

## L'OFFICIELART

# Aaron Curry's Latest Exhibit Asks Viewers to Tune In

The Los Angeles-based artist plays with sculpture, space, and perception at The Bass Museum in Miami.

by Jane Gayduk | November 21, 2018



What does art look like in an age of distraction? Aaron Curry might have an answer in his latest exhibition at the Bass Museum in Miami, "Tune Yer Head."

At the outset, viewers are greeted by weirdly inviting fluorescent color patterns, like a wall that's mid-candy flip, making it difficult to focus on one facet, but move into the first space and revel in empty walls riddled with concentrated collages. Next room: claustrophobic, large-at-scale sculpture central in the small space, black and white scribbles all over—but these seeming scribbles are actually a handmade pattern drawn from the sketches from this work, present throughout the exhibit.

As curator Leilani Lynch explains, Curry is "collapsing process and final product into one thing."

To notice this connecting thread, the viewer must shift their perspective on the parts rather than the whole, then back to the whole again, and concentrate on the relationship. "Tune Yer Head" is a study of "inundation and deprivation at the same time," explains Lynch, and an ode to the Los Angeles-based artist's own upbringing, growing up with a perpetually turned-on television.

This exhibit gave Curry an opportunity to showcase all his mediums—oscillating between painting, sculpture, drawing, and collage—as well as their amalgamation. What he brought to the museum is an immersive experience.

Gayduk, Jane, "Aaron Curry's Latest Exhibit Asks Viewers to Tune In," *L'OfficielUSA.com*, November 21, 2018



**JANE GAYDUK:** What were you thinking about when you were creating some of the pieces in "Tune Yer Head"? Was there a favorite one that you have? Or one that you're particularly drawn to?

**AARON CURRY:** It was exciting to have an opportunity to do three bodies of work. Generally, I think people separate my work between sculpture, paintings, and collage, so it was nice to work on a show that incorporates all these ideas together. The big black metal piece was from a show I had done at David Kordansky in L.A. a few years ago, so it was interesting to have that as a starting point. I've wanted to make a chandelier for some time – I've had all these drawings kicking around for a couple years and I thought it finally made sense to make one for this show. So that was kind of exciting for me. I've made a few hanging sculptures before, but I hadn't made one out of aluminum. It was also nice to have this concentrated room of collages. I'd never really done that before – they'd always been shown with paintings or in exhibitions with other kinds of work.

**GAYDUK:** Then you had a patterned carpet in the collage room with a matching pattern.

**CURRY:** I took all the drawings that I had worked on to come up with the forms for the sculpture. I started with that as a basis and eventually wanted to cover the sculpture with it. I like the idea that the drawing is the original idea of the sculpture, and then it becomes an actual thing in sculptural space, so the drawings are then disregarded. I also like this idea of covering it up and obscuring the actual physical forms in space but with the drawings. The collage room, the first room you walk into, has that same pattern, but I overlaid three different colors which are pink, yellow, and blue, and that overlay created purple and green and orange. I like this idea of channel-changing. It's the same sort of material forms, but as you walk into each room, everything takes a different role. I wanted to take the pattern from the front room and pull the color out of it, and instead of having it on the wall, have it on the floor. Then you'd have all the color from the collages there. It switches how you're perceiving those colors.

**GAYDUK:** I also thought about these changes in the context of noise, and adding and removing noise in relation to the title, "Tune Your Head."

**CURRY:** It's like a radio station, very analog in a way where you can pick up something, and you can tune in and tune out. Like television too, when you get a half channel where everything is blue, but you can see the image, then you click over a little more and the colors comes into focus.

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**GAYDUK:** The curation was also very well done. Going from one room, which is a tiny, overwhelmingly enclosed space to the next room where it opens up and you have these massive hanging, aluminum sculptures, but with a lot of negative space. Then you're breathing.

**CURRY:** That's exactly what I was going for, actually. In the first room, there is so much static with the movement of the color, and the black room is a cave but it's also almost like a beehive. Then, you walk into that last room and you have this moment of clarity where you can breathe. And the pattern there was gray – it was a nod to the Photoshop pattern when you get rid of a layer... it becomes like a background, but I created it using a stencil and spray painting and stamping and painting it and scanning that, then printing it in gray. It's related, but it's also handmade and fractured. What I really like about the black matte of the sculptures is that it can also obscure your sense of their volume, they almost become images. So, it's sort of playing around in different ways, with how you see and interact with them.

**GAYDUK:** When you created the work for this exhibit at The Bass, did you think about the audience response to it in the context of social media? When you have pieces that are so colorful and immersive, do you think about what that will look like when

people start to photograph and share it?

**CURRY:** I hadn't until this show. I've been doing similar things for a while, and somebody said it looks like an Instagram wall or something. No, I'm not framing them in that way—that would be a nightmare that I'd think too much about.

**GAYDUK:** Even unintentionally, probably because it's part of my job to handle social media, I walk in and think of how these walls and patterns are—sorry—Instagrammable.

**CURRY:** I don't think about that beforehand. I like that people are engaging with art in that way, but also sometimes it's about only looking to capture the image, and not really experiencing it in the realm they're in, in the moment. I guess that's the times.

**GAYDUK:** In the context of both yours and Paola Pivi's exhibit [also on view at The Bass] I felt that there was a response to Internet culture and to content "noise." In your collages, you have to actively engage with your own perception to tune certain parts of it out, focus on others. It's certainly reminiscent of what we do on a daily basis, with content.

**CURRY:** I've been thinking about that for quite a while, a lot within the way I work. Things have picked up so fast too in how people process images and media. It can be hard to isolate yourself in the world and not be saying something about it, even if indirectly, somehow you're responding to it. It's the world we live in.

**GAYDUK:** Of all the mediums you work in, is there one you prefer or one that you find most challenging?



**CURRY:** I have different times where I'm struggling with different things. Years ago I had quite a lot of paintings, it was the thing I started doing first as a kid when I got to undergraduate. Then I started sculpture and I kept painting, but it was more on paper, my focus was on sculpture. After a while, I started painting more because it was more of a challenge for me. Personally, it's one thing I really like about having a practice where I can do all of these different things, that I can move around. But for a while, I was making just sculptures, and I had been focused on them for so long that I couldn't push out of the form. I found I was repeating myself and lost interest. So I started painting more and making these metal sculptures.

**GAYDUK:** Do you write or sing or explore non-visual art outlets?

**CURRY:** I like music. More like garage, rock-pop kind of stuff that I do for fun, I've got a little music studio where I play and record things. It's more of a hobby. And I started a publishing company, so I've been publishing artist books for the last couple years. Which I really enjoy, because I first learned about art from a book. At first I started doing my own, because I wanted to make artist books myself, and I slowly started asking some friends to do things. Other artists, not my art.

**GAYDUK:** Are you happy with how the audience has been responding to your work or do you try not to think about it?

**CURRY:** I mean it's hard to tell. I put it up and then I go away. It happens all the time. As an artist you work on these things so intensely in this cave, your studio, and then it's so personal and then you put it out into the world and you go home to an empty studio. It's hard for me to know, but people seem positive. I'm curious what sort of response it'll have during the Basel Art Fair where a lot of people will see it.

**GAYDUK:** What is the difference for you when exhibiting at a museum versus at a gallery?

**CURRY:** I haven't exhibited at that many museums. Of course as an artist, it's what you dream to do because it's this cultural center for different cities. You want to show your work not just to gallery viewers or collectors—it's nice when you can talk to a broader public. I like the outdoor projects I've done because people just interact with your work, who wouldn't normally come upon it. I think that's a lot more interesting, it's a larger audience.