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# Default Blackness

Normative darkness. As people of color we are positioned and live and die in a sea of codes, and we influence the culture through a constant stream of code switching and language updates in popular culture. As fast as the changes are adopted by the mainstream they fall out of favor with their originators. We use our codes for protection and expression within and outside of a system in which we are simultaneously hyper-visible and invisible. All sides know the game; by the time the codes are understood and disseminated the originators have cloaked themselves and moved on. Those who attempt to imitate the originators are confident in their ability to understand the origins of the code and their right to access all shades of meaning. Everything is code; speech is only the most obvious and available mode. Our bodies, hair, walk; the very manner in which we move through the world is scrutinized for meaning, declared to have none, and then, of course, copied. But of course some of the meaning is lost and changed in the copy and although it may appear otherwise, its value is not transferred from the original.

Black is the new black.

-Kathie Foley-Meyer

**BAILA** is an acronym for **Black Artists in Los Angeles**. BAILA grew out of HABLA: Harvesting Asian Black Latino Artists. HABLA was a five-year-long social practice project by visual artist Lili Bernard. Its focus was to create platforms for the works of underrepresented artists. During the five-year-long HABLA project, it became apparent that Black artists are by far the most marginalized and underrepresented group of artists. It was therefore that, in the Fall of 2011, Lili founded BAILA.

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YOU MATTER  
JUNE EDMONDS





DERRICK MADDOX





LIZBETH OFTEN SPOKE IN TONGUES  
J MICHAEL WALKER

Sitting on the edge of a cliff  
I have no desire to jump from.  
I look back to my ancestors:  
Black faces that have figured out  
how to get by  
for centuries.  
My uncle  
is the pastor of a church in Helena, Arkansas.  
Will it soon be in ashes?  
Martyrdom is not in my foreseeable future.

i dream of a room with white walls  
covered in art.  
a mattress on the floor  
with a white bedskirt  
and too many pillows.  
a closet that is organized by color,  
sunlight that beams through the window  
at all hours of the day,  
and no one to bother me.

a letter written to the people  
on a typewriter  
at a party:

we were never promised that this life was supposed to be easy;  
adulthood, being emotionally responsible  
is associated with accepting the fact that we live on this earth,  
and understanding to what capacity we can control experiences.

you are only as strong as you allow yourself to be;  
and will soon realize  
the power and truth you seek within the world  
purely exists within yourself.

SARAH GAIL ARMSTRONG





COLOR AS COLLAGE-VINCENT JOHNSON



HERE, WITH A LIVE FASHION REPORT FROM THE RED CARPET, OUTSIDE THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE, KDDEEF CHANNEL 68 REPORTERS GUANA-A-GOGO & NEGRA...

KDDEEFF - Ch.68  
Los Angeles  
RED CARPET PRESIDENTIAL FASHIONS  
With GUANA & NEGRA

THANKS BLANCA. WE'RE HERE ON THE RED CARPET, CAMPAIGNING FOR OUR FAVORITE CANDIDATES...

WHY CAN'T I ASK A QUESTION? I AM THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WEATHER GIRL! PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES HATE ALL MEXICANS!

I'M DRESSED AS "OBAMA GIRL, THREE POINT OH", AND GUANA AS "CHICA DE EL CHAPO". WE'RE HERE TO REVIEW THESE CAMPAIGNERS RED CARPET FASHIONS.

AND HERE'S OUR FIRST C... OH MY GOD, IT'S HAVANA CUBANA!



OH SNAP! HAVANA'S IN A GAP, NO, GOP, CARLTON SWEATER! AND A LACOSTE, IZOD, POLO SKIRT, WITH BOWLING, NO SADDLE SHOES! HA HA HA!

OBAMA 2016

WHAT THE HELL YOU WEARING MISS CUBANA? YOU LOOK REAL STUPID! HAVANA GETS A RED CARPET "F" FAIL-YOU'RE!

EL CHAPO FOR PRESIDENT

MAYBE SO GUANA, BUT I'D NEVER VOTE FOR ANYONE WHO'S SUPPORTERS LOOKED OR ACTED LIKE EITHER OF YOU TWO!

RUBIO CRUZ 2016



COLOR IN ABLE .COM

Get Guana & Negra some "DECENT" Clothing for Campaigning in the (for Apparel) section of ColorInAble.com Get DOLLS to dress too...

Red Carpet ©2015 Steven J. Brooks

More Guana-A-Gogo & NEGRA Cartoons and Paper Dolls @ COLOR-IN-ABLE.COM

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“Red Carpet” is the natural follow up to “Outta Jail Today” and “FontGate” the Guana-A-GoGo & Negra comics that appeared in BAILA ZINE #1. In this comic Guana and Negra are sent by Channel 68 to cover the Red Carpet Fashions of Supporters of the Candidates in the Presidential Debate. In Typical Morning Infotainment style News, they dress up to support THEIR Favorite Candidates. When they see the First Campaigner, Havana Cubana, Dressed in the Official GOP Outfit from BAILA ZINE #1, they describe, grade and rank on her clothing as only Joan Rivers could . . .

”Red Carpet” addresses the culture, age, and affiliation clashes within the United States in respect to the CODE of presidential campaigning. Done as a Lighthearted “Goofus and Gallant” social engineering cartoon, it suggest the Proper Attire to Represent Your Candidate. It is a compare and contrast done with 3 Paper Dolls to show the Do’s and Don’ts, the CODE of dressing for presidential campaigners. This style of dressing contrasts with the CODE of the Young and Hip, as Negra uses the LIST of CODE WORDS for Uncool, Unhip And Republican, in Street Clothing. She is also sending a pretty sloppy set of signals in her own visual presentation as well, in ripped, dirty, stained clothing, and barefoot.

Meanwhile, Guana-A-GoGo is FAR TO GREEN in this RED WHITE AND BLUE environment, making a statement about her COMMITMENT TO AMERICA, or lack there of... She is probably showing a bit too much Leg for campaigning, as well . . . And the 2 of them are getting wasted right there on the Red Carpet, not quite Kosher behavior at a Presidential Debate . . . Havana Cubana provides a stark contrast in the message she sends with the CODE of her clothing and Demeanor. A message that says her candidate, their commitment and their mission are all about a prosperous future for America, guaranteed by the serious political discussion of U.S. Democracy, and I’m having it all take Place On the Media Circus Stage known as the RED CARPET.

The bigger CODE issue for me with this comic is seeing how people of color “Try” to “Fit In” in what is for the most part, a Very White experience, The Presidential Election Process. 3 of every 4 ballots cast in 2012 for President were cast by White People, elections are still “All About Them”, no matter what the “Flavor Of The Election” is. This time it’s “Hispandering”, pandering to Latinos, / Hispanics . . . And it’s obvious that many People Of Color of many different Races and Ethnic Backgrounds don’t really understand “The CODE” of an American Election. John F. Kennedy understood. He made sure, as he ran to be the first Catholic President, to send the Message that “He Would Give Orders In Washington, NOT Take Orders From The Vatican!” America First, Your Heritage, maybe it comes in Second... Not even that for President Obama, his heritage is further down in his priorities! And We, the Voters need to feel that! If People felt that Obama would have Declared Martial Law in Ferguson or Baltimore when the first Black Person got Killed, he would never have been elected president.

Martin Luther King Jr. Understood. Rioting wasn’t a way to get anyone to really change anything. Peaceful protest and responsible discussion is what made the Civil Rights Movement so successful. The 2006 Immigration Reform Protests, in contrast, looked much more like Wild Rioting in the Streets by a Hoard of Invaders, and we see how far that issue has come in the 9 years since . . .

STEVEN J BROOKS



## **BLACK ART MATTERS: A Conversation About Social Practice and Social Justice**

The following is a transcript of a conversation that took place on November 6, 2015 between artists Steven J. Brooks, Adrienne Devine, June Edmonds, Kathie Foley-Meyer and Vincent Johnson on the subject of social practice and social activism.

The conversation was loosely structured around two questions – is it social work fronting as art, and is there an element of unacknowledged privilege for artists who make this the focus of their practice, even if they are artists of color? The second half of the discussion concerned the social justice organization Black Lives Matter and its quest to force a public conversation about the relationship between communities of color and law enforcement, and other issues, and any links between social justice movements and social practice.

The field of social practice in the art world remains problematic, even as it continues to function, in some ways, as a reaction to the moneyed and decadent stratosphere of the commercial art world, with its dizzying and ever-expanding abundance of fairs around the globe, and their attendant merry-go-rounds of celebrities-turned-collectors and vice versa. Does the field of social practice have any effect on the commercial art market – or should it?

The field also remains problematic due to the continuing dearth of jobs for graduate of public practice programs, as was noted in a California Community Foundation (CCF) fall 2015 panel held at LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions).

**Kathie Foley-Meyer:** I recently attended a CCF event at LACE called “The Future of Los Angeles and The Role of Artists” and it was a panel moderated by Sofia Klatzker, the ED of Arts for LA, and on this panel were Simon Leung, who is professor of art at UCI, James Rojas, who is an urban planner and artist, and Consuelo Velasco Montoya, who is an artist and she also teaches at Otis in the Public Practice Art program. One of the things that frustrated me—I hate when I go to these panels – where they are talking about the future – and there are no African Americans on the panel. I’m not saying they didn’t try to find someone to serve, but obviously it makes you feel as if you are not being considered for the future, as if your presence is not required.

**Steven J. Brooks:** Can I just say one thing about that? We’re in Los Angeles, and if there is any one city in all of America that represents Mexico, then this is it, so it makes sense that a majority of the people on the panel were Latin. As much as I may not like being excluded, at least there were voices from people of color.

**KFM:** The largest portion of this panel was spent on social practice, and towards the end Consuelo was saying that they’ve got all these people graduating from her program, and none of them can find jobs.

**Vincent Johnson:** What would they find a job doing?

**KFM:** That’s my point; I was there with Bill Moreno, who is the President of the Board of LACE, and his comment was, “Well, what am I going to hire them as? Are they artists, are they social workers?” “What am I getting when I hire someone who has graduated from one of these programs?”

**SJB:** Can I ask what they are officially graduating as – what is actually put on their diploma?

**KFM:** It’s a graduate program in public practice.

**SJB:** Public practice of?

**KFM:** It is Masters Degree in Public Practice; the program is called Graduate Public Practice.

**Adrienne Devine:** For me what’s more important is what is the content of the curriculum, because that can mean different things to different people; it may have a different emphasis, they may not have any studio art involvement at all; that may be part of the issue with that whole category, that is, what is it?



**June Edmonds:** What's being promised? If you enter a graduate program, I imagine they give you a clue as to what you're leaving the program with, and I wonder what's being said in that area.

**KFM:** Well I think a lot of these folks want to work for non-profits, arts-related nonprofits.

**SJB:** As an administrator?

**KFM:** As an administrator of a social practice program.

**AD:** When you think about art in the more traditional sense, anybody who is pursuing a degree as an artist knows you're going to have to make your own way.

**SJB:** No, it depends on what kind of art you pursued-

**AD:** I'm not talking about commercial art, I'm talking about someone who is going to school for studio practice, you're going to have to make your own way, and I think they have to understand that too.

**SJB:** There is this expectation that when you get out of college as a philosophy major you'll be able to talk philosophy. And yeah, but where are you going to get a job doing that? And when it comes to fine art you're supposed to love your art, and continue doing it, despite the fact that you are going to have to do something else, unless you're so wonderful that people are willing to pay for it the day you graduate.

**KFM:** I think a few years ago they were turning out people right out of art school who were selling their work and getting representation.

**VJ:** And these were social practice artists who were getting representation?

**KFM:** No. Visual artists, definitely not social practice people. But I want to get back to the question – I want to know if you agree that there is an element of privilege for artists who make this the focus of their practice, do you agree with the premise that it is largely white people going into communities of color and messing around with their political and socioeconomic elements.

**VJ:** But that already happens in every other way, what's the difference? What's the new name for what already has been happening?

**SJB:** It just sounds just like Hollywood buying into Blaxploitation. Which I'm endorsing by the way.

**KFM:** I mean just black communities, and it's not only just white people doing social practice.

**VJ:** When I lived in West Adams, and I would walk to the supermarket on Washington Boulevard, I would see USC students, with their full film crews-- these film students doing documentary-style filmmaking of African Americans, who were just passersby. They were absolutely convinced of their right to do that, although there were no release forms signed or permission given. I actually approached one of them and said, "Can you imagine what would happen if dozens of African Americans with professional film equipment went into wealthy parts of Los Angeles and started filming people walking up and down the street? Do you know what would happen?"

**SJB:** Yeah, but we don't need to see another Ferguson!

**VJ:** It would be brought to a halt immediately.

**KFM:** Right, but I also think – if it would be allowed to happen, it would be like when Sacha Baron Cohen in that film – I can't remember the name – went and interviewed those rich southern people and – I think it would be this weird kind of anthropological thing – they would be put on display, and they would sort of willingly participate because people like the attention.

Is there any connection between social practice and the commercial art world? Or is it just something completely separate?





*CODE DRAWINGS*  
ARTWORK & PHOTOGRAPHY - KENTURAH DAVIS

**SJB:** Shepard Fairey is an extreme example, all the way around of social practice and the commercial art world, and it's admirable that he can make the two work together so well and so profitably for him, but he's a true exception to the rule.

**KFM:** And also Theaster Gates who is trying to spread what he is doing and have other artists take up the mantle, but I'm not sure that has actually happened.

**SJB:** I have to ask: does Theaster Gates have t-shirts in the mall, the fancy malls in the stores for men and women?

**KFM:** No, he doesn't.

**SJB:** See, that's what I'm talking about with the commercial practice, that Shepard Fairey has really been able to make the two work together.

**AD:** I think with social practice, what you're going to see is more of a link with urban planning than commercial art, and to me that really makes more sense, because if you're talking about social practice and you're dealing with social problems, then that's the avenue where social practice would have more traction. I think people who are creative on the front end, the first adopters, will be people like the Rick Lowes, Theaster Gates, Emmanuel Pratts... people who think creatively and will be able to take that creative thought and implement it in fields or disciplines that are intrinsically socially engaged ... and the corporations will follow in whatever way they figure out how they can capitalize off of it.

**KFM:** I can also see where a private collector who is socially committed can kind of start something; someone with lots of money but with more social practice kinds of aspirations will somehow work to make one feed the other. Make his or her collection practice subsidize their social practice efforts.

**VJ:** What are they going to be collecting?

**KFM:** They would collect visual art, and maybe use the market to sell parts of their collection or lend it for fees to sponsor their social practice goals.

**SJB:** There is an unfortunately horrible example of that right now for African Americans with the Bill Cosby collection at the National Gallery, where he did support a lot of artists who were involved in social practice, and he paid a lot more money for the artwork that "it would have been worth" in some respects to be able to support that artist, but he's such a horrible person, and the fact that it is being shown now, it sort of stings.

**KFM:** Right. I think they sort of have to show it per the contract, but –

**SJB:** I know they couldn't back out; it is the art world, the museum world where, remember what we heard in our second meeting with, who was it – Brooke – and Simon from LACMA that the art world runs in a two-year cycle, so, based on the contract two years ago, at the earliest for this show.

**KFM:** I know, but getting back to the example, I don't necessarily think it has to be the same artists; in other words, he/she could be collecting artists that are not involved in social practice and using that collection through sales and lending it to museums and whatnot, to finance some other kind of social practice.

**VJ:** But what is the social practice artist doing? When I go to San Francisco and see this Tenderloin, I see armies of people assisting other people – it is mechanized, it is weaponized, it is organized; you see people delivering medication, you see people delivering food—they don't live on the streets, they live in what used to be the wealthiest neighborhoods in San Francisco, which is what the Tenderloin is.

They're doing just the opposite of what's going on down here, where it's just every dog for themselves, and people living like animals in the streets. They don't allow that in San Francisco. So is that social practice?

**KFM:** So are these artists?

**VJ:** No, they're not artists, just part of the government of San Francisco.





*CODE DRAWINGS*  
ARTWORK & PHOTOGRAPHY - KENTURAH DAVIS

**SJB:** There is a huge difference, if you're talking about people living in the streets, between San Francisco and Los Angeles, and that difference is the weather: San Francisco is a much more difficult city to live on the streets all year long, whereas in Los Angeles it is totally doable.

**VJ:** In San Francisco they're providing one heck of a lot more services.

**SJB:** It's easier when you don't have as many, and they cannot live outside as easily. You have to be a hardier person to live outside where it gets chilly in the winter.

**KFM:** It's true, but I want to get back to the topic – one of my many problems with the subject, is that I don't see the difference between social practice and social work, and I don't see how it falls in the category of art.

**AD:** What I've observed is that there are artists who are increasingly not interested in art "inside the white box" so to speak. They're not interested in art in a gallery; they're more interested in engaging with people in communities and doing that in a way that is different. It may incorporate some creative approaches, but it is not art on the wall. And in doing that, depending upon how they engage with people it falls within that rubric of social practice.

**VJ:** But what are they doing that is significant that is not happening already?

**AD:** I wouldn't say that it is different; I recall someone raised the question – what's the difference between that and art therapy? I see to a degree that it is related, and some of it, when it is social practice, is it for the benefit of the community, or is it social practice because you want to work something out – that you have some issue that you want to work out, and you think this is the way to go about doing it.

**SJB:** So where would you draw the line with social practice? I have felt that BAILA has been social practice, as we have sat in places like CAAM and said, "You know, you need to pay more attention to female artists in Los Angeles, you need to pay more attention to Los Angeles artists in general, and more attention to California artists in general. To me that is social practice in one respect; I know it is at the really high end, about as high as you can get without being snooty.

**KFM:** How is that social practice?

**AD:** It seems more like activism to me.

**SJB:** It's social practice because it is putting pressure on the status quo to change—to apply to our needs and our issues, the way they actually should be or should have been. It seems that CAAM has changed. I felt that BAILA was my social practice, because I'm not going to get involved in Black Lives Matter because to me a lot of them are way out of bounds.

**KFM:** To me that does not seem like social practice, but rather advocacy on behalf of a group of artists.

**SJB:** Why do you say that is different in this case?

**AD:** Because that was not directly concerning the community, it was just between CAAM and BAILA -

**SJB:** Another part of the issue was advocacy for female artists in Los Angeles. Which seems to be a blind spot, and if you're advocating for female artists to me that is social practice. I don't understand when feminism didn't count as social practice. I didn't understand when standing up for parity doesn't count of social practice.

**KFM:** When I think of social practice I think of what went on with the residences that are across from Watts Towers, and the installation that Kim Abeles did at LACE a few years ago, where she was trying to draw attention to the issue of water in the world and water shortages, and the installation and programming last year where they artist [insert name] was drawing a line between the people that grow the food, and serve you food and the restaurant workers and issues of inequality. To me that is social practice, but what BAILA does is advocacy, because I just find that a lot of social practice artists have a particular political and socioeconomic agenda that they are pushing, and they go into a community and they interact, and I'm not saying that they are not doing good, but I don't see how you can separate your personal politics – I feel like you are using the socioeconomic position of the community that you are interacting with – in service of your political agenda. That's the part that makes me uncomfortable, particularly when they are not members of the community originally.





*CODE DRAWINGS*  
ARTWORK & PHOTOGRAPHY-KENTURAH DAVIS

**AD:** That makes sense, and I'm reminded again of Sweetwater Foundation, I think it is in Chicago, and one of the things that the brother is doing, it goes beyond just art per se, but goes into urban planning, architecture, community preservation, which is the part that I think is most important, because he's revitalized communities, and people who want to be part of that social practice really have to be committed to being part of the community. It doesn't necessarily mean that I have to move from my house into the community, but really have to be vested with the people in a lot of ways, so that the people who are there can remain there, versus folks coming in, with gentrification coming behind it, people being displaced and the next thing you know you have something like Old Town Pasadena.

**KFM:** And I just wonder what happens to the community when the artist is done?

**AD:** This is the thing too – it's multidisciplinary, it's not just artists coming in, it is people who are growing their own – his thing is food, basically, so you've got community gardens, people growing their own food; there's an art institute that is giving them space to do other things, as opposed to artists coming in to do a project, and then they're out. It's really more about empowering the community so we have to look at really defining social practice.

**SJB:** It can be a really hard line to define - Avenue 50 – they are really wonderful, and they've been committed forever. I remember there was this woman who decided to make a knockoff of Avenue 50, and she tried to put it in the community and do all the same things, but it obviously was for her, to make her art career better. And the grey line between the two of them was really hard to see in some respects, but the only reason it became obvious to me really quickly, was because I was involved in part of the higher art community, and I could see they were reflecting upon her very favorably, and the truth is she shouldn't have even been known by them, based upon how early in her career it was; she was playing it for the art world, but not for the community.

**AD:** That's northeast LA.

**SJB:** Right NELA! She was trying to capitalize on NELA – the whole community service thing, the whole making an art service center thing – but it wasn't like Avenue 50, where they really are invested in the community and based in the community. She was a carpetbagger.

**KFM:** Right. And I can see that happening actually fairly easily. Is social practice something you all are interested in as artists – do you want to incorporate it into your own art practice?

**VJ:** No!

**SJB:** Stephen says no!

**AD:** I might be involved in something, but I'm not interested in it the way it's being taught and promoted. I'm an individual artist and I may do something in and for a community, but I don't know about putting that label on it.

**SJB:** As much as I said 'no', I have continually tried to, and will continue to try to do a little something for the community, with the community. I wouldn't want to call it social practice but I would want to call it more than advocacy.

**JE:** I think that when you teach, that it is a form of social practice. I think that teachers at some point might decide, especially from working with organizations, that they might have a different way of doing things, so if they create their own programs, whether it is even labeled a program; that is social practice in its most authentic way. As with Avenue 50, which is social practice at its most authentic, and other groups we're mentioning. I think some social practice projects are authentic and some are merely exploitative.

**KFM:** Do you feel that artists of color have a special obligation to –

**AD:** No.

**SJB:** I personally want to say yes, but I actually have to say no. As an artist of color raised by a minister and a schoolteacher, of course I'm going to say yes. But as an artist I believe that artists should follow their own passion and unless their passion is through teaching or social advocacy through any kind of service, then no. If they want to follow their passion and paint pink on the wall every day for no other reason than that and they can do that that should be fine.





ADRIENNE DEVINE

**VJ:** For me there are only a couple of issues: what is the role of the artist, and what is the role of art? I have not seen any artwork cause someone to suddenly go from being a poor student to being a good student, or having a particular viewpoint of life that they've never had before. They can have exposure to those things, but to have that artwork redirect them to some better path, I have not seen that.

Look at the way people with power use culture. To gain a certain kind of knowledge, and to have access to a certain kind of insight, that is not available to them. For example, the Zola novel, "Ladies' Paradise," which is about the invention of the department store. That book was reprinted almost 150 years after it was first published – reprinted by a major department store in New York City, because it had such a profound understanding of how you create visual excitement in people.

**JE:** That's a program on BBC.

**VJ:** Is it?

**JE:** It is, and it's called "The Paradise."

**VJ:** Selfridge's is the setting. The point is, no one was clamoring for this book. This book came back because the information in it could be taken advantage of. It was better than any research that was out there. Because the writer had a deep, rich understanding of how to get people to want to buy things—how stores make people want to buy things, and what worked 100 years ago is going to work now.

That profound insight being then taken by people to then maintain a certain kind of hegemony and position in the world. It's the same reason that certain kinds of people weren't allowed to read; it's all of those things—having access to that level or being not allowed to access that level of knowledge. Why that thing is held in such esteem and privilege. Why is it that you have to go to the US, to an elite graduate school program to get to that certain level of knowledge so that you actually know what's going on.

**KFM:** I agree; I think some of these graduate public/social practice programs are graduating students who are going to, if they get jobs, bump up against people who are already working in the communities that they are seeking to join, and then there's a bit of unresolved conflict and tension there.

**JE:** I actually know of an instance where that happened. Without mentioning any names or organizations, I heard about an instance where a graduate from a program was working for a while, and there was tension and conflict from the beginning, because the graduate wanted to direct things. The student felt the education they received was sufficient to take charge, but did not have experience in the field, which was actually what was needed for the job. The field management skills were simply not there, and things got out of control, and there was denial about that, and eventually they came to a parting of the ways, and the graduate joined the ranks of unemployed graduates of the program.

**SJB:** It sounds horrible to say, but lots and lots of people want to do good; lots and lots of people want to be activists, and that's a really wonderful thing, but the truth is, when push comes to shove, as far as how much employment is out there, there isn't nearly enough for people who want to do this and be employed for their passion.

**KFM:** I know, and I don't want to call it a scam, but it feels a bit like a scam to me to be having people borrow tens of thousands of dollars, and spend two years in these programs and then not only not be able to get a job, but when they do, to not be able to function effectively.

**SJB:** Well at least in a lot of states, if they have a master's degree they can teach, even if they suck at it.

**JE:** It just depends upon what they're promising when they enter the program. If they're not promising jobs, then it is the responsibility of the person paying that money.

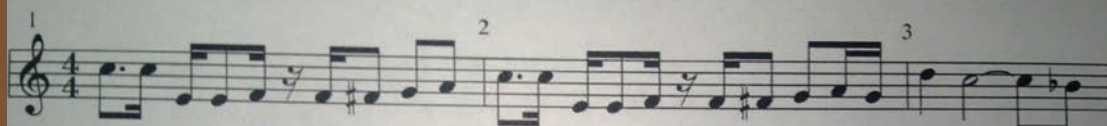
**SJB:** There is no one who goes into a public practice art program with the promise of any job. Period. You're talking about it like it's ITT Tech.

**KFM:** Yes, I agree, but they certainly don't graduate thinking that they're not going to be able to find work. One of the statements from the lecturer at the CCF Conference was that she was frustrated; she wanted to be able to have jobs for her graduates.

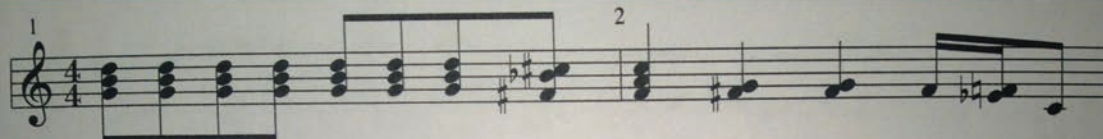
**SJB:** The only way she's going to get jobs for all of her graduates is if she's gets everyone to vote for the Democrats, who will spend money on the arts. The only way.



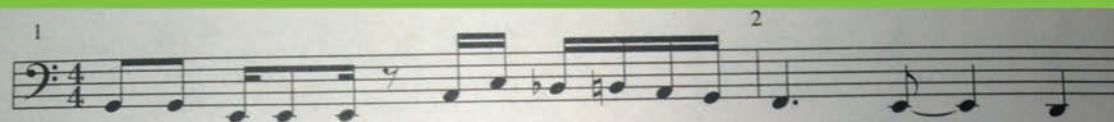
# CAN YOU DIG IT?



# KEEP ON KEEPIN' ON



# RIGHT ON



*THE BASS LINE*  
MUSIC: MICHAEL McTAGGART  
ARTWORK: KATHIE FOLEY-MEYER

**KFM:** That's one solution. Seriously, though, why do we keep creating these programs – actually I know why, but it seems like a waste of money.

**SJB:** It is a waste of money. These programs will graduate a small percentage of people who are good at this, and the vast majority who won't be. But it's a masters degree that will get you, at least outside of California, really far, even if it's for something else, so that no matter how much you've spent for something you're not actually doing, you still have a master's degree that will open a lot of doors, and there's plenty of people who have money to throw away.

**KFM:** Right, but I think putting it under the rubric of art – it feels a little false to me still, but maybe I'm just narrow-minded.

So – moving on to our second topic – Stephen, you had said something earlier about Black Lives Matter; that you're not comfortable with some of the things they've said or done?

**SJB:** Yes, but my personal view has been, for the last 25 years, that when it comes to these groups that are fervent and inspired, and as much as sometimes I believe for the most part in what they believe in, they don't have control over themselves, and there's people who stand for the group who will do inane things like taking the microphone away from a presidential candidate and just keeping it until he has to walk away.

**KFM:** Have you seen any of the art that's been generated as a result of these protests?

**SJB:** Yes I have, and I'll say that I do support people who want to join, but as someone who went through this 25 years ago when it was Operation Desert Storm\Operation Desert Shield, as a liberal left-wing cartoonist back in Cambridge Massachusetts, I wasn't going to do more than contribute my cartoon, but I was not going to march on someplace, because people do stupid things and are out of control. If you want to have someone like Dr. King manage the group, so that everyone acts respectfully, maybe I would think about joining the group, although I don't trust the police in America. But the truth is, none of these groups, ever since then, have ever been in control like that, and they do things that make people not like them, as much as their messages are great, and really need to have attention.

**KFM:** Is it important to be liked?

**SJB:** No, it's important to not to be tarred. It's important to not be called communist in the 50s because you joined them in the middle 30s because the economy really needed it. And that's the example my grandfather gave me, which has sort of stuck with me forever.

**VJ:** My understanding is that the coming to consciousness has come through people having video, and that video ending up on national television, and that video has caused the federal government to acknowledge that there's a serious problem; it has not been through Black Lives Matter. It's a western optical invention that's been turned back on police forces.

**SJB:** I am impressed that Black Lives Matter has spread at least across the western hemisphere. I'm really happy about that; I'm not against them, but the fact they took the mic away from Bernie Sanders, makes me step away from the group, and I realize that there's some controversy about that. But when you look at the protests that African Americans made in the 50s and 60s to gain their rights, it was a lot different than the protests that happened about a lot of other things. We, as African Americans really showed that we were willing to join America in every way not just condemn it. Open the fuckin' doors. We are here. And I know that even 50 years after that, there's Black Lives Matter; but that's such a different attitude and a different approach than everyone else has taken, and the truth is the only other approach that has worked fairly well has been the gay rights movement. They've been able to legislate themselves to parity, and freedom and equity that they deserve.

**KFM:** Except in Houston, Texas. I guess what I was looking for a link between a social justice movement and a social practice project, or entity if there are any.

**SJB:** The truth is there are probably tons of them, but we're probably too old to be connected to a lot of it. Because we're not the ones standing on the front lines, and then, when the cops aren't looking, we're making art on a piece of cloth, and then when they come, we run with it, which I'm pointing to, one of the pieces that's in Watts Tower Arts Center right now. The one on the sheet that's actually a reproduction of the original piece, because it doesn't exist any more. We're all a bunch of old people who aren't doing that, and are we all hip enough to know which links—I mean we can't even find the naked pictures of each other on the internet, can we?

**KFM:** No, and that's probably a good thing to be honest.

**SJB:** I just want to say that I think that anyone who tries to change the way things are in our messed-up world is, in some way or another, exerting social practice. I know it doesn't quite fit the definition of the master's degree.





KATHIE FOLEY-MEYER

**KFM:** Anyone else have anything to add?

**VJ:** Just that Cy Twombly is going to have a painting coming up for sale that is anticipated to be about \$60 million. The artist, who lived in Rome, who was like landed gentry in Italy, his estate, there's a painting coming up for auction that is owned by someone in Los Angeles, that is anticipated to bring \$60 million. Now, when I see that – what's happening with that \$60 million is that a facility is going to be built by a world-famous architect, as an extension of an existing property. I think about that – that if you added up all the sales of African American art in the United States in this past year, I would bet it would not add up to \$60 million. And I'm talking about including all the superstars out there, etc.

We're talking about social practice, etc., and how it feels to be in society, and that's a marker, in a society, of value. That's saying, showing how far away your value is. That this person can make an object in the world that's worth in and of itself \$60 million. This is not the full sum total of all the things this person has ever done in their life. This is one object, worth \$60 million.

**SJB:** You're a little too obsessed with people who have put value on objects on something that is other than their true value.

**VJ:** That is their true value.

**SJB:** If someone were to bronze a poop by Kim Kardashian, it probably be worth half a million dollars. And it's not because it was a poop or a bronze poop, but because it was Kim Kardashian's bronze poop. So there's a difference between the value of art and the value of art that's been turned into gold, like it was lead. But the value doesn't really count any more because it's not the art that has value but the status symbol that's the value. It's not art. It's a fuckin' status symbol.

**VJ:** But it's real money. The sale is going to be real.

**SJB:** Of course it's going to be real, just like those \$200 Nikes that are really worth 30 bucks. Just because the value's inflated doesn't mean that it's good, and just because the value is inflated doesn't mean the value is what it's claimed to be.

**KFM:** Vincent, answer a question for me: the building that he's constructing from the proceeds from the sale – is going to be what kind of cultural center?

**VJ:** A place for people to meet and for other cultural activities to take place.

**KFM:** And where is it going to be located?

**VJ:** My understanding was Mid-Wilshire or West LA.

**SJB:** And even still, it's a much better use of \$60 million for all concerned than that one stupid painting.

**KFM:** To me that sounds like a form of social practice actually. That's what I meant earlier when I said a wealthy person who uses their art to advance a social practice or political agenda—that's exactly what I was talking about. And again, I feel like we are definitely left out of that equation when these things happen, and the only way we're not left out is that if artists of color or means do the same thing; or black collectors.

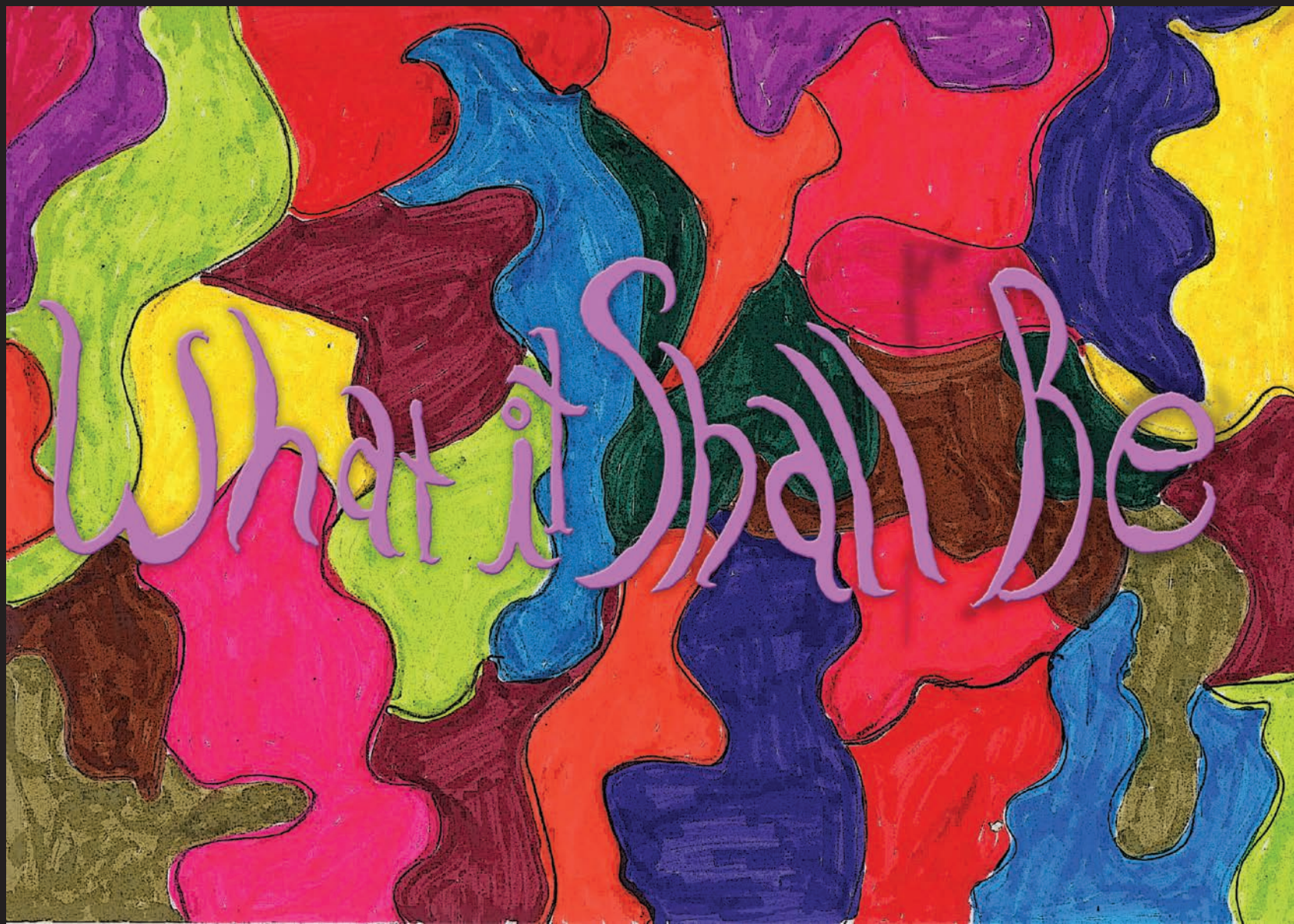
**SJB:** Your definition of artist is too strict; we are included if you count music. But for visual artists, fuck no, they just shit on us.

**KFM:** No, I am. We are doing it. Art + Practice is doing it. But it's a slow process.

**JE:** That's what Vincent's point is; is that Cy Twombly is worth \$60 million . . . and we can only have one Art + Practice in LA because Mark Bradford is the only one making just a little bit of money to do that. We're talking about equality, and we were talking about CAAM, and equality of space, and now Vincent is talking about equality of pay.

**VJ:** Exactly. Just recently, the Art Institute of Chicago was given 42 Pop artworks. Work made from the 1950s and 60s. The assessed value of these 42 works is \$500 million.





KATHIE FOLEY-MEYER





*BROTHER WINSTON KEPT HIS SECRETS*  
*J MICHAEL WALKER*





DODGE MAGNUM II-ZEAL HARRIS

**KFM:** Are they all – male – white – the canon?

**VJ:** Of course! You already know who they are! 42 artworks. Not 42,000. 42.

**KFM:** Right. \$500 million.

**VJ:** That for me, when I see those figures, that bestows a certain value on a person. If you look at a spectrum of value, when you say what that this person – what they produce, can have this value, whereas another person, what they produce can only have up to this small value. Right now, the Norman Lewis retrospective is about to open this week at the Pennsylvania Academy. Norman Lewis is a premiere Abstract Expressionist artist and still is not being acknowledged. The institution is as unknown as the curator who worked on the show. It's going to go to the Amon Carter and to the Chicago Cultural Center. It's not going to the Art Institute of Chicago or to MOCA. He's not being valued – talking about Black Lives Matter; it's across the board about not being valued. There's a direct connection between that and being exterminated in the streets; it's one part of a continuum.

**JE:** Hello. I think that Black Lives Matter is so important that it exists – these young people out on the streets, getting their asses kicked.

I think there are some things occurring because of that; it always does. It did back in the 60s; it wasn't just the Freedom Riders, it was the Black Panthers too! If it hadn't been for both groups, no changes would have gone on. If Muhammad Ali hadn't gone on TV; if he wasn't out there laughing and threatening at the same time, we wouldn't have gotten the gains that we have today. Which are being taken away. So that's why I will always admire Black Lives Matter. Those young women who ran onto the stage and took Bernie Sanders' mic- I thought that was funny, and to me the question always is, what is the result of these actions? What would have occurred if that action had not happened? Bernie Sanders wasn't addressing Black Lives Matter. They ran onto stage and asked Bernie Sanders to talk about Black Lives Matter. And you know who else is talking about Black Lives Matter? Hillary is!! Black Lives Matter affecting Bernie affected Hillary as well. So what these young people were doing, it might be crazy, but they're making changes, and I feel like I see it all around.

**KFM:** I do too.

**SJB:** You know something? They're not really making changes. They are making people give lip service. Because the truth is Black Lives Matter has always been on Bernie Sanders' agenda. Black Lives Matter has always been on Hillary Clinton's agenda.

**JE:** He wasn't even talking about it-

**SJB:** The truth is, this is an election, and I've got to ask, is anyone here really going to vote for a Republican? We all feel that black lives matter; the Democrats know that black lives matter; they're doing the best they can. There's other stuff we could be discussing instead of this because we know it. It's a given. The sun will come out tomorrow. Black Lives Matter is a liberal shield.

**KFM:** I'm going to respectfully disagree in that they held politicians' feet to the fire, and they've made it impossible to take the black vote for granted.

**SJB:** [Laughter] I'm sorry, but the only way the black vote will not be taken for granted is if it is withheld. I'm sorry, but even if Ben Carson's lies were all the truth, and he were the most positive Republican to ever come down the pike, I still could still could guarantee you that 90% of the [black] votes would go to the Democrats. If Ted Cruz or Marco Rubio is the next great colored person to run for president, they're still going to go for the Democrat.

**KFM:** I still think that they are forcing issues to the forefront that were able to be ignored in the past, and that they are pushing up against white privilege in ways that are starting to be felt.

**AD:** Yes.

**JE:** Agreed.

**VJ:** Yes



**SJB:** These things are happening because of technology, not because of anything else. It just came to the forefront because in the last few years everyone and their brother has a hi-definition videocam in their pocket, and can publicize that worldwide within five minutes, because that's all it takes to upload it. The truth is, without Barack Obama this country would probably be burning down, because all this stuff that we as African Americans have known forever, and have never convinced white people of, that racial profiling is real, we now have video coming out every freaking day showing them that, and it wouldn't matter who it was for anything else, the technology has forced this issue.

**KFM:** But I also think that BLM has forced the issue; I don't think it is just technology. They are publicly linking the deaths, each time it happens; it becomes a roster of devalued life that you cannot look away from.

**SJB:** A lot of white people see that without having to have any connection to Black Lives Matter. All they have to do is turn on their television, or their internet connection, or turn on their phone every day, and they see that without Black Lives Matter at all.

**KFM:** I would argue that they don't turn it on, though.

**SJB:** Oh sure they do, because you can't not see it. You can't not see the video of someone being gunned down, because every tv station wants to show it, every tv station does show it, so you do see it. And we said Rodney King was beaten way too much 20 years ago, that that was an anomaly. But when you see a new video every day, and we are seeing a new video every week at this point, and everyone's seeing it because there are no censors anymore, because doesn't have a censor, and that is pushing the issue. And in my opinion, God made Barack Obama president in part so America wouldn't burn down, because I can't see a white president in this situation having any control no matter what they did, because no matter who they sided with they would be wrong. Notice how Quentin Tarantino is now a target for the police for the United States of America because he agrees with Black Lives Matter.

**KFM:** Oh sure you can. The same technology that you are saying makes it possible for this stuff to be viewed is the same technology that makes it possible to ignore it. If I'm the type of person that only goes to certain web sites and watches certain television stations, then I can plausibly ignore some of what's going on, and I'm saying that the Black Lives Matter movement has made that less likely.

**VJ:** But why is Black Lives Matter focused on police brutality when in Chicago every week there's like 50 people shot?

**SJB:** Thank you!

**KFM:** I thought they were focusing on that as well, I didn't think it was only police brutality.

**SJB:** No, they aren't. They've completely ignored the fact – Spike Lee's next movie is called “Chi-Raq” – in other words, Chicago and Iraq put together.

**KFM:** Yes, I know; I saw the trailer.

**JE:** Overall, there's more white-on-white crime than black-on-black crime.

**VJ:** Right.

**SJB:** Overall, there's more white people in America than black people. 70% of America is white, 12% of America is black.

**JE:** No, no, the percentage-

**SJB:** Oh, the percentage -

**VJ:** She's talking about ratios; one-on-one activity. One against the other.

**JE:** Right.

# PERIODIC TABLE of BEAUTY

Africa Carribbean North America



1.0 acceptable/superb

2.0 acceptable/low

3.0 unacceptable

A acceptable

U unacceptable

U\* only acceptable when cosmetically altered

PERIODIC TABLE OF BEAUTY  
janet e. dandridge



**VJ:** Every time I go to Chicago – I have five aunts who have lived in Chicago for over 50 years. Every time I go to Chicago I am really concerned, and I don't stay on the streets in the evening. I look at people and I see anger like I have never seen before, like anger I haven't seen since the 60s. Going to a barbecue place I think I might get shot here waiting for pit barbecue, just because somebody just goes ape on somebody because of something- whatever – bothers them. That feeling is so overwhelming in Chicago right now and it's been bad out here. It's been bad in Detroit; it's been bad in a lot of places. Right now in Chicago, people are being mowed down like dogs. They're not paying attention to anybody, they're not talking to the ministers, they don't care about anyone, they only care about – you look at me wrong, and I'm going to shoot you in the face. That's it.

**KFM:** Who is talking about that there?

**VJ:** From Rahm Emmanuel down, they're all talking about it, but it is impossible for the police to remove every weapon from Chicago. But guess what – 2500 people have been shot there this year already. It's unbelievable.

**AD:** That's dreadful.

**KFM:** I have family there; my mom is from there.

**VJ:** Every time I'm there I think- there's something going on here. I've been to Detroit, I've been to Houston, I've been to Miami, to New Orleans—none of these places feel like Chicago, on the south side. Detroit doesn't even have streetlights at night, and I'm not worried about that. What I am worried about is if you come up behind me in Chicago in daylight.

One last point: the first two black artists retreats hosted in Chicago were fabulous. During one of the days of the second retreat I went back to my car, which was parked right next to Theaster Gates 25,000 square foot warehouse. There was a flyer on it that said a little boy 10 years old had been shot, had been murdered, the next street over while we were having our conference.

**SJB:** Notice how they have the industry to get the flyer printed up and on your car before the people get out of the conference.

**VJ:** That's how it is; that's what's going on.

**KFM:** That's how it is; while you're meeting to try and save something, people are dying the streets.

**VJ:** Exactly.

**KFM:** That is where we are.

**VJ:** There's no question about it; the things that are happening, that Theaster Gates' is doing – those things are phenomenally positive things. There's no question about it. But—the universe of people who are behind it – and they are not behind it because they are fond of black people – I am not that stupid. Let's see what happens when social practice disappears from the map, and there's a massive land grab on the whole south side of Chicago.

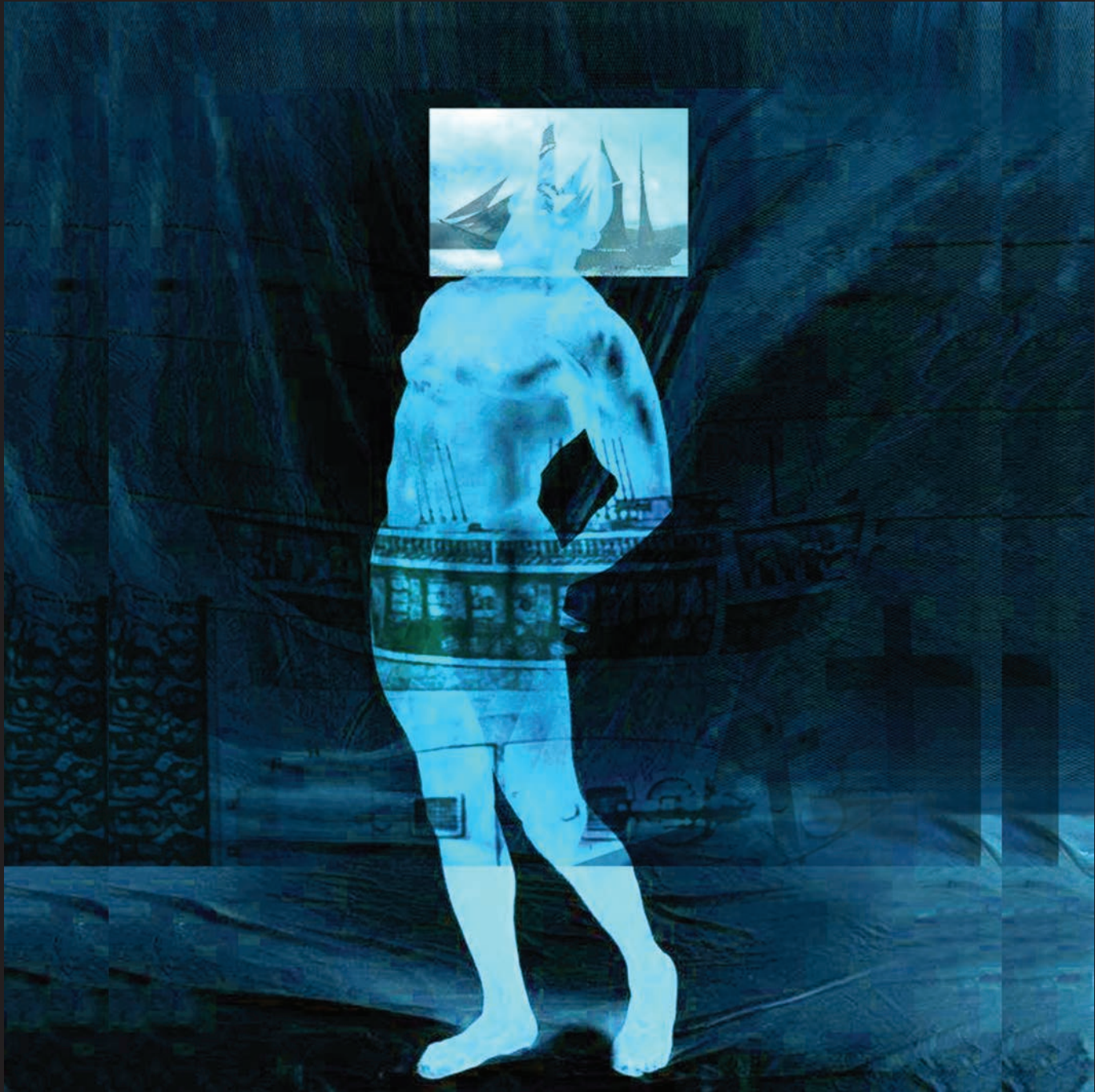
**KFM:** You mean like what they're doing in Detroit?

**VJ:** Yes, exactly.

**SJB:** No, in Detroit it's different; if you want a house it costs like 3000 bucks. I'm thinking of getting about 5 of them myself.

**KFM:** Yes, but it is white artists moving in and buying the houses. It's not black people, so we're back to that tension about social work and social practice.





*BUILDING A NEW WORLD*  
TONI SCOTT



**SARAH GAIL ARMSTRONG** is a performance artist and poet located in Los Angeles.

**STEVEN J BROOKS** (ColorInAble®), is a Web Developer, CGI & VFX artist, & Etc... I'm a Recovering Cartoonist (Cartoonists NEVER Recover)...A Rehabilitated VFX Artist, on the Web Development Train once Again... If any piece of my work wasn't being driven by the characters, it must have been really important! I shouldn't waste time on projects that don't further the characters and their storyline or their lives, when I do, I'm just wasting effort and resources! If it's not them in the piece, then 'Why did I even bother doing that?' And, if it is that Rowdy Mob of Hot Chicks you're seeing in my work, remember, they're ColorInAble®! <http://colorinable.com>... ETC: BFA & AAS from RIT in Photography, concentration, Film & Video; Boston Comic News #7 (Editorial Humor), Best of Boston Cartoonist, March 1989; Hometown Video Award, Most Innovative Programming, 1992; Don't Shoot, It's Only Comics, Cartoonist; Cannibal Flower Artist; DTLA, Artist; BAILA Artist; The Citizen L.A., Featured Artist, November 2008; Be The Light Artist; Watts Towers Artist... 2D & 3D VFX Movie & TV Credits Include: Clash Of the Titan's; Jackass 3D; The Last Samurai; Drew Carey Green Screen Show; Vampire Diaries; Shrek Trilogy.

**StevenJBrooks.com, Dream.us, ColorInAble.net, ColorInAble.org**

**janet e. dandridge** began her artistic career at age 9 with a point-and-shoot camera documenting the happenings in her community. After studying film, television production, and writing at St. John's University in New York, Janet moved to Los Angeles, where she has established herself as an accomplished interdisciplinary artist. In 2006, Janet introduced Evolution Revolution (EvoRevo). EvoRevo connects with national and international artistic and political movements throughout the visual and verbal arts, through benefits such as Boobs in Bars for breast cancer research funding, Hurricane Katrina Revisited to acknowledge victims of the devastating 2005 hurricane, and Uganda Interpreted to raise awareness of the children affected by the 26-year civil war. Currently, she is an MFA candidate at Otis College of Art & Design, creating works using photography, installation, performance, and abstract imagery on issues concerning racial constructs, sexism, colorism and classism; as well as abstract imagery that instigates wandering beyond the obvious and obscure. Janet is a vocalist with the band, The Milky Way; and she was the lead in the comedic film *Jamaica T. Jones and The End of The World*. Janet continues to build upon artistic collections that focus on social-political ideologies that not only affect her immediate community, but the world.

**janetedandridge.flavors.me**

**KENTURAH DAVIS** is a visual artist based in Los Angeles and Accra, Ghana. The core of her work oscillates between portraiture and design, exploring the ways in which rhetoric and histories define how people navigate the world. From small works on paper to mural size drawings, her process of writing a text in repetition to render portraits acts as a metaphor for the way that we acquire and inhabit language. Davis has produced work for exhibitions, artist collaborations, film and commissions. In 2015 she was commissioned by the Los Angeles Metro department to create 10 large-scale works for permanent installation at the Downtown Inglewood station along the upcoming Crenshaw/LAX line. Recent exhibitions include solo shows at Papillion Art (Los Angeles) and group shows at the La biennale di Venezia (Italy), The Mistake Room (Los Angeles), The Yokohama Triennial (Japan), and Ucity Museum at Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, (China). She is represented by Papillion Art in Los Angeles.

**kenturah.com**

**ADRIENNE DEVINE** is a mixed media visual artist from Pasadena, California. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art from California State University, Long Beach, and is currently pursuing her Master of Fine Arts degree at Claremont Graduate University. Adrienne's imagery is informed by her research on precolonial African writing systems, graphic symbols, spiritual practices, cosmologies, and philosophies. Her work explores cultural identity through the rediscovery of indigenous form and content, her personal narrative, shared cultural codes, and the nexus with new forms of expression throughout the diaspora. Adrienne demonstrates skill and finesse with a multitude of media and techniques including drawing, painting, woodburning, printmaking, collage, assemblage, and artist book forms. Photography is also integral to her process both as a means of creative expression and as a source of reference. Using text, symbols, figurative forms and abstraction, she develops a visual dialogue that is intended to capture and delight the imagination of the viewer, as well as provoke thought on contemporary social issues. She has shown her work in group shows in the greater Los Angeles area for the past seven years.

**AdrienneDeVine.com**

**JUNE EDMONDS** is a painter and public artist that has shown her work across the country and has completed works of public art. Her public art works include a commission with the MTA Blueline Pacific Station and two commissions with the Department of Cultural Affairs. June has been a recipient of Artist in Residence grants with the Department of Cultural Affairs in Los Angeles and the California Arts Council. June has also done residencies including Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and the Helene Wurlitzer Foundation in Toas, New Mexico. June received an MFA from Tyler School of Art, Bachelors degree from San Diego State University and currently works and resides in Los Angeles.

**JuneEdmonds.com**

**KATHIE FOLEY-MEYER** was the creator of Project Bronzeville, a 2013 collaborative multidisciplinary art project that explored the period in Los Angeles history when African Americans resided in Little Tokyo. She was a featured artist and the co-curator, along with Peter J. Harris, of the exhibition highlighting the history of African American theater for the 2014 Pasadena Playhouse production of *KISS ME, KATE*, and she designed the exhibition for the Playhouse's production of *STOP KISS* in the fall of that same year. Her work is featured in *Hard-Edged: Geometrical Abstraction and Beyond*, a group show at the California African American Museum that runs through April of 2016, and her photo series *Memory Parade* was on view at LA Artcore in the fall of 2015. Recently she was part of LA Artcore's Japan-U.S. Cultural Exchange program, exhibiting her work with a group of American and Japanese artists in Kitakyushu, Ashiya and Kyoto. She received an MFA from California Institute of the Arts and a BS in Foreign Service from Georgetown University. She served on the Museum of Neon Art Board of Trustees from 2006-2012. She currently serves as President of the Board of Directors of LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions).

**kf-m.com**



**VINCENT JOHNSON** received his MFA from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA (1997) and his BFA from SAIC (1986). Johnson's photographic work is based on theories of color and intensive research into art history. His painting practice engages the history of abstraction and its contemporary turns. He is a 2005 Creative Capital Grantee, and was selected for the New Museum of Contemporary Arts Aldrich Art Award in 2007 and for the Art Matters grant in 2008, and the Foundation for Contemporary Art Fellowship, Los Angeles in 2009. His work has been reviewed in ArtForum, Art in America, The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times. Johnson's work has been exhibited at Soho House (curated by ForYourArt), Palihouse, (curated by LAND), Another Year in LA gallery, all in West Hollywood and the Roman Susan gallery, Chicago. The Studio Museum in Harlem, PSI Museum, New York, the SK Stiftung, Cologne, Santa Monica Museum of Art, LAXART, Las Cienegas Projects, Boston University Art Museum, Kellogg Museum, Cal Poly Pomona, Adamski gallery of Contemporary Art, Aachen, Lemonsky Projects, Miami and the Palace of the Inquisition, Evora, Portugal are all part of Johnson's exhibition portfolio.  
**VincentJohnsonArt.com**

**ZEAL HARRIS** is known for creating seductive, bold, urban-vernacular, story paintings. Her themes span daily life, current events, and history. Her style is colorfully caricaturesque while prompting commentary around critical sociopolitical subjects. Upon first glance, her work may appear funny, playful, or naïve. Another moment spent with the work and her slant toward creating narratives that expand notions around gender, race, class, and sexuality becomes an evident pattern. The combination of her style and her storytelling skills successfully represents a rare hybridity that fills desperate voids while creating bridges between diverse art worlds and everyday art viewers. Zeal has an MFA in Studio Art from Otis College of Art & Design where she has taught painting for the Continuing Education Program. Zeal also attended UCLA graduate film school for one year, and has a BFA from Howard University in Washington, DC. She was raised in Hampton, Virginia and is currently based in Los Angeles. She has been in recent exhibitions at the Port Au Prince Haiti Ghetto Biennale, Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum, the California African-American Museum, 18th Street Arts Center, and the Caribbean Cultural Center of the African Diaspora in New York.  
**zealsart.com**

**MICHAEL McTAGGART** is a guitarist, composer, and arranger from Los Angeles, California. Michael studied Studio/Jazz Guitar, as well as served as musical director the USC Saved by Grace Gospel Choir while attending University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music. He has performed on stages around the world including The Monterey Jazz Festival, Playboy Jazz Festival at Hollywood Bowl, Rose Bowl, Lincoln Center in (NYC), Gibson Room (London), and the Greek Theatre. He has also worked with the Thelonious Monk Institute for Jazz as a jazz ambassador facilitating music clinics/master classes for young, aspiring musicians.

**DERRICK MADDOX** - “Do words have meaning or do people bring meaning to words?” “This is the very question Los Angeles based conceptual artist, Derrick Maddox asks the viewer in his varied creative expressions exploring the symbolic nature of language. Since his childhood, Mr. Maddox has always asked himself, “Why does miscommunication occur?” It seemed that miscommunication happened everywhere; between cultures; between sexes; between races; and even between individuals. It was only after his undergraduate studies at UCSD, that Mr. Maddox realized there was a “glitch in the matrix”, a space that existed between thought and language, a space which Mr. Maddox has termed “the void.” Derrick Maddox’s diverse art practices are the physical representations of the unspeakable (I.e. the “void”). The “void” is the space where language as a construct is limited or partially breaks down in the communication of thoughts or ideas between sender and receiver. Derrick Maddox received his B.A. in communication from UCSD, and his MFA from Cal Arts. A poet, a musician, plus performing and visual artist, the emerging Derrick Maddox artworks have been shown at the *ReSignifications* exhibition in Florence Italy, Watts Towers Art Center, California African American museum (CAAM), the Sweeney art gallery at UC Riverside, Ave. 50 studio in Los Angeles where Mr. Maddox was interviewed on Fox News 11’s Good Day LA.

<http://finearts2.porefungus.com>

**TONI SCOTT** - As a native Californian, and Muscogee Creek Nation Citizen, Toni Scott comes by her artistic talent naturally. She is a fifth generation storyteller who seeks to inspire and empower challenged groups through visual creativity. “Learning of my multicultural family heritage has inspired me to give life to the lost images and stories of American history. . . In every work I create resides a commitment to themes that build and enrich humanity.” Toni’s work ranges from large scale multi-media museum installations to lifelike sculptures cast in bronze, to carvings in marble, alabaster, soapstone and Douglas fir. Her paintings range from large-scale colorful figurative works to masterful representational paintings in oil. Toni’s multimedia work includes digital renderings, mixed media, life size sculptures, and thematic installations. Among her exhibitions is a 3-year solo installation *Bloodlines*, featured in the Gallery of Discovery at the California African American Museum from 2009-2013. Scott was selected as the solo artist for the 2015 Dame Jillian Sackler International Artists Exhibition Program, in the Arthur M. Sackler Museum of Art and Archaeology at Peking University, in Beijing China. Knowledge acquired from the University of Southern California and Otis College of Art and Design, along with her natural talent and skill, have made Toni Scott the internationally renowned artist that she is today.

[toniscott.com](http://toniscott.com)

**J MICHAEL WALKER** is a Los Angeles based artist, whose work across a variety of platforms – painting, drawing, photography, and digital photomontage – seeks to bridge the differences deemed to separate us – be they class or ethnicity, age or gender – and to spotlight our spiritual essence. He merges historical research with empathic portraiture to portray marginalized people, particularly women of color, in ways that speak to their inner beauty. J Michael has participated in more than one hundred exhibitions; received a dozen grants, fellowships, and artist residencies; and enjoyed a dozen solo exhibitions in the United States and Mexico. His work is in the public collections of the UCLA Library, the Autry Museum, the Arkansas Arts Center, the Smithsonian, the University of Santa Barbara, and the Museum of Latin American Art; and in notable private collections, including those of actress CCH Pounder and gallerist Michelle Papillion.

[jmichaelwalker.com](http://jmichaelwalker.com)





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SARAH GAIL ARMSTRONG

STEVEN J BROOKS

janet e. dandridge

KENTURAH DAVIS

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