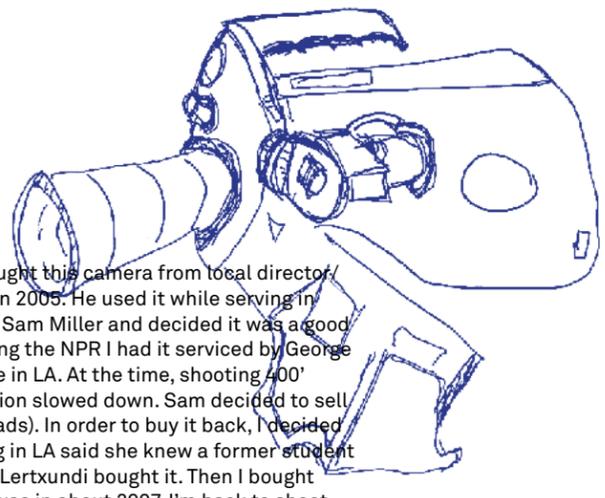
Art requires communication
 He is making collages
 He is conveying images
 There is boldness, openness, and eagerness
 Art is soul food: it is various forms of slow food

2:



11-27-14

3: FILM LOOPS



This is a 16mm Eclair NPR. I bought this camera from local director/cinematographer John Mincey in 2005. He used it while serving in Vietnam. I had sold my Bolex to Sam Miller and decided it was a good time to upgrade. After purchasing the NPR I had it serviced by George Zorzoli at Optical-Electro House in LA. At the time, shooting 400' loads was costly so my production slowed down. Sam decided to sell the Bolex (which shoots 100' loads). In order to buy it back, I decided to sell the NPR. Betzy Bromberg in LA said she knew a former student who might be interested. Laida Lertxundi bought it. Then I bought back the Bolex from Sam. This was in about 2007. I'm back to shooting 400' loads for my thesis film, this time using an Aaton which was formerly part of the NFL camera fleet. When Khalil was visiting my studio last month, he said my work reminded him of Laida's films.

4:



5: JIBADE-KHALIL HUFFMAN

Did you mean:

- Jibade-Khalil Huffman?
- Jibade Khalil Mack Huffman, TX?
- Jibade Avatar Khalil Gibran Huffman Koos?
- Jibade Johnson Khalil Huffman Coding Example?
- Jihad Khalil – Singer Huffmaster?
- Jlbado Khalil Gibran, Artist Huffman Peak Trail?
- Jibade Khalil Gibran Quotes Huffman ISD?
- Jlbarito Wiz Khalifa Huffman Koos?
- Jibaro Burj Khalifa Huffington Post?
- Jibanyan Khaleesi Hulu?
- Jibara Khal Drogo Hotmail?
- Jibo Khan Academy Huffma?
- Jibjab Khans of Tarkir Huffam?
- Jiberish Khan Academy Math Bob Huff?
- Jibe Consulting Khat Huf Socks?
- Jimmy Johns Khloe Kardashian Huf Plantlife Hat?
- Jiffy Lube Khq Terre Haute International Airport?
- Jimmy Fallon Kare 11 Hu Jintao?
- Jimmy Johns Menu Kayak nic.hu?
- Josh Huff Kaiser Permanente Hogeschool?
- John Oliver Kingdom Hearts H&M?
- Joan Rivers Kha'Zix Triple H?
- JC Penney Khl Jhaqo Hyatt Hotels?

6: Letter to Gertrude Stein

Dear Renaissance Woman of Contemporary Time:
 Time isn't time.
 How's the culinary of the early 20th century?
 How's the art? How's the company?
 How does a gay have a say in nineteen-twenty-something?
 Do you feel like a woman, a leader, a lover? Do you feel like an icon?
 For Paris, for culture, for art, for literature
 Do you feel like an outsider?
 Do you feel confident with your partner by your side, your best friend?
 Do you love all the people?
 Do you hate California?
 I know you knew it's content that counts
 Still does and always will.

TITLES ARE OFTEN ARBITRARY

8:

A different version of her or something like that. We don't believe you. You need more people. Because I am the author. Waking up in Central Park. Water skinning his knee. Characterizing a fitness. Absence of looking for something better to do. Michael Asher is an interesting case. That gold rope. Other material. Until it is decided. A pleasure cruise. A spectacle we can at once ignore. Savage and the snake. She was the soundtrack to her dreams. To say nothing of her debutante. Lightheaded congestions. This many ships. To lather. Desires. I tie myself into a ship. Staged on lands. Your future self can't contain. Forest Fires. Vernacular. Till someone comes along and punches you. Race films. Model United Nations. Dario Argento. Jewel of the Nile. Duration is an interesting case. I am every woman. Flying as a symptom. Hyperbole pills. Pedantic. Some of us rely on other material. This is a thousand years of sexual history. To the same day. Perfect symmetry. Alarmed of 3-part harmony.

There was a time when I really thought you loved me. Really start freaking out. Transplanted in the ground. General reeling. When it was tipped over. The symbols are alarming. In a draft lottery system. Customary to hide your money behind a shelf. Like the sociopath I know you are. You can expect a halter top. We will say yes to Kennedy. In a scheme to corner the market. I like the proposition. Because you love me. During a full moon. In the middle of dinner when you call.

...

You project and it's done. This silent cacophony. Which I employ a lot. Vacation image. About the domestic. About light and layering. This Edward P. Jones novel. From a certain era. My grandmother's house. This idea of working through layers. A discreet image. It's all fair game.

...

Titles are often arbitrary.

7: I'm looking to my phone for love and yes I know I have never typed a poem