DAVID
KORDANSKY
GALLERY

Adam Pendleton

Begin Again

November 7 – December 19, 2020

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www.davidkordanskygallery.com
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David Kordansky Gallery is pleased to present Begin Again, Adam Pendleton's first exhibition at the gallery. The show of new work will be on view November 7 through December 19, 2020 at the gallery's Edgewood Place location. David Kordansky Gallery is currently open by appointment. Timed reservations and virtual visits are available here.

Begin Again includes paintings from the Untitled (WE ARE NOT) series, works on Mylar, and a video portrait, unfolding across three exhibition spaces in the gallery.

Originally constructed from the artist's signature spray paintings, Pendleton's series Untitled (WE ARE NOT) are fields of the repeated phrase "WE ARE NOT" rendered in black and white ink. These fields are in a sense polyphonic, thick with many different attempts. Ambiguously an unresolved negative predication and/or a negative assertion of existence, the utterance is semi-systematically multiplied and opened up. The unregulated materiality of the spray paint—with its high-contrast drips and particle effects—creates a sense of continuous variation on the canvas, as well as an uncanny surface that at once flattens out and recedes into depth. The textual fields negotiate between noise and information, where negation gives way to entropy, or becoming.

Pendleton's works on Mylar (or "drawings," as the artist refers to them) are hung across one room of the gallery in expansive grids of individually framed works, and derive from collages in which the artist layers sketches, brushwork, and cut paper with fragments of language and images from a library of materials. Photocopied book pages—largely related to post-colonial African history, African sculpture, and European modernism—are masked, overprinted, and overwritten. Phrases, slogans, incomplete propositions—"OK DADA"…"BUT NOW WE"…"NOW I AM HERE"…"SEE THE SIN"…"BLACK DADA"…"I AM NOW THE"…"WHO IS QUEEN"—are staggered and recombined across the grid. The collages, printed in dark, opaque black on transparent film, are tracings of Pendleton's archive of visual research, implying further acts of layering. When viewed together, this typology expresses a continuous procedure of interpolation, recapitulation, and expansion.

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A black box viewing room encloses the video What Is Your Name? Kyle Abraham, A Portrait (2018–2019). This work is an exchange between Pendleton and the celebrated dancer and choreographer Kyle Abraham. As in many of Pendleton's previous video portraits, the work is a process of complication: conceived, shot, and cut in a way that does not so much represent or figure, as abstract and refract its subject. Throughout, Pendleton poses questions to Abraham, who modifies his answers as the questions are repeated. A long, stuttering list, mostly of infinitive phrases ("to divide by / to stand up / to sit down…"), but occasionally resolving into sentences, accompanies Abraham's dancing at one point. Chains of queries, answers, gestures, verbs, and isolated fragments of the body—shared among Pendleton, Abraham, and the camera—form a multimodal grammar of movement. The work is Pendleton's third video portrait to date that explores movement, memory, and choreography with dancers. Previous video works by Pendleton include Just Back From Los Angeles: A Portrait of Yvonne Rainer (2016–2017) and Ishmael in the Garden: A Portrait of Ishmael Houston-Jones (2018).

Pendleton's montages, from painting to collage to video, engage in nonlinear iteration: never oriented toward any determinate position, they are constantly beginning, although not returning to the same, nor relying on simple difference. This activity of beginning without end, which occurs at the level of language and syntax (the unfinished and unresolved statement) as well as at the level of artistic form (the suggestion that even finished works are still open to further production), refuses closure, putting stake in something closer to a continuous present. Cycling through sets of sentences, fragments, images, artifacts, histories, and other propositions, the constant activity of beginning develops what Gertrude Stein once called a "troubling time-sense." We might understand this as a mode of composition that redistributes, equilibrates, troubles time: troubling history, present, and future.

In 2021, Adam Pendleton will present Who Is Queen, a major installation in the atrium of The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Other recent solo exhibitions include shows at Le Consortium, Dijon (2020); Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston (2020); MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts (2018); Baltimore Museum of Art (2017); KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2017); Baltic Center for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, United

Kingdom (2017); Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (2017); Museum of Contemporary Art Denver (2016); and Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans (2016). Recent group exhibitions include To Be Determined, Dallas Museum of Art (2020); Manifesto: Art x Agency, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. (2019); Public Movement: On Art, Politics and Dance, Moderna Museet Malmö, Sweden (2017); The Eighth Climate (What does art do?), 11th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2016); and Personne et les autres, Belgian Pavilion, 56th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice (2015). Pendleton's work is included in the collections of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; and Tate, London, among other institutions. He lives and works in New York.

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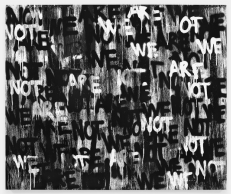
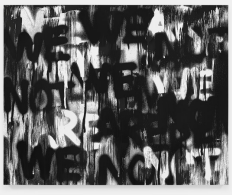
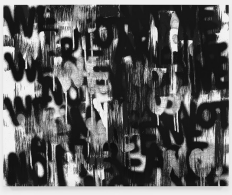
North Gallery



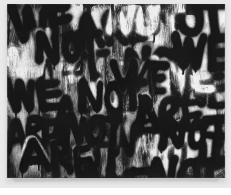
Adam Pendleton
Untitled (WE ARE NOT), 2020
silkscreen ink on canvas
120 x 144 x 2 inches
(304.8 x 365.8 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# APN 20.012)



Adam Pendleton
Untitled (WE ARE NOT), 2020
silkscreen ink on canvas
96 x 120 x 2 inches
(243.8 x 304.8 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# APN 20.007)



Adam Pendleton
Untitled (WE ARE NOT), 2020
silkscreen ink on canvas
96 x 120 x 2 inches
(243.8 x 304.8 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# APN 20.008)



Adam Pendleton
Untitled (WE ARE NOT), 2019 - 2020
silkscreen ink on canvas
96 x 120 x 2 inches
(243.8 x 304.8 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# APN 20.002)

Adam Pendleton
Untitled (WE ARE NOT), 2020
silkscreen ink on canvas
96 x 69 x 2 inches
(243.8 x 175.3 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# APN 20.005)

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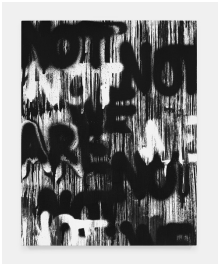
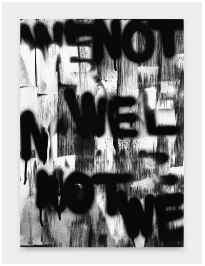
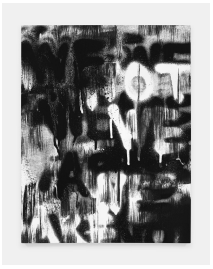


Adam Pendleton
Untitled (WE ARE NOT), 2020
silkscreen ink on canvas
36 x 28 x 2 inches
(91.4 x 71.1 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# APN 20.011)

Adam Pendleton
Untitled (WE ARE NOT), 2020
silkscreen ink on canvas
96 x 69 x 2 inches
(243.8 x 175.3 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# APN 20.004)



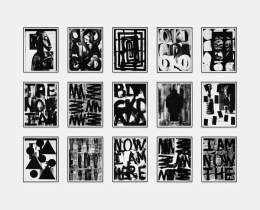
Adam Pendleton
Untitled (WE ARE NOT), 2020
silkscreen ink on canvas
96 x 69 x 2 inches
(243.8 x 175.3 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# APN 20.017)



Adam Pendleton
Untitled (WE ARE NOT), 2020
silkscreen ink on canvas
36 x 28 x 2 inches
(91.4 x 71.1 x 5.1 cm)
(Inv# APN 20.016)

Viewing Room

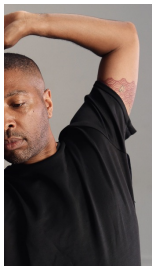
Adam Pendleton
Summer 2020 #1, 2020
silkscreen ink on Mylar
installation dimensions variable
thirty-six (36) parts, each:
sheet:
38 x 29 inches
(96.5 x 73.7 cm)
framed:
40 3/8 x 31 3/8 inches
(Inv# APN 20.015)



Adam Pendleton
OKDADAOKD, 2020
silkscreen ink on Mylar
installation dimensions variable
fifteen (15) parts, each:
sheet:
38 x 29 inches
(96.5 x 73.7 cm)
framed:
40 3/8 x 31 3/8 inches
(Inv# APN 20.013)

Adam Pendleton
The Now I Am/But Now I Am, 2020
silkscreen ink on Mylar
installation dimensions variable
thirty (30) parts, each:
sheet:
38 x 29 inches
(96.5 x 73.7 cm)
framed:
40 3/8 x 31 3/8 inches
(Inv# APN 20.014)

South Gallery



Adam Pendleton
What Is Your Name? Kyle Abraham, A Portrait, 2018-2019
single-channel color video
19 minutes 39 seconds
dimensions variable
Edition of 5, with 2AP
(Inv# APN 19.045)

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ADAM PENDLETON

born 1984, Richmond, Virginia
lives and works in Germantown, NY and Brooklyn, NY

EDUCATION

2000-2002 Artspace Independent Study Program, Pietrasanta, Italy

SELECTED SOLO / TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS
(* Indicates a publication)

2021 *Who Is Queen?*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

2020 *Begin Again*, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
**Elements of Me,* Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA
Adam Pendleton, curated by Franck Gautherot, Le Consortium, Dijon, France

2019 *These Elements of Me*, Pace Gallery, Seoul, South Korea
**Who We Are*, Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, Germany
**NO THING: Pope L., Adam Pendleton*, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich, Switzerland

2018 *Liam Gillick Adam Pendleton / Adam Pendleton Liam Gillick*, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, New York, NY
* *Our Ideas*, Pace Gallery, London, England
New Works, Galeria Pedro Cera, Lisbon, Portugal
what a day was this, Lever House, New York
List Projects: Adam Pendleton, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA

2017 *Which We Can,* Pace Gallery, Palo Alto, CA
shot him in the face, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, United Kingdom
Front Room: Adam Pendleton, Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD
shot him in the face, KW Institute of Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany

2016 *Midnight in America*, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich, Switzerland
* *Becoming Imperceptible*, Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, Denver, CO;

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Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans, New Orleans, LA; Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, Cleveland, OH
Whole Fragments, Parra & Romero, Ibiza, Spain

2015 *New Work,* Pace Gallery, London, England

2014 *Selected Works*, Travesía Cuatro, Guadalajara, Mexico
Selected Works, Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, IL
Adam Pendleton, Pace Gallery, New York, NY
Joan Jonas & Adam Pendleton, Galeria Pedro Cera, Lisbon, Portugal

2012 ** I'll Be Your*, Pace Gallery, London, England
I smashed my sickening face, Artpace, San Antonio, TX

2011 *New Black DaDa Paintings*, Galeria Pedro Cera, Lisbon, Portugal
the women, Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, IL
Art Statements, Galeria Pedro Cera, Art 42 Basel, Basel, Switzerland
** Radio (ONE)*, Salina Art Center, Salina, KS

2010 *BAND*, The Kitchen, New York, NY
Adam Pendleton, Illingworth Kerr Gallery, Alberta College of Art and Design, Calgary, Canada
EL T D K Los Angeles, Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, CA
chandelier across cognition generates glow linguistic signals perception, Galeriea Pedro Cera, Lisbon, Portugal

2009 *EL T DK*, Haunch of Venison, Berlin, Germany

2008 *Rendered in Black*, Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art, Indiana, IN

2007 *Rendered in Black and Rendered*, Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, IL

2006 *Bam Split Lab and the Afro Futuristic Underground*, Perry Rubenstein Gallery, New York, NY

2005 *History,* Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, CA
Deeper Down There, Yvon Lambert Gallery, New York, NY
Gorilla, My Love, Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, IL

2004 *Being Here*, Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL

Being Here, Wallspace Gallery, New York, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS
(* Indicates a publication)

2021 *Grief and Grievance: Art and Mourning in America*, curated by Okwui Enwezor, New Museum, New York, NY

2020 *Yesterday's Tomorrow: Selections from the Rose Collection, 1933–2018,* Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
If on a Winter's Night A Traveler, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel
Mapping the Collection, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany
Group Show, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich, Switzerland
2020 Vision, co-curated by David Kratz, Stephanie Roach and edited by Emma Gilbey Keller, The New York Academy of Art residency, Southampton Arts Center, Southampton, NY
The Silence Perpetuates, Mark Borghi Fine Art, Sag Harbor, NY
Drawing 2020, Gladstone Gallery, New York, NY
To Be Determined, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX
Artists for New York, Hauser & Wirth, New York, NY
Chewing Gum IV [Kohei Nawa, Kenneth Noland, Thomas Nozkowski, Adam Pendleton, Michael Rovner, Tony Smith, Xiao Yu, Zhang Xiaogang], Pace Gallery, Central, Hong Kong

2019 *Manifesto: Art X Agency,* Hirshhorn Musuem and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC
David Adjaye: Making Memory, Design Museum, London, England
Surface Tension, Carolina Nitsch Project Room, New York, NY

2018 *DPAM Collects: Happy Little Trees and Other Recent Acquisitions,* DePaul Art Museum, Chicago, IL
LeWitt, Nevelson, Pendleton Part II, Pace Gallery, Geneva, Switzerland
LeWitt, Nevelson, Pendleton, Pace Gallery, Geneva, Switzerland
Second Sight: The Paradox of Vision in Contemporary Art, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME

2017 *Public Movement: On Art, Politics, and Dance,* Moderna Museet, Malmö, Sweden
Sonic Rebellion: Music as Resistance, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Detroit, MI

The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin, Jewish Museum, New York, NY
American African American, Phillips, London, England
OCCUPY MANA: Artists Need to Create on the Same Scale That Society Has the Capacity to Destroy (Year 1), Mana Contemporary, Jersey City, NJ
I am you, you are too, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN
Art of Rebellion: Black Art of the Civil Rights Movement, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI
How to Live Together, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria

2016 *Lorraine O'Grady: Initial Recognition*, Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo, Sevilla, Spain
The Eighth Climate (What does art do?), 11th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea
The Revolution Will Not Be Gray, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO
The Language of Things, Organized by Public Art Fund, City Hall Park, New York, NY
Down To Write You This Poem Sat, Oakville Galleries, Oakville, Canada
**Blackness in Abstraction*, Pace Gallery, New York, NY
ACCROCHAGE, Parra & Romero, Ibiza, Spain
New Visions, Tensta Konsthall, Spånga, Sweden

2015 *Young*, *Gifted and Black*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
The 2015 Biennial of the Americas: Now? NOW!, Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, Denver, CO
**Personne et les autres,* Belgian Pavilion, 56th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy
Sharon Hayes, Tony Lewis, Adam Pendleton, Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York, NY
Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA
**Adventures of the Black Square: Abstract Art and Society 1915-2015*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, England

2014 *Civil Rights*, Void, Derry, Ireland
Selected Works, Travesia Cuarto, Guadalajara, Mexico
We Love Video This Summer, Pace Gallery, Beijing, China
**Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN
**Love Story – Anne and Wolfgang Titze Collection*, 21er Haus and Winter Palace, Belvedere Museum Vienna, Vienna, Austria

The Disappearance of the Fireflies, Collection Lambert, Avignon, France

2013 **The 30th Biennial of Graphic Arts: Interruption,* International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubjana, Slovenia
Warhol Ones, Half Gallery, New York, NY
**Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art*, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art, Grey Art Gallery at New York University, New York, NY
Body Language, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
After Hours 2: Murals on the Bowery, Art Production Fund in partnership with the New Museum, New York, NY

2012 *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art*, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Houston, TX
Books: Adam Pendleton, Matt Keegan and Ricardo Valentim, Galeria Pedro Cera, Lisbon, Portugal
**Ecstatic Alphabets/Heaps of Language*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
Phantom Limb: Approaches to Painting Today, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
La Triennale 2012: Intense Proximity, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
Heart to Hand, Swiss Institute/Contemporary Art New York, New York, NY

2011 *A Promise is a Cloud*, Public Art Fund, MetroTech Center, Brooklyn NY
Never Odd or Even, Grimmuseum, Berlin, Germany
Fifth Contour Biennial, Mechelen, Belgium
Soft Machines, Pace Gallery, New York, NY

2010 *Quadruple-Consciousness*, Vox Populi Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
It Is Written, Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz, France
**Greater New York 2010*, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, NY
Collected: Reflections on the Permanent Collection, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
Self as Disappearance, Centre d'Art Contemporain, La Synagogue de Delme, Delme, France
**Desire*, Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas, Austin, TX
From Then to Now, Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland, OH
**Afro-Modernism: Journeys through the Black Atlantic*, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, England
Blood of a Poet, Thierry Goldberg Projects, New York, NY

2009 *The One Hundred and Sixty-Third Floor: Liam Gillick Curates the Collection*, Museum Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, IL
**After 1968: Contemporary Artists and the Civil Rights Legacy*, California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA
Artists in Residence, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
Performa 09: The Prompt, White Slab Palace, New York, NY
Cargo/ Cargo Manifest/ Cargo Vision, Autocenter, Berlin, Germany
Infinitesimal Eternity, Yale University School of Art, New Haven, CT
Black Hole, Kunsthalle Andratx, Mallorca, Spain
Constellations: Paintings from the MCA Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, IL
**Encodings: Artist in Residence, 2008-2009*, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
**Sympathy for the Devil: Art and Rock and Roll Since 1967*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montreal, Montreal, Canada
The columns held us up, Artists Space, New York, NY
Talk Show, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, England
**The Generational: Younger The Jesus*, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY

2008 *Matter of Fact: Aftermath*. Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo, Brazil
U-TURN: Perform History II, U-TURN Quadrennial for Contemporary Art, Aarhus Art Building, Aarhus, Denmark
Manifesto Marathon, Serpentine Gallery, London, England
Macrocosm, Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, CA
**Manifesta 7: Matter of Fact*, Manifattura Tabacchi, Rovereto, Italy
**Freeway Balconies*, Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, Germany
The Future as Disruption, The Kitchen, New York, NY
**After 1968: Contemporary Art and the Civil Rights Legacy*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
Object, The Undeniable Success of Operations, Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, The Netherlands
**Sympathy for the Devil: Art and Rock and Roll Since 1967*, Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, Miami, FL
**Hey Hey Glossolalia: The Eroticism of Pedagogy*, Creative Time, Judson Memorial Church

2007 *Performa 07: The Second Biennial of New Visual Art Performance*, Stephan Weiss Studio, New York, NY
**Sympathy for the Devil: Art and Rock and Roll Since 1967*, Museum of

Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, IL
Resistance Is…, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Commemorating Thirty Years, Part III, 1991-2007, Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, IL

2006 *Interstellar Low Ways*, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL
R³: Reading 'Ritin 'Rithmetic, *30 Years Later*, Castle Gallery, Inverness, England
Sea Change, Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, CA
Please Love Me, Walker's Point Center for the Arts, Milwaukee, WI
Figures de l'acteur: Le paradoxe du comédien, Collection Lambert, Avignon, France
Message Personnel, Yvon Lambert, Paris, France

2005 *Frequency*, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
25 Bold Moves, curated by Simon Watson and Craig Hensala, House of Campari, New York, NY
**Double Consciousness: Black Conceptual Art Since 1970,* Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, TX

2004 *When Contemporary Arts Speaks*, Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art, Indianapolis, IN
Seven More (Things We Like), Conner Contemporary Art, Washington, DC
Black Milk: Theories on Suicide, Marvelli Galllery, New York, NY
Optimo: Manifestations of Optimism in Contemporary Art, Marfa Ballroom, Marfa, TX
It's About Memory, Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, IL

SELECTED PERFORMANCES AND FILM SCREENINGS

2017 *three scenes/the voice*, Frieze New York Projects, Randall's Island, NY

2011 *BAND*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA

2010 *three scenes, variation one,* Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA

2009 *three scenes*, Kunstverein, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Hannah Weiner: An Argument for Black DaDa, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, England
BAND, Toronto International Film Festival, Toronto, Canada

The Prompt, Performa 09, White Slab Palace, New York, NY

2007 *The Revival*, Performa 07, Stephan Weiss Studio, New York, NY

BIBLIOGRAPHY
(* Indicates non-periodical book, catalog, or other publication)

2020 **Elements of Me,* Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2020
**Adam Pendleton*, with texts by Adrienne Edwards, Andréa Picard and a conversation between Adam Pendleton and Alec Mapes-Frances, London and New York: Phaidon, 2020
"Election 2020, Artists' Projects," *Artforum*, October/November 2020, p. cover, 176-177
"I Voted," *New York*, October 26-November 8, 2020, pp. cover, 12
Pogrebin, Robin, "In Pursuit of a More Diverse Gallery," *The New York Times*, October 21, 2020, pp. C1, C7
Stone, Mina, "Cooking with Artists: Adam Pendleton," *MoMA.org*, October 21, 2020
Tillet, Salamishah, "It's a New Dawn," *Elle Decor*, October 2020, pp.104 -109
Smee, Sebastian, "Some of America's best Black artists are joining forces for a show about Black grief — conceived by a legendary curator who died last year," *WashingtonPost.com*, October 6, 2020
Kenney, Nancy, "Some of America's best Black artists are joining forces for a show about Black grief — conceived by a legendary curator who died last year," *TheArtNewspaper.com*, October 6, 2020
Rathe, Adam, "Seeing *is* Believing," *Town & Country Magazine,* September 2020, p. 31
Vartanian, Hrag, "Elements of Adam Pendleton's Creative Lexicon," *Hyperallergic.com*, September 24, 2020
"Nina Simone's childhood home secures a protective easement," *ArchPaper.com*, September 11, 2020
Justice, Leah, "Protecting History," *TryonDailyBulletin.com*, September 10, 2020
"Permanent protection for Nina Simone's childhood home," *AVLToday.6amCity.com*, September 10, 2020
"NC home of legendary musician, activist receives historic building protection," *WSOCTV.com*, September 9, 2020
Leonard, Charlie, "Nina Simone's Childhood Home will be permanently protected in Tryon, North Carolina," *Clture.org*, September 9, 2020
"Nina Simone Childhood Home Permanently Protected," *SavingPlaces.org*,

September 8, 2020
Jones, Brenda, “Nina Simone Childhood Home Permanently Protected,” *YesWeekly.com*, September 8, 2020
“Nina Simone's childhood home protected indefinitely by preservation easement,” *WLOS.com*, September 8, 2020
Lee, Vered, “U.S. Artist Adam Pendleton Brings Black Lives Matter to Tel Aviv: ‘I Don’t Shy Away From Complicated Ideas’,” *Haaretz.com*, August 8, 2020
Whyte, Murray, “At the Gardner, Adam Pendleton puts the art world’s sins in black and white,” *BostonGlobe.com*, August 6, 2020
Valentine, Victoria L., “New National Trust Grants Are Preserving African American History at 27 Sites Connected to Boston Artists, Architect Paul Williams, and Poet Lucille Clifton,” *CultureType.com*, August 6, 2020
Sapsford, Beatrice, “10 In-Demand Works on Artsy This Week,” *Artsy.com*, June 23, 2020
Pendleton, Adam, “Op-Art: See the Sin,” *NYTimes.com*, June 21, 2020
Mafi, Nick “Young Black Artists Speak About the Role of Art in This Moment,” *ArchitecturalDigest.com*, June 16, 2020
“8 Black Artists on Life in America Right Now,” *Vogue.com*, June 16, 2020
Sutton, Benjamin, “What Sold at Frieze New York Online,” *Artsy.net*, May 12, 2020
Loos, Ted, “Artists Are Hunkered Down, but Still Nurturing Their Inner Visions,” *NYTimes.com*, April 21, 2020
Desmole, Lola, “Adam Pendleton, Harold Ancart and More Must See Online Shows,” *Whitewall.art*, April 14, 2020
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“Election 2020, Artists’ Projects,” *Artforum*, October/November 2020, p. cover, 176-177

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PROJECTS
ART OF THE POSSIBLE

“Election 2020, Artists’ Projects,” *Artforum*, October/November 2020, p. cover, 176-177

AS OF THIS WRITING, we are waiting to see whether Election Day 2020 will mark an end to the hallucinatory nightmare of Donald Trump's presidency; whether it will constitute a victory or a setback for the white supremacists who enabled him to rise; whether the reactionary violence against Black Lives Matter protesters and other enemies of the regime will effloresce into civil war. We are waiting to see if the unimaginable occurs. But if we are to truly move beyond this presidency and all the forms of violence and injustice that made it possible, we must change in ways that, while positive and necessary, are almost equally far-fetched. For this election issue, *Artforum* asked nine artists—JUDITH BERNSTEIN, JENNIFER BOLANDE, SUE COE, RENÉE GREEN, TOMASHI JACKSON, TALA MADANI, KENNY SCHARF, TARYN SIMON, and ADAM PENDLETON (whose work is on the cover)—to contribute projects reflecting on a moment that requires us to think the unthinkable. □

"I Voted," *New York*, October 26-November 8, 2020, pp. cover, 12

Tillet, Salamishah, “It’s a New Dawn,” *Elle Decor*, October 2020, pp.104 -109

Nina Simone in London in 1966. **BACKGROUND:** Recovered wood slats from Simone's childhood home in Tryon, North Carolina. **OPPOSITE:** The exterior of the three-room clapboard house prior to its recent restoration.

Tillet, Salamishah, "It's a New Dawn," *Elle Decor*, October 2020, pp.104 -109

IT'S A NEW DAWN

THE RESTORATION OF **NINA SIMONE'S CHILDHOOD HOME** IS USHERING IN A NEW DAY FOR THE PLACE WHERE SHE DISCOVERED HER LOVE OF MUSIC AND PASSION FOR JUSTICE.

BY **SALAMISHAH TILLET** PRODUCED BY **INGRID ABRAMOVITCH**

I WAS THREE MONTHS PREGNANT when I first visited Nina Simone's childhood home in Tryon, North Carolina, a tiny town in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Even before I entered 30 East Livingston Street, I was struck by how dilapidated the three-room clapboard house had become. The battleship-gray facade was peeling, primer peeking through its slatted surface. It was an unfortunate fate for the birthplace of this major talent, who is celebrated today not only for her exquisite music but also for the role she played as a cultural conscience of the civil rights movement.

That was in 2015. What a difference five years and the devotion of a group of caring individuals can make. Three years ago, a group of well-known Black New York artists—Adam Pendleton, Ellen Gallagher, Julie Mehretu, and Rashid Johnson—teamed up to buy the house and rescue it from demolition. Soon after, the National Trust for Historic Preservation declared it a National Treasure and launched a campaign to restore 30 East Livingston and turn it into a retreat for writers, dancers, musicians, and visual artists.

Built in the 1920s with no indoor plumbing, this modest house is inextricably linked to Simone's legacy and enduring influence. She was delivered here in 1933, and it was in these three rooms that she grew up surrounded by a seamless flow of sacred and secular sounds. Her father, handyman John Devan Waymon, played harmonica, banjo, guitar, and mouth harp. Her mother, Mary Kate, was a Methodist preacher and sang daily from the choir book.

It didn't take long for the singer's specialness to become apparent: At eight months old, Simone—whose given name was Eunice Kathleen Waymon—was humming the spiritual "Down by the Riverside." At two and a half, she played the organ at the church across the street.

Eunice's musical talents garnered her so much attention that even in a town as segregated as Tryon, her mother's white employer offered to pay for her piano lessons when she was a

SIMONE: DAVID REDFERN/GETTY IMAGES; BACKGROUND AND HOUSE EXTERIOR: SCHEHERAZADE TILLET

IN THESE THREE ROOMS, SHE GREW UP SURROUNDED BY A SEAMLESS FLOW OF SACRED AND SECULAR SOUNDS.

young girl. She moved to New York City to study at Juilliard, but then, in a heartbreaking rejection, she was denied admission to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where she had hoped to study classical music. She reinvented herself as Nina Simone, performing in nightclubs and adapting jazz standards. Her debut album, 1959’s *Little Girl Blue,* spawned a Top 40 hit, “I Loves You, Porgy.”

Her childhood in North Carolina left its mark, good and bad. She experienced her share of racial injustice growing up—and never forgot it. At the height of the civil rights movement, she composed the era’s most defiant song, “Mississippi Goddam,” in response to the assassination of NAACP leader Medgar Evers in Mississippi and the murder of four Black girls in a church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama. As a result, she was blacklisted by record companies and concert venues and sought refuge outside the United States in such places as Barbados, Liberia, and, finally, France, where she died at home in Aix-en-Provence in 2003.

Back in Tryon, her childhood home, vacant for more than a decade, might have been demolished if not for the efforts of a local economic planner, Kevin McIntyre, and his wife, Julie. In 2005, they bought the house and embarked on a major renovation with the hope of turning it into a permanent monument to Simone’s life and legacy.

Wanting to get the details right in the restoration, the McIntyres sought guidance from Simone’s older brother Carrol Waymon, a civil rights activist and educator. The couple invested $100,000 of their own money, installing a new porch and front stairs, replacing bricks and beams, and shoring up the foundation. On the exterior, they attached weatherboard siding pulled from a local church also built in the 1920s. Inside, they furnished the rooms with Depression-era furniture, including a metal bed and a coal stove, along with a pedal organ. They also decorated the space with ephemera that alluded to Simone’s biography: “To Be Young, Gifted, and Black” sheet music; a map of Ghana, where she owned a home; a copy of Carter G.

THIS PAGE: NANCY PIERCE; OPPOSITE: SCHEHERAZADE TILLET (2); PENDLETON: SANG TAE KIM; JOHNSON: ERIC VOGEL; GALLAGHER: PHILIPPE VOGELENZANG. COURTESY OF HALAL: MEHRETU: ANASTASIA MUNA

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Previous owners had started the restoration, furnishing the 660-square-foot home as it would have looked when Simone lived there with her parents and seven siblings. On the pedal organ, the sheet music includes Bach (Simone trained as a classical pianist) and her own anthem, “To Be Young, Gifted, and Black,” a tribute to her late friend, the playwright Lorraine Hansberry, and an homage to the young activists of the Black Power movement. A cast-iron pot on a vintage coal stove.

PRESERVING A LEGACY

In 2017, four New York artists purchased Nina Simone’s childhood home in North Carolina. Working with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, they are restoring the house and turning it into an artist’s retreat. **ABOVE:** The plan by Asheville-based Mathews Architecture to stabilize the 1920s structure.

ADAM PENDLETON
Conceptual artist

RASHID JOHNSON
Sculptor and painter

ELLEN GALLAGHER
Collagist and filmmaker

JULIE MEHRETU
Abstract painter

Tillet, Salamishah, "It's a New Dawn," *Elle Decor*, October 2020, pp.104 -109

ABOVE: Members of the Hands-On Preservation Experience (HOPE) Crew, which trains youth in historic-preservation techniques, helping to restore the home's facade last summer.

THE EFFORT TO RESTORE THE HOUSE HAS ATTRACTED SUPPORT FROM JOHN LEGEND.

Woodson's *Journal of Negro History* from the year of her birth. But the project was overwhelming, and in 2010 the McIntyres were forced to put the unfinished house up for sale. After it sat unsold for an entire year, the house was bought by another owner for well below the listing price.

By 2017, the house was back on the market, its fate even more uncertain than before. That is when the New York artists, led by Pendleton, heard that it might be destroyed and jointly purchased it for $95,000. Not only did their investment rescue the house from oblivion or obliteration, it also launched their collaboration with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. For Brent Leggs, the executive director of the trust's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund (other current projects include John and Alice Coltrane's home in Dix Hills, New York, and Joe Frazier's gym in Philadelphia), the chance to team with artists was an invaluable opportunity. He hopes the project will inspire "another thousand artists to become involved in preservation to own and steward, while bringing life back to these kinds of spaces and honoring Black cultural legacies."

Drawing upon Simone's recent cultural resurgence as an icon for Black artists, the Trust launched a crowdfunding page last year to raise money to complete the restoration. The effort attracted support from John Legend, who was so moved by Simone's activism, he quoted her in his 2015 Oscars speech when he won Best Original Song for "Glory," from the film *Selma*.

Legend's interest in Simone is part of a larger trend: a rediscovery and reappreciation of the artist by a new generation. Entertainers such as Beyoncé, Jay-Z, and Rihanna and actresses Issa Rae and Lupita Nyong'o have recently sampled or styled themselves after the chanteuse. And in 2018, Simone was posthumously inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

In March, I had planned to return to the house in Tryon for the third time, with my eight-year-old daughter, Seneca, and four-year-old son, Sidney, so they could see firsthand where the

NANCY PIERCE (4)

LEFT, FROM TOP: The HOPE Crew preps the clapboard for repainting. The exterior in the mid-2010s. **ABOVE:** The freshly whitewashed home.

“EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED TO ME AS A CHILD INVOLVED MUSIC,” SIMONE WROTE IN HER AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

origins of my own obsession with Nina Simone began (I have written about her many times and am writing a book about the singer). As a result of our shelter-in-place order, we had to settle on re-creations: watching video clips and interviews and curating photographs that my sister, Scheherazade, took of the house when she accompanied me on a visit there two years ago.

As we attempted our virtual tour, we came across images of men and women from the National Trust’s Hands-On Preservation Experience (HOPE) Crew, which trains young people in historic-preservation trades like repointing, painting, carpentry, and window restoration. The pictures, taken last summer, show the group priming and painting Simone’s family home in Tryon and stabilizing its exterior in preparation for artists to make their own pilgrimages there.

A few months later, Vanessa Ferguson, a renowned jazz singer, headlined a concert inside the house. “It felt like the first time in a long time that Nina’s essence was being heard inside of this historic space,” Leggs recalls.

With her performance in Simone’s childhood home, Ferguson tapped into an even more formative memory.

“Everything that happened to me as a child involved music,” Simone wrote of her days at 30 East Livingston Street in her autobiography, *I Put a Spell on You*. “It was part of everyday life, as automatic as breathing.”

Today, as we struggle through these months of pandemic and weeks of racial protest, the simple act of breathing has emerged as a contest. In response to the police killings of Eric Garner in 2014 and George Floyd in 2020, “I Can’t Breathe” is both a chant of Black resistance and, more tragically, a reminder of centuries-old racial violence.

In this age of Black Lives Matter, as we reckon with our nation’s past, Simone’s voice stands out more than ever. And the house in which she, her piano playing, and her political vision were born is far more than an artist’s retreat. It’s a refuge for a nation in peril that welcomes all who want to enter back home. ■

To donate to the restoration, go to **savingplaces.org/places/ninasimone**

TOWN&COUNTRY

OUT & ABOUT

SEEING *is* BELIEVING

An art world star on the fall exhibition he can't miss.

BY ADAM RATHE

REED KRAKOFF FOR JIFANY JPENDLETON); COURTESY NAYLAND BLAKE AND MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY, NEW YORK (PINOCCHIO)

"I've been mourning the shows that closed in March," says the artist Adam Pendleton. "There's this feeling of missed opportunity. But you also realize how we take things for granted, saying, 'Oh, I'll see that next weekend.' All of a sudden that's not a possibility."

As art institutions begin to reopen, however, Pendleton—who has spent recent weeks working on his debut show for the David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles, set to open in November—is looking forward to one exhibition in particular: a 30-year survey of the work of Nayland Blake slated to open at MIT's List Visual Arts Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on October 16.

"Nayland has taken a critical view of how he functions in the world over many decades—always ahead of where culture has been in terms of rethinking binary notions of gender, race, and sexuality," Pendleton says. "I consider him to be a conceptual artist who makes sculpture, but he also makes drawings that play with styles from cartoons to graffiti."

It's work that benefits from being seen outside the virtual viewing rooms that have dominated recent gallery exhibitions and art fairs. "Sculpture is one of the mediums that you really have to see in person," Pendleton says. "You can see an image and begin to meditate on the ideas it's trying to communicate, but sometimes you need the sharp edge of experiencing art firsthand." T&C

The exhibit Adam Pendleton is most looking forward to this fall? "No Wrong Holes: 30 Years of Nayland Blake," at the MIT List Visual Arts Center. Top: A piece from the Blake show, *Untitled (Pinocchio)*, 1994.

“Op-Art: Adam Pendleton,” *The New York Times*, June 22, 2020, p. A21

The New York Times

OP-ART ADAM PENDLETON

ADAM PENDLETON *is an artist known for his critical articulations of blackness, abstraction and the avant-garde.*

Pendleton, Adam, “Op-Art: See the Sin,” *NYTimes*.com, June 21, 2020

The New York Times

Op-Art: See the Sin

A sketch from an artist known for his critical articulations of blackness, abstraction and the avant-garde.

By Adam Pendleton | June 21, 2020

Mass demonstration. Indifference. Slavery. Indifference. Jim Crow. Indifference. My people. Raised fist. Bended knee. Indifference. Just loss. Just pain. Just past. Just murder. Indifference. Loss of breath. Indifference. Loss of life. Indifference. Our pleas. Our hopes. Our demands. Our lives. Indifference. Genocide. Indifference. Mass incarceration. Indifference. Non-violence. Violence. And then indifference. Locked arms. Choked up. Indifference. Choked. Indifference. Just jogging. Just driving. Just playing. Just living. Indifference. Just language. Indifference. Just sleeping. Indifference. Just moving towards you. Indifference. Just breathing. Indifference. Our people. Those people. Indifference.

Adam Pendleton, completed sketch for “SEE THE SIN,” 2020.

Mafi, Nick "Young Black Artists Speak About the Role of Art in This Moment," *ArchitecturalDigest.com*, June 16, 2020

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

Young Black Artists Speak About the Role of Art in This Moment

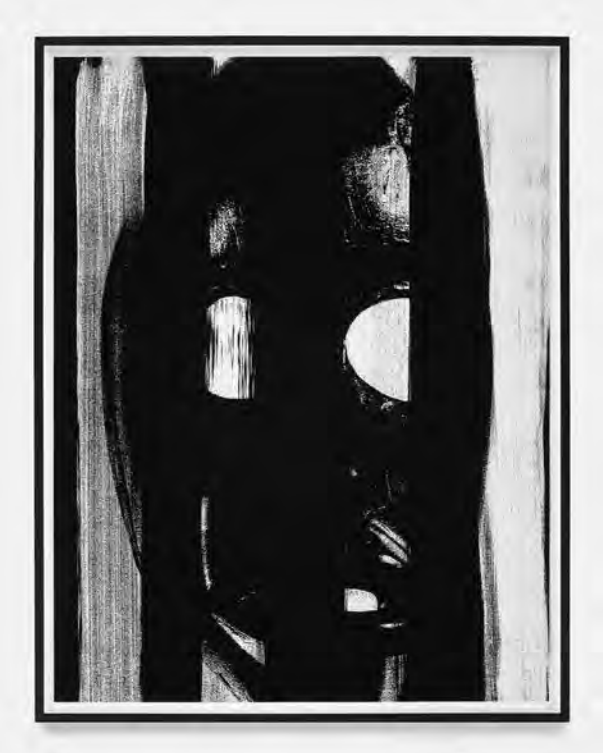
Groundbreaking artists such as Njideka Akunyili Crosby and Jammie Holmes discuss their work in the context of 2020, and what power art has to lead us toward a better tomorrow

By Nick Mafi | June 16, 2020

When a work of art is powerful, when it affects the consciousness of its viewer, that work doesn't simply inhabit the room it's in, but something much larger and consequential. For if the viewer carries that image, that message, out into the world, perspectives can evolve, replacing the unknown with empathy. This language of images and colors and words on a canvas allows the viewer a glimpse into the artist's mind, and at times, the artist's life story too. Which makes the work of Black artists all the more important to the fabric of American culture, for the role of art in this and any moment is to spark a conversation. Because at its best, art can voice for us what we cannot say, or don't yet know.

"Artists and creatives are often called on to assert themselves during times of crisis," explains artist Paul Anthony Smith. "So far, 2020 has given us two major crises: COVID-19 and the continual deaths of Black and Brown individuals at the hands of the police." According to artist Adam Pendleton, it's precisely in moments of crisis that the freedom of expression inherent to art can best be utilized for good in society. "Artists today need to be listening, experimenting, and criticizing," argues Pendleton. "Our sphere is a special one—relatively speaking, an extraordinarily free one—and this freedom should be used to the fullest extent. We must make images and extend gestures that endure."

We spoke with several young and extremely talented Black artists to better understand how they view the role of art in this moment, and how art can transform the world for a better tomorrow. Some of their names you may have heard of, such as the MacArthur Genius Grant winner Njideka Akunyili Crosby. Other names may be new to you. But the familiarity of their names doesn't matter. By studying the works of Black artists, our society will learn the richness of intellect and history and personal biography of these gifted young men and women. Because the power of art, particularly great art, is that it makes us feel something just beneath our collective skin, no matter the color.



Adam Pendleton, *Untitled (Mask)*, 2019. Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Adam Pendleton

Born in 1984 in Richmond, Virginia, Adam Pendleton is one of the country's top young talents. Consider the following: His work has been featured at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney, and the New Museum, among other venues. He's twice been featured in Forbes' "30 Under 30" list. And those who own his work range from Steven A. Cohen to Leonardo DiCaprio and Venus Williams.

Through his work, Pendleton juxtaposes several complex issues at once, creating works that have multiple meanings for multiple viewers. "There is no way to excuse oneself from history—even unknowingly, all art, all culture has a historical context," explains Pendleton. "When I use historical material, I'm trying to unsettle the past, to create a different sense of time through framing, reproduction, collage, and juxtaposition, often using things that are themselves already fractured in some way."

Like most artists, Pendleton aspires to create a dialogue with his audience, perhaps now more than ever. "I hope that the viewer feels productively disoriented—that what is given to them does not fit their preconceived notions, and that the work appears to them like its own world.… My aim has always been to invite the viewer into a conversation."

Pendleton, Adam, "Artist Adam Pendleton on Protests Across America: 'I Am Not Safe, and This Country Is Not Kind'," *ARTnews.com*, June 4, 2020

ARTnews

Artist Adam Pendleton on Protests Across America: 'I Am Not Safe, and This Country Is Not Kind'

By Adam Pendleton | June 4, 2020

Adam Pendleton, Completed sketch for *SEE THE SIN*, 2020.
COURTESY THE ARTIST

I woke up this morning and realized I live in a country where police mow down civilians with SUVs and storm protesters with batons, rubber bullets, teargas, and live rounds. I realized you can lose your life for standing up for life. I realized that I am not safe, and this country is not kind. I realized we are living through a health crisis, an economic crisis, a cultural crisis, and a social crisis while the country is being led by a man who fuels all flames of dumb violence and division. I realized I was tired of being asked "Are you OK?" by friends and colleagues. I realized I was tired of being asked to respond, yet heartened that people care. I realized I was angry that I was heartened that people care—because you better care. You are the person standing next to you: If I fail, you fail. If you fail, I fail.

I realized we have lost our collective sense of compassion and intelligence—and then that we probably never had it to lose. I realized that, after this moment quells, people will go back to their lives, and my life as well as those of my brothers and sisters—trans, cis, the we in all of us—will still be on the line. I woke up in the calm of the early morning light next to the man I love and thought, "Live free or die." I wondered if I should, if I would, give my own life for this urgent abstraction of Black life, of mattering. I wondered if I would die. I realized I am surrounded by contradictions, dysfunctions, and distractions. I realized I had better things to do than mourn for this country while thinking of Toni Morrison: "The function, the very serious function of racism is distraction. It keeps you from doing your work. It keeps you explaining, over and over again, your reason for being. Somebody says you have no language and you spend 20 years proving that you do. Somebody says your head isn't shaped properly so you have scientists working on the fact that it is. Somebody says you have no art, so you dredge that up. Somebody says you have no kingdoms, so you dredge that up. None of this is necessary. There will always be one more thing."

But then I realized I must mourn for you who don't speak up, act up, or take a stand. I realized my life might depend on you. I realized while I was culturally designated as "African-American"—words I've too often heard so violently used—it was my ancestors who built this country. I realized that, but for few of us, we're all immigrants, forced and otherwise, on this land. I realized, too late as always, that there were people here long before us, and we only know how to plunder and think we're flourishing. I realized I wanted to ask "Whose life doesn't matter?" but then: when you have to ask, it's probably too late.

I realized that my pessimism is realism and, of course, it's long been time to get real. I ask of history here: Did our artists join hands with our freedom fighters? Did they demonstrate in Birmingham? Did they cover their faces when the hoses were turned on? History shirks linearity. It exhausts us. It exhausts me.

I realized I want my language to fail. That my approach must be asyntactic and combinatorial. That I don't want to become but to always be becoming. I realized my parents' worries aren't like other parents' worries. I realized I scan headlines looking for statements of support, looking to see who would say my life matters. I realized I wonder who would choose capital over Black life and why a mayor who created Black life isn't on my side. I realized I don't think the rally or the cry could go too far when we have been waiting on something for more than 400 years.

I realized, lying here, that I believe in a politics of love but also ask: what is love without violence, and what is capital if not violence? I realized I had been punched in the gut. I took a breath and then realized that I needed to have a conversation with you—that I needed to reach out but that there is no "moving on" or "next page" until we *SEE THE SIN*. I realized the impossibility—and thus the poetics—of my plea.

Loos, Ted, “Artists Are Hunkered Down, but Still Nurturing Their Inner Visions,” *NYTimes.com*, April 21, 2020

The New York Times

Artists Are Hunkered Down, but Still Nurturing Their Inner Visions

Artists and architects may be sheltering at home, but their creativity still flows — and the results surprise even them. Here’s what 10 famous makers are looking at, reading, and sketching now.

David Hockney, “Do remember they can’t cancel the Spring” (2020), iPad drawing of the artist’s view of Normandy, France.Credit...David Hockney

Under most circumstances, the life of an artist or architect requires a lot of solitary time. But none of the 10 artists and architects I spoke to expected to be sheltering somewhere, hiding out from a deadly pandemic with a small number of family members or close friends.

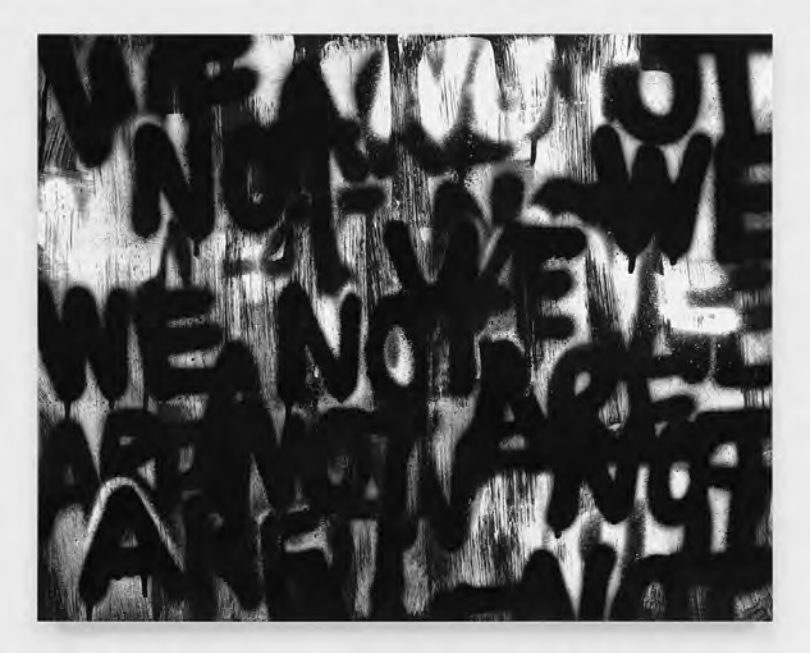
When asked how they were spending their time, they answered that, despite their fears, the pandemic is proving to be fertile ground — and they sent along some proof. The anxiety of the coronavirus era has already seeped into the work of Rashid Johnson, who suddenly started making blood-red drawings. Steven Holl depicted a pair of struggling lungs, and mourned a close friend — while continuing to design buildings. Adam Pendleton, whose artwork incorporates text, looked out the window and said he saw the words “SEE THE SIN.” Frank Gehry sketched, but his big meeting got Zoombombed. Leidy Churchman started an epistolary romance, and Doris Salcedo doubled-down on her constant theme: memorializing the forgotten.

One thing is clear: Like the generation after World War I, today’s artists will take this traumatic and uncertain time and turn it into something unexpected. As Maya Lin put it, “We’re going to get really interesting creativity out of this.” The following interviews have been edited and condensed.

Loos, Ted, “Artists Are Hunkered Down, but Still Nurturing Their Inner Visions,” *NYTimes.com*, April 21, 2020

Adam Pendleton

The multidisciplinary artist, 36, who frequently makes text paintings that address the history of race in the United States, was at his Hudson Valley house with his husband.



Adam Pendleton, “Untitled (WE ARE NOT),” from 2020, silkscreen ink on canvas. The artist frequently works with text. Adam Pendleton

Right now, I’m looking out across a road to an open plot of land, and the grass is sort of that rusty, red color with a little bit of sand tone to it. And there’s a small evergreen blowing in the wind. And I think it’s the fact that nothing is happening — other than this sort of welcoming but barren landscape — that is the most inspiring thing at the moment.

In my work, I grapple with things that allow us to have a perspective on culture. And if you look at a moment like this, you realize that this is a mere blip in the span of time. And it fortifies you. I think we’re in this hurry-up culture. If something lasts longer than a week, we’re like, “I’m so over this” [laughs]. And I have to say, I have a little bit of anxiety about going back to the hurried-upness of everything.

I think when things happen like this, there’s this kind of leveling. We’re all as important as the person next to us.

So I’ve been looking out of this window and thinking about three words, very simple: SEE THE SIN.

Who knows how it will manifest in the work. But looking out of this window, I know it has something to do with a perspective change.

Desmole, Lola, “Adam Pendleton, Harold Ancart and More Must See Online Shows,” *Whitewall.art*, April 14, 2020

whitewall

Adam Pendleton, Harold Ancart and More Must See Online Shows

by Lola Desmole | April 14, 2020

As a response to the ongoing COVD-19 pandemic, galleries have turned to online exhibitions to showcase the work of artists. Here’s what we’re digitally visiting this week.

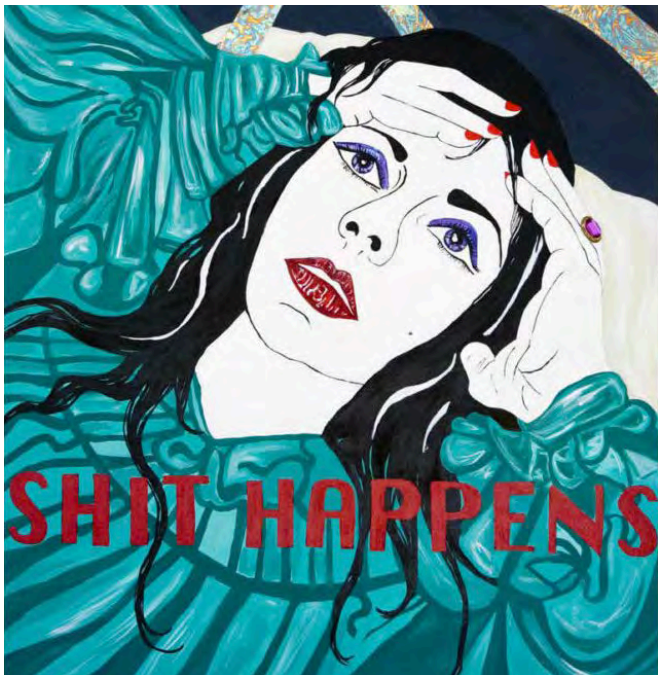
Adam Pendleton *Untitled (WE ARE NOT)*, 2020. Silkscreen ink on canvas. Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

Arlene Shechet, *Guessed It,* 2002. Glazed Ceramic, steel.

Harold Ancart: Pools
David Zwirner
David Zwirner is showing the work of Belgian sculptor Harold Ancart in online viewing room platform. The artist’s work represents the architectural structures of swimming pools that he made with styrofoam remnants from his studio. He then cast the styrofoam in concrete, and painted it. Ancart started this series in 2017, influenced by artists like Josef Albers, Jo Baer, Richard Diebenkorn, Peter Halley, and David Hockney.

“How Can We Think of Art at a Time Like This?”
Art at a Time Like This
This online exhibition brings together the work of a range of artists asked to respond to the global pandemic. Curators Barbara Pollack and Anne Verhallen got together in mid-March as a reaction to gallery and museum closures across the country. The website currently features the work of 24 artists, including Martha Wilson, Ai Weiwei, Amir H. Fallah, Mickalene Thomas, and Patricia Cronin. The exhibition promises to keep expanding and bringing in new artists according to the progression of the pandemic.

Desmole, Lola, “Adam Pendleton, Harold Ancart and More Must See Online Shows,” *Whitewall.art*, April 14, 2020



Kathe Burkhart, *Shit Happens: from the Liz Taylor Series (NightWatch)*, 2007

Tom Wudl, *Flower Treasury Universe*, 2016. 22K gold power, gum arabic, pencil, white gold leaf, gouache, polymer medium on Gampi paper

“Hell is a Place on Earth”
PPOW
The online show presented by PPOW features the films of six artists: Carlos Motta, Guadalupe Maravilla, Carolee Schneemann, Hunter Reynolds, Suzanne Treister, and David Wojnarowicz. Each is unique to the artists’ practice but all confront bodily and societal restriction as well as destruction.

“Material Matters”
Pace
Pace presents an exhibition featuring 11 artists whose practice explores the meaning of materiality and its role in guiding expression and disrupting expectations. Examples of combining, mixing, and transforming, can be seen in work by Lynda Benglis, Arlene Shechet, Richard Tuttle, Lee Ufan, and more. Curated by Andria Hickey in collaboration with Joe Baptista and Danielle Forest, “Material Matters” challenges boundaries and power structures through unique point of views.

One-on-One: Adam Pendleton Untitled (WE ARE NOT)
David Kordansky
Through this exhibition, Adam Pendleton explores the meaning of individuality and collectives as well as creative processes. This series of new paintings represents Pendleton’s interest in overlapping and contrasting territories between abstraction and language, control and disorder, minimalism and expressivity.

George Condo: Drawings for Distanced Figures
Hauser & Wirth
Hauser & Wirth presents drawings of George Condo the artist describes as being “composites of various psychological states.” In these works, he represents the current state of isolation and lack of human contact that we are currently all facing during this global pandemic. Condo is finding inspiration and meaning while alone in the studio.

Tom Wudl: The Flowerbank World
LA Louver
“The Flowerbank World” features around two dozen pieces from 2015 to 2020 by Tom Wudl, as well as early paper-punch abstractions from 1973, and an in-progress large-scale work that he started in 2018. Wudl draws inspiration from the Buddhist text, *Avatamsaka Sutra (The Flower Ornament Scripture)*. Through his understanding of this spiritual teaching, Wudl creates colorful paintings, drawings, and prints, that are, however, not meant to be sacred.

Gerlis, Melanie, “Art markets find high-tech ways to reach buyers,” *FT.com*, March 27, 2020

Art markets find high-tech ways to reach buyers

Dealers respond to static sales with VR platforms and Instagram shows

Melanie Gerlis I March 27, 2020

Work by Noel Fielding in Guts Gallery’s Instagram show

While auctions lend themselves relatively well to online sales, the supply of items for sale — the driver of the art market — is discretionary. Would-be sellers of some of the more pricey pieces are biding their time during this coronavirus pandemic. “This is an unprecedented situation, but what you generally see during a crisis is that consignors postpone their decisions,” said Guillaume Cerutti, chief executive of Christie’s, on a conference call last week. For these reasons, the auction house is to combine its planned big-league May sales of 20th-century art in New York with its June auctions in London, and will host one series of sales in New York starting on June 23.

It would be surprising if there weren’t some distressed sellers of art, as financial markets and several industries take a tumble worldwide, but Christie’s has not yet observed any of these, Cerutti says. Demand for art is still high, he adds — although again, it seems too early to tell. Christie’s team notes that, for now, most transactions are expected to take place privately, as happened during the financial crisis triggered by the 1991 Gulf war.

There have been some unlikely advantages of the art business moving online. Sam Orlofsky, director at Gagosian, was particularly pleased to have sold Mary Weatherford’s flashe paint and neon “Splendor in the Grass” (2019) through the Art Basel Viewing Rooms for $750,000. The work, he explains, would not have qualified for the real-life fair in Hong Kong, had it taken place, because the electrical, neon elements are in breach of the Exhibition Centre’s fire code. “We are making lemonade out of lemons. We finally had the opportunity to participate [in Art Basel] with Mary, and it worked,” Orlofsky says, noting that the work’s buyer is based in Asia.

Anecdotal evidence from Art Basel’s experimental Viewing Rooms, online between March 20-25 as a replacement for its Hong Kong fair, suggests that the initiative gave galleries a much-needed outlet while the world faced the realities of Covid-19. Apart from the VIP surge on the opening days, though, would-be art buyers seem to have other things to think about just now. Organisers do not plan to share the number of daily visitors to the site and will instead give an overall figure, as they would for their physical events — not particularly helpful to an industry grappling with how best to address the current situation.

The race is on to provide the technology that can enhance an art viewing and buying experience better than the websites that have supported galleries and fairs so far. Oliver Miro, son of the London gallerist Victoria Miro, has been working on a high-tech platform for the past few years and is almost ready to fire it up. Called Vortic, the extended reality (XR) platform allows galleries to use a high-resolution scan of their own space and properly “hang” a show, or just one or two items, Oliver Miro says. He explains that the idea came about because he wanted a way to record gallery shows that not everyone has the chance to see. He successfully tested the virtual reality technology through a Grayson Perry show at Victoria Miro gallery last year.

The initial launch will be of Vortic’s mobile and tablet app, which will be offered for free for the first three months from the end of April. The VR functionality, supported by Oculus headset technology, will follow later in the spring. Miro emphasises that Vortic operates independently from the gallery (where he also works).

Even in torrid times, galleries are adding names to their rosters. The multimedia artist Adam Pendleton (born 1984) now works with David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles, alongside Max Hetzler and Pace Gallery. Pendleton hasn’t had an exhibition in Los Angeles in a decade, notes Kurt Mueller, director at David Kordansky Gallery. This will be rectified in September, all being well, when they plan a solo show to coincide with the artist’s “monumental installation” due for New York’s Museum of Modern Art (*Adam Pendleton: Who Is Queen?*, July 25-October 4).

In London, the foundation of the land artist Nancy Holt, who died in 2014, has formalised the artist’s relationship with Parafin gallery. “It was the obvious choice, but even those have to be looked at from every angle,” says Lisa Le Feuvre, executive director of the Holt/Smithson Foundation, which also looks after Holt’s husband Robert Smithson (1938-73). Parafin plans a Holt exhibition in the autumn, if that proves to be possible. “If nothing else, the current situation gives us time to plan properly,” Le Feuvre says.

If galleries were struggling to stand out from the crowd in real life, it is arguably even harder on the democratic internet. Those that deserve a mention this week include mega-gallery Hauser & Wirth, whose Turner Prize-winning artist Martin Creed raised a big smile on Instagram Live on Saturday evening with a performance from his home that included juggling, strumming a guitar and singing, all while wearing his clothes back to front.

At the other end of the commercial scale is Guts Gallery, run by the 23-year-old artist Ellie Pennick. She is posting work by 31 of today’s minority artists on Instagram from March 26 (@guts_gallery). The participants will vote for their favourite three and the most popular artist will get a real-life gallery show, “when all this ends”, Pennick says. Works, including by the comedian-turned-artist Noel Fielding, are also available to buy (price range £300-£15,000, until April 16). The name of her exhibition sums it up for many just now: *When Shit Hits the Fan.*

Sheets, Hilarie, “A Theatrical Turn For MoMA’s Atrium,” *The New York Times*, Arts, Briefly, February 11, 2020, p. C3

The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2020

Arts, Briefly

NEWS FROM THE CULTURAL WORLD

A Theatrical Turn For MoMA’s Atrium

Adam Pendleton (right) will transform the Museum of Modern Art’s atrium this summer into a theatrical stage set framed by three 60-foot-tall scaffolds displaying his work. The 36-year-old artist’s multimedia installation is titled “Who Is Queen?” and will be on view from July 25 through Oct. 4, with live daily events surrounded by text-based paintings, mobiles, video portraits and sound pieces exploring his concept of “Black Dada.”

“It’s looking at blackness as an open-ended idea, not just related to race but in relationship to politics, to art, specifically to the avant-garde,” said Pendleton, who for his roster of readings, lectures and musical performances has enlisted people including the civil rights activist Ruby Sales, the poet Susan Howe and the cultural theorist Judith Butler.

For each day of the exhibition, during hours with no live performance, Pendleton plans to create a dissonant sound collage, layering audio material of artists and curators, culled from MoMA’s archives, with hip-hop music, for instance, or recordings of Black Lives Matter protests.

Discussing the title of his show, Pendleton said, “‘Queen’ could be a derogatory or loving name for a gay man,” adding that he remembered being called this once and resented having to decide whether to reject or embrace it. “That’s at the heart of ‘Queen’ — this idea of who we are, in personal but also collective terms.”

HILARIE M. SHEETS

SANGTAE KIM; VIA PACE GALLERY

Holmes, Heidi, "Adam Pendleton's 'Who Is Queen?' Will Explore Black Dadaism With Daily Events at MoMA,"
The Observer, February 11, 2020

OBSERVER

Adam Pendleton's 'Who Is Queen?' Will Explore Black Dadaism With Daily Events at MoMA

By: Heidi Holmes I February 11, 2020

Adam Pendleton speaks during BOMB's 38th Anniversary Gala on April 30th, 2019. Sean Zanni/Patrick McMullan via Getty Images

Adam Pendleton, a young conceptual artist who has rocketed onto the scene within the past couple of years, is going to be a big part of the Museum of Modern Art's upcoming programming. Following the institution's recently-completed multi-million dollar renovation, this summer, Pendleton will be responsible for a multimedia installation entitled Who Is Queen? that will completely transform the Museum of Modern Art's atrium into a theatrical stage set from July 25 to October 4, according to a new report from the New York Times. The exhibition will build on themes explored in Pendleton's Black Dada Reader, a 350-page tome of essays and texts that lay out the artist's intellectual fascination with Dadaism and American blackness.

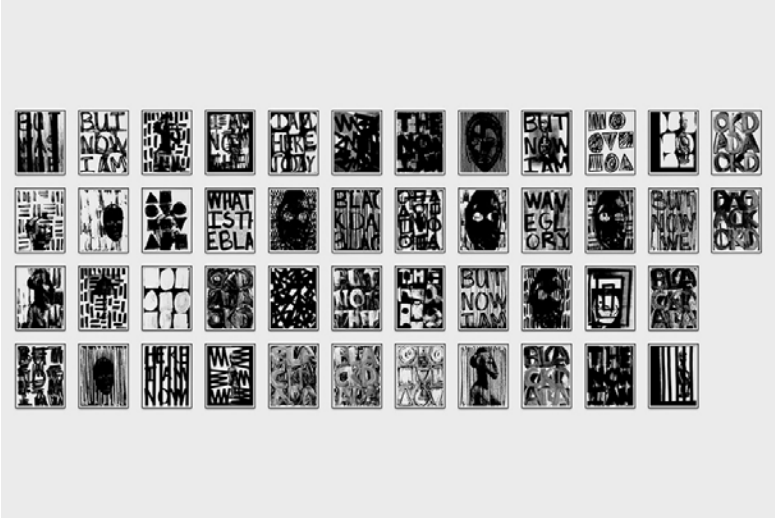
Pendleton, who wrote his initial Black Dada text in 2008, often combines his obsession with language with a sculptural sensibility to create uniquely poetic verse. In 2012, Observer excerpted some of it: "it's a matter of fact/a full moon hanging in a low sky irradiates the day with a milky glow/now i am older and wiser/going in a taxi from the train station."

Who Is Queen? will explore the artist's intellectual interests with live daily events featuring contributors such as poet Susan Howe and the theorist Judith Butler, as well as via a rotating display of Pendleton's paintings, portraits and sound pieces. These sound pieces will be comprised of audio from MoMA's archives, audio from protests and different kinds of music. "It's looking at blackness as an open-ended idea, not just related to race but in relationship to politics, to art, specifically to the avant-garde," Pendleton told the Times.

Regarding the exhibition's title, Pendleton also told the paper of record that it stems from his once being called a queen, and his not really knowing how to accept or metabolize the moniker. "'Queen' could be a derogatory or loving name for a gay man," Pendleton explained to the New York Times. "That's at the heart of 'Queen'—this idea of who we are, in personal but also collective terms."

“Pace Gallery presents Adam Pendleton’s first solo show in Korea,” *ArtDaily.com*, January 12, 2020

artdaily.com



Adam Pendleton, These Elements of Me, 2019 © Adam Pendleton

SEOUL.- Pace Gallery is presenting Adam Pendleton: These Elements of Me, the artist’s first solo show in Korea and his sixth with Pace. The exhibition comprises a single large-scale work: a 46-panel grid of compositions silk-screened with black ink on clear sheets of Mylar. Derived from Pendleton’s collages, the titular work is part of an ongoing series that incorporates the artist’s own writings and drawings as well as found materials, such as historical photographs and pages from books in his personal library.

In These Elements of Me, a play of repetitive, incomplete, and unresolved propositions—“I AM NOT THE”…“BUT NOW I AM”…“BUT NOW WE”…“THE NOW I AM”…“BUT WAS THE”—unfolds in uncanny dialogue with shapes, marks, hatching, and reproduced images. These visual forms intrude into the compositional space of the words, at times disrupting their legibility. Masks and sculptural figures from African cultures feature prominently in the series, alluding to the relationships between Modernism, abstraction, and colonialism. Rereading and overwriting, masking and re-masking, Pendleton allows opacities to accumulate and proliferate, refiguring the transparent lightness of the Mylar support while disrupting any overarching sense of semiotic clarity.

“For me, the object itself is not finite or complete,” the artist has explained. “It’s really a point of departure. It’s this idea I always come back to, which is about viewing the object as a site of engagement. I’m interested in finding a mid-space location, which is maybe how revolutions start.” Another point of departure is Black Dada Reader (2017), Pendleton’s compendium of texts and images which have long informed his work. In early handmade iterations of the Reader, Pendleton used transparent plastic pages to delineate the passage from one text to the next, allowing the transparent material to serve as both a dividing screen and a site of interchange and overlay. In his new work, the Mylar functions similarly, but through the gridded presentation on the wall the texts and images circulate and interact freely and in totality.

Adam Pendleton is a New York-based artist known for work animated by what the artist calls “Black Dada,” a critical articulation of blackness, abstraction, and the avant-garde. Drawing from an archive of language and images, Pendleton makes conceptually rigorous and formally inventive paintings, collages, videos, and installations that insert his work into broader conversations about history and contemporary culture. His work is held in public collections including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; and Tate, London, among others.

Hannah-Jones, Nikole, “Our democracy’s founding ideals were false when they were written. Black Americans have fought to make them true. *The New York Times Magazine*, August 14, 2019

The New York Times Magazine

Our democracy’s founding ideals were false when they were written. Black Americans have fought to make them true.

By Nikole Hannah - Jones | August 14, 2019

Artwork by Adam Pendleton

Konate, Awa, “Black DaDa - Deconstructing the Articulation of Blackness with Adam Pendleton” *Widewalls*, April 23, 2019

WIDEWALLS

Black Dada - Deconstructing the Articulation of Blackness with Adam Pendleton

By Awa Konate | April 23, 2019

Installation view of “Adam Pendleton: shot him in the face” at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art (2017). © Adam Pendleton, courtesy the Artist.

James Baldwin once said:

We used to think of history as the realm of the settled as an inalterable past, as a nightmare. That was the legacy bequeathed us by the past century’s catastrophes. But while we can never redeem what has been lost, versions of the past are forever being reconstructed in our fabrication of the present.

Although stated in 1972, today’s volatile moment of American interstate relation reminds us, that the past doing evermore so repeatedly embedded in our present sphere. Baldwin comments on interrelations between past and present realities, as a continuum of cultural and historical notions which constitute the very materiality of our social fabric and are ever persistent.

Adam Pendleton is an artist, whose unwinnable and complex layered practice is exceptionally occupied with Baldwin’s declarative statement. With a career spanning nearly two decades, including paintings, videos, essays, collages, and performances, he has situated the intersections of race, belonging, cultural politics, and art history as varying constructions that are re-articulated and imposed in the very centre of our Contemporary.

Not merely to inquire how and what if, but to push the very logic which constitutes their historical and social functions.

My first encounter with Pendleton was his large Black Lives banner at the Venice Biennale’s Belgian pavilion in 2015. Its context was stupendous and appeared almost to “devour” the pavilion’s space by forcing the centrality of its race relations. This without a doubt intended to procreate a statement. More recently, my attention has been directed to the disruptive continuity of his work whilst reading his publication Black Dada Reader (2017). Followingly, I had the opportunity to engage in a brief yet thoughtful exchange with Pendleton about his artistry and the contextualization of Black Dada.

Installation view of “Adam Pendleton: Our Ideas” at Pace Gallery, London (2018). © Adam Pendleton, courtesy the Artist and Pace Gallery. Photo: Damian Griffiths, courtesy Pace Gallery

Adam Pendleton’s Black Dada and Our Ideas

“Black Dada, is an artistic sequence of variations which intersect, yet does not conform to one’s preconceived definitions and therefore is articulated into newer or non-restrictive meanings,” Pendleton articulates. Drawing inspiration from the American beat poet Amiri Baraka’s controversial political rhetoric *Black Dada Nihilimus* (1964), he developed a practice framework titled Black Dada in 2008. It’s a manifestation that he refers to as a theoretical amalgamation, intersecting Harlem’s Avant-garde art movements, and Conceptualist references from the 1960s to 1970s – remarking during our conversation. *“Black Dada is a way to talk about the future while talking about the past. It is our present moment.”*

In the reflection of the nows continuity, Pendleton reminds: “what can I as an artist, do which would critically reshift that which matters and affects me personally?”

With an expanded socio-political idea theoretically and conceptually embedded into his work, one observes and is reminded, that his art isn’t merely existing along this idea, but is the very foundation and function through which his practice and the various discourses moreover dialogues sustained are comprehended. In this sense, the theoretical framework of Black Dada furthermore is an ontological conceptualisation of Blackness.

As a spectator, one won’t necessarily observe this when reading the Black Dada Reader. Instead, I recently understood the conception, in physical proximity Pace gallery’s exhibition titled Our Ideas at Pace Gallery in London. Upon entering the space, one’s attention is immediately overwhelmed by the evident dialogue between space and art. Gazing longingly and simultaneously whilst being tempted to touch the artworks silk printed glossing and tantalising surface, they appear to cut sharply through the architectural frame of the exhibition room.

It is particularly notable in the titled works Our Ideas #2, in which visually too much seems to be going on at once, yet the black-white colour scale rigidity ads to strength the space’s dynamic tension between idea and materiality. Navigating from the entrance towards the galleries left then right side, the varying decolonisation movements photographic archives from recently deceased curator Okwui Enwezor’s The Short Century at Villa Stück in Munich (2002) that are appropriated, transfigures an entire space into literal graphic emblems.

In further transfiguration, incomplete sentences from various texts are spray painted, drawn or printed on the photographic surfaces to continuously remove and distort the original context. In deconstruction, the intrinsic function of isolation and disruption, all be it separately or together, drifts towards a critique of the image’s relation to the spoken furthermore written word.

These functions are continuously reiterated and although they often appear incomprehensible, the abstraction nevertheless stays true to Dadaism’s dynamic tension between idea and materiality. Sculptural and Formalist critic Michael Fried denotes this as “presentness”, meaning an art object’s ability to negate the viewer’s attention into nothing but an illusionary space. Reading the work of immediate readability means one’s attention instead is focused on the external connection between the artworks and their environment. Thus their “movement” to one’s awareness becomes significantly more apparent and transfixing.

There’s an interesting dialogue at play between the theoretical framework, Black Dada and the actual art. Pendleton certainly comes from a critique of presentation that not only centres but laterality and contiguity subjectivise race as historical, political and cultural constructs that are continuously articulated through the objects, theories and works he appropriates.

Yet subtly and interestingly, when asked, he reminds that the familiarity appears to be extended further than its origins, not as fixed entities but fragmentations of different histories which all somehow bear a resemblance and constitute the very materiality of the Black body both as a colour and concept: “I feel as though our consciousness is the result of appropriation. We are appropriated. We are and culture is the result of that which has become networked throughout our history into the realms of culture.”

To observe Pendleton’s work, one is required, if not almost forced, to comply with a sense of unknowingness and

instead observe meaning constituted in themes through the materials used refusing to be categorised. The imagery dialogue alludes to history as a constituted limitation between past and present read at a micro-level to slowly detect familiarity of narratives.

My work moreover Black Dada operates on notions of abstraction, but such abstraction is an active mode of representation which is a liberation of its own.

In further articulation, Black Dada as an abstraction is therefore understood as the literal and metaphorical process through which epistemological relations are interrogated. Although differing, it reminds of Andrea Fraser’s institutional critique framework, in which there’s a readable attempt to not only dematerialise the material art object but also the very language which constitutes its existence, as well as the historical hierarchies it upholds. Within the space, there’s no written statement, name or size to isolate individual works. Instead, they appear as a single artistic corpus. Thus upon observance and in the absence of any written information, one’s readability is contingent upon imagining moreover determining the incomplete abstraction’s socio-political function, role, and importantly extension to space and identity.

Said incompletion is purposely an opening signifier that intends to move in several directions. The result is a body of works in which, radical juxtapositions appearing incomplete circulate to confuse moreover disrupt institutional logic, yet correlate periods of time, art and politics where the past continues to reconstruct itself in the present. Thus as a viewer one’s attention furthermore appreciation is immediately constrained to grappling grounds in the absence of any prior knowledge of the appropriated content.

Therefore, the conceptual framework of Black Dada is unfathomable without material reference. But accounting for Pendleton’s general practice, his reluctance to define more than necessary is intentional, to evoke viewers to carefully consider meaning in not only the reappropriated imagery or text, but moreover the intersections between space, artworks and oneself. Observing his work, and in extension, Black Dada requires a constant state of physical including intellectual wandering.

In Conversation with Language

This is why uncompleted and disrupted speech furthermore texts bear such an important function to Pendleton’s artistry. The written language’s fragmentation appears to refute familiarities. Whether referring to the *Our Ideas* exhibition, or the attempt to understand *Black Dada* further, the disconcerting feeling that’s evoked doing both, asks of one to navigate the frustration of a consistent knowing to surmise, reminding that history and personal experience are often defined by contradictions, gaps and overlaps, and he responds: *“My work has remained quite consistent and identifiable, particularly with interest in language. Both how it functions in a literary and theoretical sense. In theoretical I mean, how language shapes spaces and creates discourses moreover functions through which certain bodies are excluded. So a consistent aspect of my work has always been the dichotomy through which the body is situated in the ephemeral frame of language and space. And importantly how that configures one’s identity and existence outside of the institution’s sustained historical narratives.”*

Bourdieu refers to this process as “cultural allodoxia” – a misinformed recognition which distorts the gap between acknowledgement and knowledge. In his ability to emerge mediums moreover disciplines into one, Pendleton’s essayistic practice draws us towards a larger, and in the truest sense experimental narrative.

Konate, Awa, “Black DaDa - Deconstructing the Articulation of Blackness with Adam Pendleton” *Widewalls*, April 23, 2019

Installation view of “Adam Pendleton: Our Ideas” at Pace Gallery, London (2018). © Adam Pendleton, courtesy the Artist and Pace Gallery. Photo: Damian Griffiths, courtesy Pace Gallery

Perhaps forcefully our socio-political desires and the fleeting emotions which we’re ruled by are historised and set forth. This historisation seeks to interrogate both past and present representation. And whether one gloss through the Black Dada Reader (2017) or roam from a particular Our Ideas exhibition space to another, the multitudes of works seem almost pervasive and overwhelming. And such multitudes of abstraction appear almost as if Pendleton is attempting to insert himself, or even direct the audience to question the personal sense of belonging to the institutional space.

It reminds that the reappropriation of old imagery is a mark of a continuum. By maintaining an almost consistent format which only varies in texture and positioning, one’s unable to view the objects without also being mindful of the physical moreover temporal relationship to its situating within the gallery. In other words, it’s a continuing dialogue which marks and puts issues into perspective, because their very existence is continued into a frame that’s in constant exchange to one another. As a spectator, one is posed to observe how visual relations inform aesthetical relations that exist at the moment. In response, one might ask, in the frame of discursive visibility in which position does the Black body and its historical narrative fit in? And does the unpinnable definition shifts conception of Blackness, furthermore the ways through which blackness is materialised?

Although as a viewer one is often left with an unsettling sense of unreadable symbolism, one is inevitably also forced to see the institutional space as a site of social antagonism. Perhaps, the conceptual framework of Black Dada presents a rather profound revision of history moreover language, to inquire an epistemological narrative and the intrinsic socio-political layers that in turn forcefully ask, “what do you actually see?” AWA KONATE

Stevens, Philip, “hank willis thomas + MASS design group chosen to design boston’s MLK memorial,” *designboom,* March 15, 2019

designboom®

hank willis thomas + MASS design group chosen to design boston’s MLK memorial

Philip Stevens | March 15, 2019

(Above and below) ‘boston’s king memorial’ by adam pendleton, adjaye associates, future\pace and david reinfurt

this design — proposed by adam pendleton, adjaye associates, future\pace, and david reinfurt — is woven into boston’s existing urban environment. from the summit of the memorial, visitors can view america’s oldest city park and new mountainous sculptures below, which together compose a radical amphitheater. the open structure bridges over the common’s walking path, and is accompanied by a gentle ramp which leads visitors from the upper street-level down to the lower-level of the existing walking path.

Duron, Maximiliano, “ICA VCU Adds Adam Pendleton, Adrienne Edwards to Advisory Board,”
ARTnew.com, March 4, 2019

ARTnews

ICA VCU Adds Adam Pendleton, Adrienne Edwards to Advisory Board

By Maximiliano Duron | March 4, 2019

Adam Pendleton and Adrienne Edwards

Artist Adam Pendleton and curator Adrienne Edwards will join the advisory board for the Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. The new additions to the board come three months into Dominic Willsdon’s tenure as director of the museum.

Pendleton is a New York–based artist who was born in Richmond. His practice is concerned with the articulation and aesthetics of “Black Dada,” an amalgamation of blackness, abstraction, and the avant-garde, which formed the basis of a reader he published in 2017 through Koenig Books. His 2016 solo exhibition “Becoming Imperceptible” originated at the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans and traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver and the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland. He is also a trustee of the Baltimore Museum of Art.

Edwards has been the curator of performance at the Whitney Museum in New York since May 2018. Prior to that she had been a curator of the New York–based performance-art biennial Performa since 2010. Previously she worked as a curator at large at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and organized the well-received exhibition “Blackness in Abstraction” at Pace Gallery in New York in 2016.

“They both have this subtle understanding of our immediate context,” Willsdon told ARTnews. “But then they’re both, of course, bringing experience from many other places and ideas of many other kinds of practice.”

Willsdon said that he plans to expand the advisory board to include national and international members. Current members include artist Diana Al-Hadid and Rachel Goslins, the director of the Arts & Industries Building at the Smithsonian. Because the ICA VCU is overseen by the university’s provost, the board serves to help guide the one-year-old museum as to what it should be in its first years.

“The conversation that’s animating people is around what should a contemporary art institute even be for the next decade,” Willsdon said. “We have a great opportunity to think about that from square one. . . . I’m getting a sense of the possibilities here.”

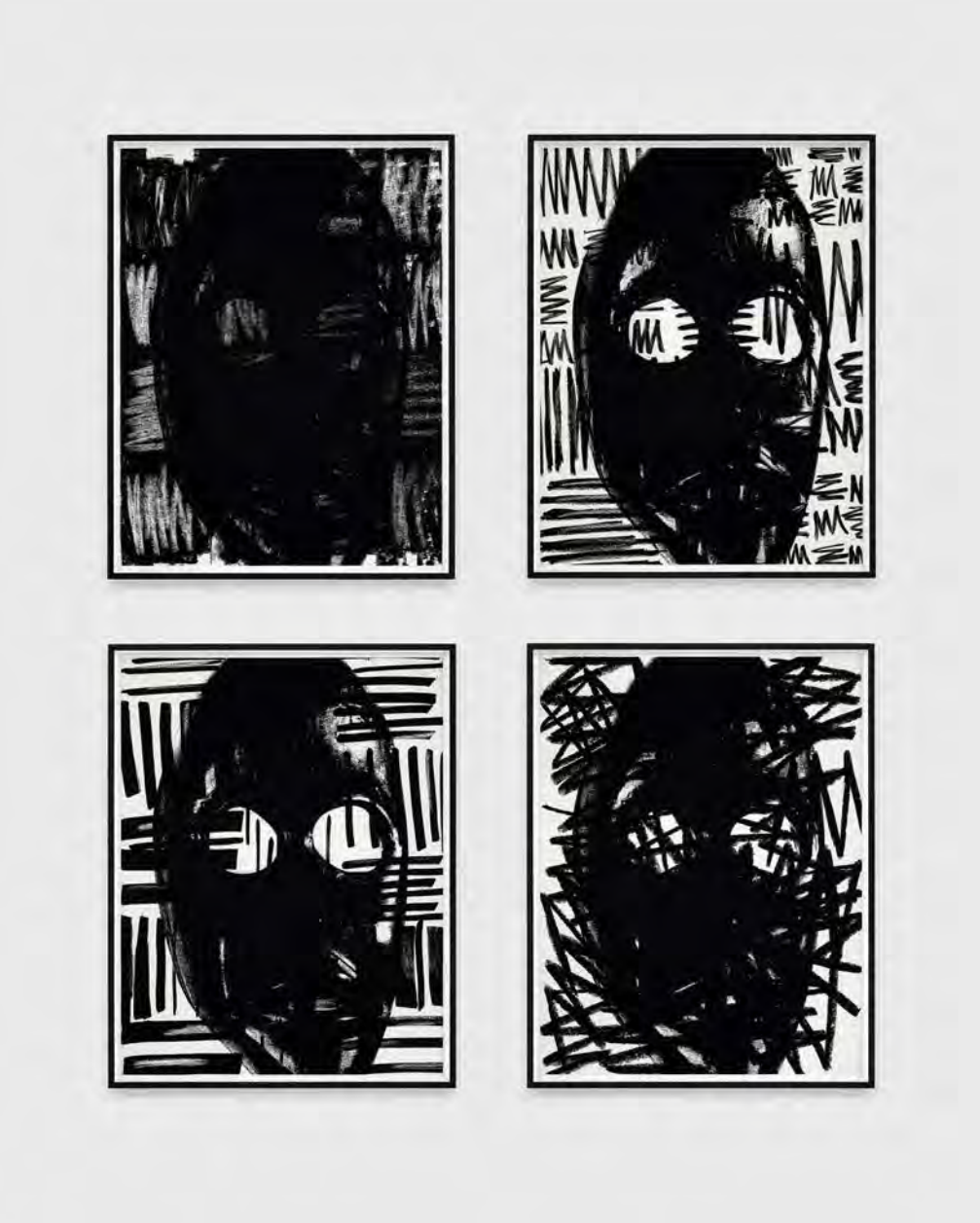
Gosling, Emily, “5 Questions: Pope.L and Adam Pendleton: “Art Can Mobilize Your Body”,”
Elephant, January 28, 2019

ELEPHANT

5 Questions: Pope.L and Adam Pendleton: “Art Can Mobilize Your Body”

By Emily Gosling I January 28, 2019

Pope.L and Adam Pendleton are two artists creating powerful, political works in very different media, but with shared goals and approaches. As a new show opens of their work, they tell us more about working together and why language is “both a mechanism of escape but also a trap”. Words by Emily Gosling



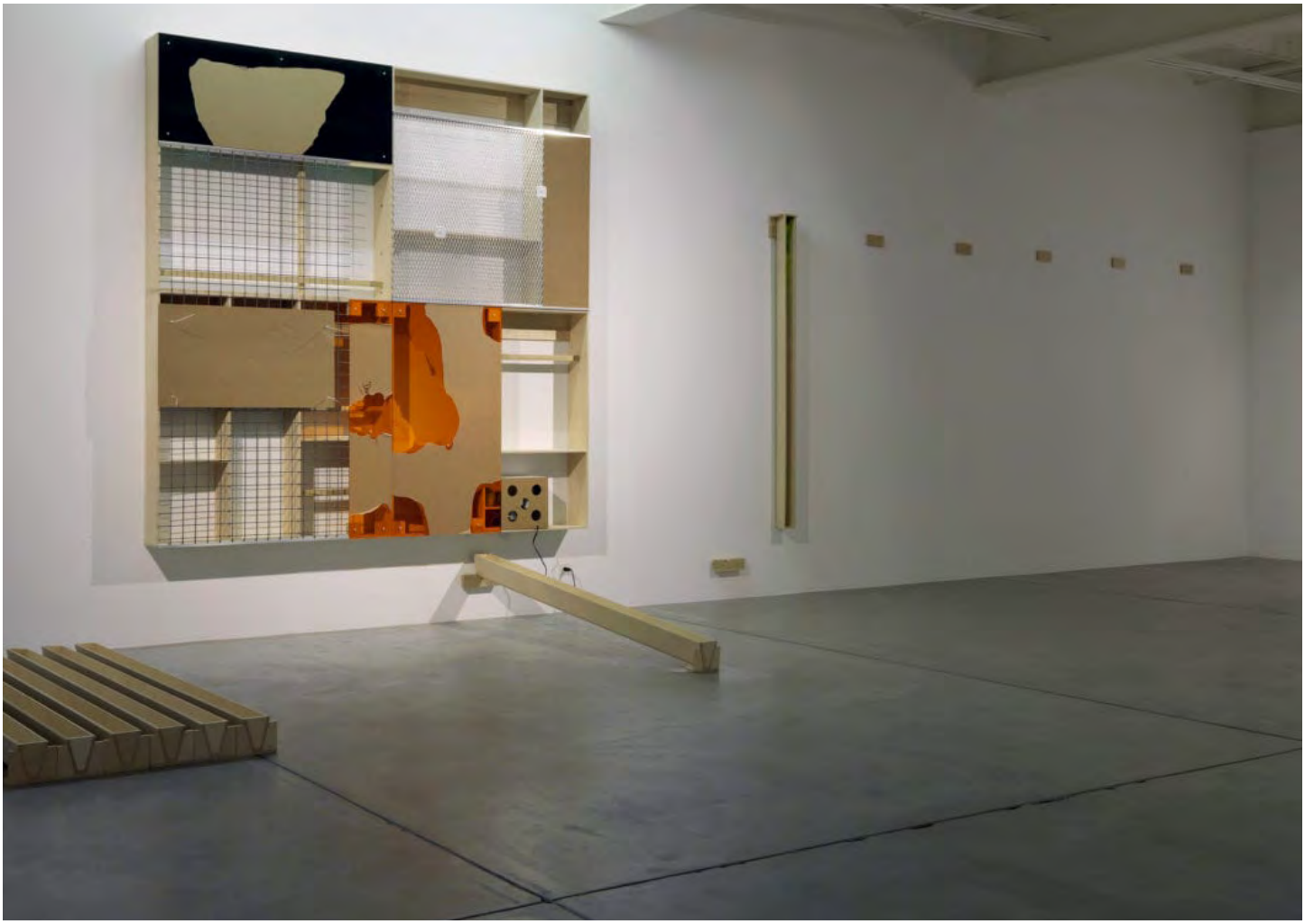
Adam Pendleton, Untitled (Masks), 2018 © Adam Pendleton. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich / New York

Gosling, Emily, “5 Questions: Pope.L and Adam Pendleton: “Art Can Mobilize Your Body”,”
Elephant, January 28, 2019

Artists Pope.L and Adam Pendleton may be a generation or so apart—the former has been renowned for his provocative, often very public discipline-spanning works since the 1970s; while Pendleton was featured on the Forbes Magazine’s “30 Under 30” list as recently as 2012—but it’s not hard to see where their sensibilities (and sense of humour) align. This month sees the opening of a new show at Zurich’s Galerie Eva Presenhuber entitled No Thing, presenting the work of both artists in dedicated exhibition spaces, with a collaborative performance that opened the show. Pope.L is showing new silkscreens, works on paper, and sculptures; while Pendleton is exhibiting a twenty-part suite of mylar works based on an African mask as a continuation of his development of the theory of Black Dada—a “critical articulation of blackness, abstraction, and the avant-garde”, as the gallery puts it.

Each artist claims the other came up with the exhibition title, “or it’s based on Samuel Beckett’s Stories and Texts for Nothing”, says Pope.L. “A set of tightly written yet loosely linked narratives that defy narrative. Maybe that is the feeling of the show. No one thing but a multitude…”

I spoke to the artists about the nature of collaboration, the role of artists in engaging with political issues, and why gallery spaces can be the worst sites for performance art.



Installation view, No Thing, 2019: Pope.L, Adam Pendleton. © Pope.L. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich / New York Photo: Stefan Altenburger.

Gosling, Emily, "5 Questions: Pope.L and Adam Pendleton: "Art Can Mobilize Your Body"," *Elephant*, January 28, 2019

What makes for a good artistic collaboration? How do you feel your individual practises complement each other?

Pope.L: A good collaboration requires two things: space when you need it, and boundaries when you don't. We are black. Well at least I am. I shouldn't speak for Adam. I have learned a certain generosity of spirit, wit and love of art from Adam that is very refreshing. Not sure this is generational, I have always been attracted to this sort of artist.

Adam Pendleton: Pope.L is an artist I've respected for many years, but have really only known through his work. We enact and realize our ideas differently, so it was important that we gave each other the conceptual and physical space to do what we needed to do. We never discussed what exactly the other person was going to do as we worked on the show, but remained in touch on a daily basis. Getting to know each through the frame of the exhibition made for a meaningful exchange.

Adam Pendleton, Untitled (masks), detail, 2018

How far do artists have a responsibility to engage with social and political issues?

PL: As far as you can throw a rock.

AP: We are all responsible for how we respond to the things that are happening around us. A work of art can function in different modes and registers at any given moment. It can speak to your heart. It can speak to your mind. It can mobilize your body.

Pope.L, your performances often involve local citizens and are sited outside—what are the challenges of performing in those sort of unpredictable environments? How does the nature of your performances have to adapt for the gallery space?

PL: The biggest challenge is allowing yourself to respond critically but without prejudice. Framing or not framing what you are doing when you are working in unconventional environments can be a great tool. People want to know: "What the fuck are you doing?" At times the answer is: "Fuck you. Ask a better question." Galleries are the hardest places to perform because they are too familiar. The most fulfilling places may not be the best for the performance.

Gosling, Emily, “5 Questions: Pope.L and Adam Pendleton: “Art Can Mobilize Your Body”,”
Elephant, January 28, 2019

Adam, you’ve been described as “a kind of citizen-poet”. Why is language so central to what you do?

AP: I would claim the mantle of conceptualism but also Black Dada. Language is always failing. I see it both as a mechanism of escape but also a trap.

Installation view, No Thing, 2019: Pope.L, Adam Pendleton. © Adam Pendleton. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich / New York. Photo: Stefan Altenburger

Pope.L, according to the gallery, your works “always have a tone that sticks and irks the consumer.” Should art rile people? What do you hope people get from seeing your work?

PL: I do not know if irking folks is so important. It’s a barometer. If it irks me first, then it’s ready for the public. Rile is a great word. Yes, art should deliberately do something. The art relies on what art should deliberately do and how it should do it. What do I hope people get from seeing it? Stomach pains, nausea, new insights about the democratic process.

Moffitt, Evan, “What Can’t Be Read,” *Frieze,* December 18, 2017

Frieze

What Can’t Be Read

Evan Moffitt I December 18, 2017

How Bethany Collins, Steffani Jemison, Adam Pendleton and Kameelah Janan Rasheed are using the tradition of black radical poetry to examine questions of subjectivity and race

Adam Pendleton, ‘shot him in the face’, 2017, exhibition view at Baltic Centre for Contemporary art, Gateshead. Courtesy: the artist

When is a poem a picture? In his seminal theoretical text, In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition (2003), Fred Moten asks: ‘What are the internal relations within that experience between the intellection of the poem’s meaning and the sensing of its visuality and/or aurality? What are the relations between versions of or variations on the poem, manifestations of the eye and ear that raise the too deep question of the ontological status of the poem itself?’ Moten’s own poems feel good on my tongue as I recite them and their rhythm is integral to their meaning. He argues that the gap or ‘break’ between a poem’s meaning and its aesthetic effects can be fertile ground for radical politics, a space of emotional resonance that conventional language struggles to articulate.

A generation of artists inspired by Moten has seized on the poet and theorist’s title as a proposition, breaking apart texts from literary and historical sources to build new forms out of the wreckage. Language, broadly speaking, has long been a central concern for many black contemporary artists – Glenn Ligon, Pope.L, Lorna Simpson and Carrie Mae Weems come to mind – but this younger generation draws inspiration directly from literary sources: the poetry of Amiri Baraka, Tisa Bryant, Moten, Harryette Mullen, Claudia Rankine and others. Unlike many of their artistic predecessors, they fracture sentences and split words, collaging them together in ways that often refuse coherence. Their work acknowledges that identity is complicated by the language we use to define and express it.

Adam Pendleton quotes diverse literary sources in prints and wallpapers, collaged text and scanned photographs that embrace this condition of illegibility. For ‘shot him in the face’, his 2017 show at KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin, which later toured to Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead, Pendleton installed a vinyl wallpaper bearing the provocative opening line from Ron Silliman’s 1981 poem ‘Albany’, enlarged in black block letters: ‘If the function of writing is to “express the world”.’ Silliman’s poem continues in a cycle of short, flat sentences about race and class in Albany, California.

Pendleton, meanwhile, deploys a literal flatness to question art or writing’s imperative to ‘express the world’. at KW, black and white silkscreened images of work by Pablo Picasso, photographs of a dada dancer from 1916 and a dancing Congolese couple, as well as a page from a book of Chinese textiles were cropped and layered into a near-abstract pattern. Several other quotes from silliman appeared on the wall, fragmented and framed, such as the line: ‘A woman on the train asks Angela Davis for an autograph,’ from which only Davis’s name, ‘train’ and ‘woman’ were discernible.

The breakdown of language is part of what Pendleton refers to as ‘Black dada’, a term he has used since 2009 for his most important and extensive series to date. The phrase is borrowed from Amiri Baraka’s 1964 poem ‘Black Dada Nihilismus’, a seminal early text of the Black Arts Movement. Baraka invokes both the nihilism of dada and its dark depictions of the eroding social and political order in post-World War I Europe to voice the frustrations of black Americans of the Civil Rights movement fighting against systemic racism and violence during the Vietnam War.

In his ‘Black Dada’ paintings, Pendleton riffs on the famous refrain in Hugo Ball’s 1916 ‘Dada Manifesto’ – ‘dada m’dada dada mhm’ – to link different historical avant-gardes. The letters of ‘dada’ permutate alongside blown-up images of Sol LeWitt’s ‘Incomplete Open Cubes’ (1974). Like LeWitt’s modular geometry, language is a system open to endless reconfiguration and renewal. Reading Ball’s manifesto as not only a nonsense poem, but a political treatise alongside Pendleton’s own work, MoMA PS1 curator Jenny Schlenzka has argued that Pendleton ‘recovers dada’s tactical nonsense as a precursor weapon against a society that naturalizes racial identity in the service of oppression and exploitation’.

Kameelah Janan Rasheed leverages that same ‘tactical nonsense’ in her architecturally scaled, fragmentary, text-based collages. A Supple Perimeter (2017), which was included in the 2017 exhibition ‘Speech/Acts’ at ICA Philadelphia, begs to be read, though its sentences fall apart as soon as they begin to form. Across two long, black walls, photocopied and excised words are pinned in loose clusters that hover near eye level, recalling poet Douglas Kearney’s ‘performative typography’. A framed image of a hand pressed against the glass of a scanner hangs at the fulcrum of this frieze, as if to block the advance of our gaze. ‘Refuses to do that’ is pasted over the palm, while an adjacent blank page bears the simple prepositional phrase: ‘inside the offering of’. An offering and a refusal: Rasheed’s words and gestures conflict because, her work argues, one’s marginality is always a conflicted state. Nearby, the words ‘and black?’ in bold, Helvetica type have been slid across the surface of a live photocopier, creating a woozy distortion that sets even the nature of the question into doubt. ‘And black?’ What’s black? Who’s asking?

‘I want to hear./the rhythm/of rupture,’ one line reads. and elsewhere: ‘a sentence is structured/TO-AND-FRO-MOVEMENTS/sentence and race through the words.’ Rasheed’s fragmentary collage engages in a sly mimesis: it pronounces the cause of its illegibility. ‘Rupture’ recalls what Moten once wrote of one of Baraka’s favoured poetic devices: ‘Montage renders inoperative any simple opposition of totality to singularity. It makes you linger in the cut between them, a generative space that fills and erases itself.’ I linger in Rasheed’s cut, looking for fugitive meaning, only for the work to refuse my reading.

Towards the end of the installation, hung low to the floor, a framed scan of fingertips, lined up like a policeman’s record, serves as the artist’s signature. Prints are evidence, but they also leave a more personal trace of daily life, like the grease stains on the pages of a well-thumbed novel. Here we find ourselves, perhaps, at the ‘supple perimeter’ of the work’s title – a body or a text reclaimed as a margin

fertile for political discourse.

The grain of a photocopy reminds me of the many texts on art history, theory and philosophy that I received as handouts in university classes. When scanned, books that are smaller than standard A4 paper leave a black frame of negative space around the blinding whiteness of the duplicated page. The stark, two-tone aesthetic of the photocopy is central to Pendleton’s and Rasheed’s practices, just as black and white dominates the work of many of their peers. ‘Speech/Acts’, which considered six artists of colour working with poetry and the black radical tradition, was virtually monochromatic. Setting aside the obvious racial metaphor, the clash of black and white offers a dialectical contrast that alludes to the many conflicted states of marginalized identity, and to conditions of visibility and invisibility.

If the master’s tools can never dismantle the master’s house, neither can his tongue unravel his discourse. To that end, interrupted speech and written text can serve as critical poetic devices for artists to craft more inclusive, open-ended language. Steffani Jemison’s work considers the way black Americans throughout history have invented languages, spoken and unspoken, to circumvent racist attempts to silence their expression. ‘Plant You Now, Dig You Later’, Jemison’s sweeping show which opened in March 2017 at Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, focuses on a series of ‘hieroglyphic characters’ that Nat Turner, the leader of an 1831 slave rebellion, claimed he saw in a corn field and took as divine inspiration. Enlarged on sheets of acetate mounted on the gallery walls and running onto the floor, the scrawled, snaking symbols have a runic quality, as if they predate the Latin alphabet. Other sheets bear the ideographic marks of Solresol, a language based on the Solfège system of musical notation, devised by composer François Sudre in 1827.

Sudre envisioned Solresol as a universal idiom; the symbols’ unfamiliarity to the modern eye is a mark of their ultimate failure. Mixed in with Sudre’s notation are letters from the Hamptonese alphabet – a cryptic language devised by the self-taught black artist James Hampton, from Washington D.C, who spent more than a decade building an elaborate golden throne and altar from salvaged materials in response to religious visions. Indecipherable but inspired: language in Jemison’s work is as much a tool of communication as it is an expression of interiority. It’s not clear how Hampton and Turner developed their runic systems, but their lack of clarity (to the white gaze?) seems to be the point. Here, poetry and its building blocks are a means of escape, of liberation, of utopic imagination.

Jemison is a writer and poet, too, and her use of the archive often results in more legible text-based works than those of Pendleton or Rasheed. You Completes Me (2013–ongoing), a poem composed of sentences lifted from self-published novels the artist bought at street-side bookstands in Harlem, arranges words typologically to form a non-narrative story. Clusters of adjectives (fat/juicy legs/fine as fuck) compete with brand-name signifiers (Escalade/Lexus/Charger). Street slang appears alongside questions of existential melodrama: ‘Have you ever been wounded in your soul and paralyzed with grief?’ This work acquires some of the rhythms of life in Harlem, from its intellectual and pulp histories to the daily chatter of its residents. While not all of the novellas function as portraits of the neighbourhood, Jemison’s work uses language to draw our attention to issues of class, race and gender that dominate everyday life there.

Bethany Collins’s America: A Hymnal (2017) employs a similar cut-and-paste technique, compiling scores for 100 different versions of the 19th-century ballad ‘My Country, ’Tis of Thee’ to tell a story of US history through popular music and nationalistic expression. The tune for the early, pre-revolutionary

anthem was famously borrowed from ‘God save the Queen’. Later in the century, it was adapted as a battle hymn by suffragettes and abolitionists, who used the song’s title and opening line – ‘My country ’tis of thee,/ sweet land of liberty’ – as an ironic jab at the nation’s hypocrisies. Collins’s collage process recalls Robin Coste Lewis’s ‘Voyage of the Sable Venus’ (2015), a multi-part poem composed entirely of titles of Western artworks that reference the black female figure. Lewis’s devastating poem makes clear the extent to which women of colour have been treated as exotic objects throughout history. Collins’s book, too, gives me the impression of an avid reader combing the archive of US history in search of something they can recognize, only to realize that that history was written to exclude them.

‘Perhaps the most insidious and least understood form of segregation is that of the word,’ Rankine writes in her book Citizen: An American Lyric (2014), which has been a touchstone, since its publication, for many artists working with poetry. Citing an episode during the 2006 World Cup, in which a racist slur was directed at Zinedine Zidane – a french footballer of Algerian descent – Rankine notes that ‘illustrations of this kind of racial prejudice can be multiplied indefinitely’, the way a word can be repeated, on a tongue or across a chalkboard. It’s what Kearney calls a ‘stutter’: we are forced to witness the same kind of racist violence over and over again, like a word lodged in the throat. I’m reminded of the psychoanalyst and philosopher Frantz Fanon’s observation that the child who cries, ‘Look Daddy! A Negro!’ produces blackness by declaring and circumscribing difference. People turn. Fingers point. A crowd becomes a lynch mob.

In violently splitting apart the body of a text, these artists nevertheless refuse to picture the physical violence inflicted on the bodies of people of colour. Poetry’s critical evasiveness thus offers a way to articulate the effects of oppression without reproducing them in echo. By trying to capture the essence of words, poetry at once fails to express the world – per Silliman and Pendleton – while also proving indispensable to our experience of it. If race is a social construct, then language plays a key role in perpetuating and legitimizing the terms of racial difference. For these artists, words are both a trap and an escape hatch. Racist epithets and laws use language to marginalize the black body, but poetry deconstructs syntax in ways that could set it free. It might be paradoxically ‘in the break’ that things – our words, our world – become unbroken.

Bethany Collins is an artist based in Chicago, USA. In 2017, she had solo exhibitions at Patron Gallery, Chicago, and 1708 Gallery, Richmond, and was featured in ten group exhibitions, including ‘Another Country’ at Broad Art Museum, East Lansing, Michigan, ‘Gray Matters’ at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio, and ‘Excerpt’ at The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (all USA).

Steffani Jemison is an artist and writer based in New York, USA. In 2017, she had solo exhibitions at Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, USA, and Jeu de Paume, Paris, France, and was included in group exhibitions at Sprüth Magers, Los Angeles, USA, Brennan & Griffin, New York, and Ulises, Philadelphia, USA.

Adam Pendleton is an artist based between Germantown and New York, USA. In 2017, he had solo exhibitions at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK, and the Baltimore Museum of Art, USA, and was included in group exhibitions at Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA, and Mana Contemporary, Jersey City, USA. His solo show at MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, USA, runs from 3 January until 11 February, 2017.

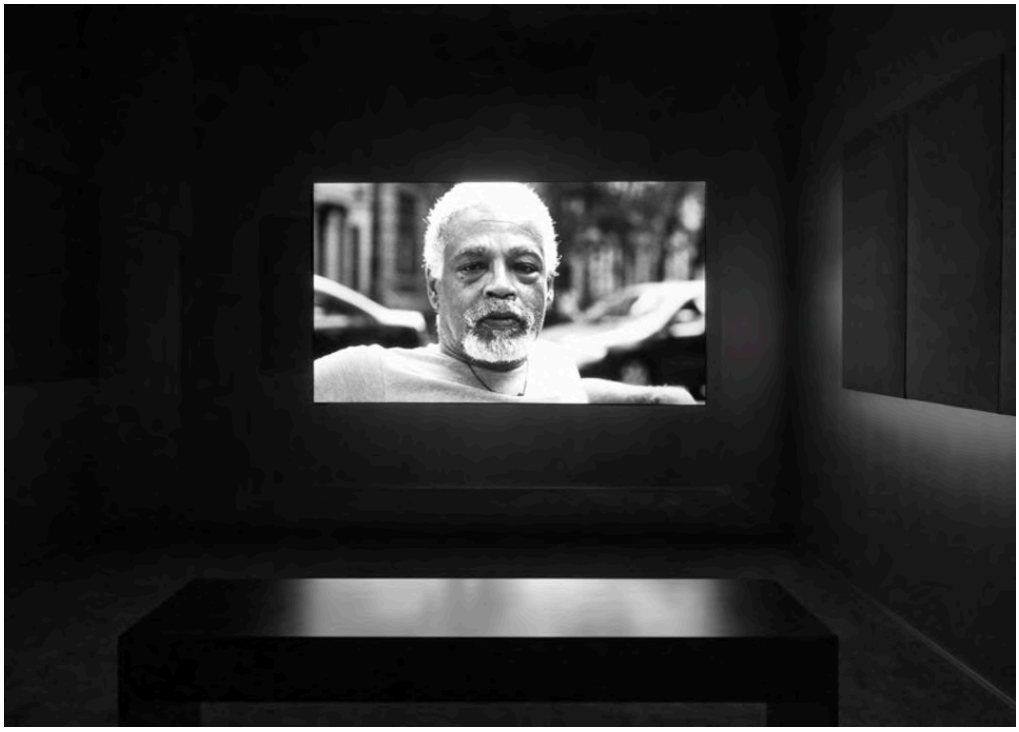
Kameelah Janan Rasheed is an artist and writer based in New York, USA. In May 2017, her solo exhibition ‘A Supple Perimeter’ opened at the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Governors Island, New York. Also in 2017, she was included in group exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, USA, Visitor Welcome Center, Los Angeles, USA, and Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Venice, Italy.

Yablonsky, Linda, “Everything is black and white: Liam Gillick and Adam Pendleton in friendly competition at Eva Presenhuber,” *The Art Newspaper,* November 12, 2018

THE ART NEWSPAPER

Everything is black and white: Liam Gillick and Adam Pendleton in friendly competition at Eva Presenhuber

By Linda Yablonsky I November 12, 2018



Adam Pendleton, Ishmael in the Garden: A Portrait of Ishmael Houston-Jones (2018), single-channel black-and-white and colour video, Ed. 1/5 + 2 AP, 24:15 min © Adam Pendleton

You can always tell a true believer from a grazer in the art world. The more bewildering a work of art, the more it appeals to the faithful. Mystification creates intrigue, stirs debate. Browsers go more for selfie ops.

Head-scratching pleasure won the day among the artists and curators who flocked to the 2 November opening of a collaborative exhibition of complementary works by Liam Gillick and Adam Pendleton—two conceptual artists who would seem to have no connection other than their affiliation with Galerie Eva Presenhuber in Zurich. (Each is associated primarily with other dealers in New York.) This show revealed a shared compulsion to collate, and to baffle.

Visitors started out in the dark. Plunged into the blackest of black boxes just inside the gallery door, they were confronted by the premiere of Pendleton latest video portrait—a tender study of the dancer/choreographer Ishmael Houston-Jones. (Yvonne Ranier was the focus of his previous film.)

Intimacy doesn’t begin to describe how close Pendleton brings viewers to his subject, who speaks both in voice-over and directly to the camera about his family, a sexual encounter, and deep personal losses of a sort that everyone will recognise. It’s intense.

After this, moving into the blinding light of Presenhuber’s exhibition space was quite disorienting. It took a minute to register the works, which face off on opposite sides of the room and stick to black and white.

Yablonsky, Linda, "Everything is black and white: Liam Gillick and Adam Pendleton in friendly competition at Eva Presenhuber," *The Art Newspaper,* November 12, 2018

But what is? Gillick's salon arrangement of prints, in several sizes, picturing texts distilled from uncredited sources went for the grey areas. "It's a compilation," he said, a kind of anthology of economic, social and philosophical influences on his thinking. "Our ideas are fragmented—events in the day—deconstructed and recomposed," he'd written in a press release. "They take place alongside everything else." This helped to explain the installation but otherwise left me none the wiser. "It's about irony and disorder," he told me. It felt vaguely political.

"Do you know what's going on here?" asked Kathy Halbreich, who was enjoying her first, full, post-MoMA day as director of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. We stared at Gillick's prints and took in the adjacent walls

Installation view of Liam Gillick, Adam Pendleton, at Eva Presenhuber, New York, until 22 December 2018

that Pendleton had covered in black-and-white wallpaper blasted with spray-painted graffiti spelling "Crazy Nigger". On top of that are framed, black-and-white images of a scribbled-over mask, a vase, and a Sol LeWitt cube, among others from a personal lexicon that Pendleton calls Black Dada.

"It's a way to answer the question, what does Black Dada look like and what does it do?" Pendleton said of his display. What it did here was connect disparate objects and ideas that have meaning for the artist. This I understood, because I'd heard him explain Black Dada previously as, "a way to talk about the future while talking about the past." I'd also read the volume of essays and poetry by himself and many others that he published under the title, Black Dada: What Can Black Dada Do for Me Do for Me Black Dada, a Reader.

It's really a manifesto. Who bothers with manifestoes anymore? You gotta love a guy who dares. This particular guy has many admirers, including the Performa biennial founder RoseLee Goldberg, the Whitney Museum curator Adrienne Edwards, the writer Lynne Tillman and the artist Joan Jonas, all present at the opening.

"Who are these other people?" asked Jonas, who will be the next to go in front of Pendleton's camera. "I don't recognise half the faces here."

We departed as we arrived, still in the dark. Though we are New Yorkers, suddenly we couldn't work out which direction was up, down, east or west.

You gotta love a show so confounding that your own home feels foreign. Black Dada!

Biswas, Allie, “What To See in London: Writer Allie Biswas on “Adam Pendleton: Our Ideas,” at Pace,”
Art in America: The Guide, November 2, 2018

Art in America
The Guide: Museums • Galleries • Artists

What To See in London: Writer Allie Biswas on “Adam Pendleton: Our Ideas,” at Pace

By Allie Biswas | November 2, 2018

“Adam Pendleton: Our Ideas,” installed at Pace Gallery, 6 Burlington Gardens, London, October 2-November 9, 2018. From left: Black Dada (A), 2018; Midnight (A Victim of American Democracy), 2017; System of Display, U (CULTURE/Sonia Delaunay, study for mosaic design, 1955), 2018; System of Display, O (MOVING/Arabia ceramics), 2018; Our Ideas #2, 2018; partial view of Our Ideas #3, 2018. Copyright © Adam Pendleton, courtesy of Pace Gallery. Photo: Damian Griffiths.

I came to know of Adam Pendleton’s work through his exhibition at the Venice Biennale in 2015. He showed a group of paintings and vinyl works that conveyed the phrase BLACK LIVES MATTER, and flying at the pavilion’s entrance was a flag bearing the words BLACK LIVES. It caught my attention, seeing an artist bring this language into his work, putting it in a context distinct from the media and internet outlets in which it had initially evolved.

Language is a critical component of Pendleton’s work. He lifts text from the essays, poems and films that make up his extensive personal archive, and places them in his paintings and collages as legible words or passages, or as jumbled letters. As with the visual sources that he uses, some of which appear repeatedly in his compositions—photocopies of masks and artifacts, or photographs documenting decolonization, for example—Pendleton’s appropriations of existing language offer new possibilities for interpreting histories. His work draws attention not only to how ideas come into being in the world, but also to how they resonate differently at different times.

Biswas, Allie, "What To See in London: Writer Allie Biswas on "Adam Pendleton: Our Ideas," at Pace,"
Art in America: The Guide, November 2, 2018

The importance of words is immediately noticeable in the artist's current exhibition at Pace. A series of silkscreen paintings, "Untitled (A Victim of American Democracy)," 2018, paraphrases a line from Malcolm X's 1964 speech "The Ballot or the Bullet." In these works, the letter "A" stands out against more abstract forms. On the opposite side of the gallery is a floor-to-ceiling vinyl text, Midnight (A Victim of American Democracy), 2017, that takes over the entire wall with its suggestion of a statement.

Conceptual foundations aside, Pendleton's art is thrilling for its graphic immediacy. The artist works almost solely in black and white and has developed a visual lexicon completely recognizable as his own. Depending on the piece, the letters are blurred, curved, informal or precise, but they are always uppercase. In the large grids of individual silkscreen-ink-on-Mylar works, Our Ideas #2 and Our Ideas #3 (both 2018), displayed on neighboring walls, Pendleton's hand-drawn signifiers—a range of thick black marker lines, cartoonish zigzags, and geometric shapes—merge with his stockpile of found images. His pictures can simultaneously give the impression of density and sparseness.

The artist's unique aesthetic is reached through a process. Words are extracted from texts, positioned with images, and partly deleted; images are silkscreened onto mirrors and tagged with Arial Bold type; letters are spray-painted, photographed, laser printed, collaged and then screen printed; photocopies lead to the infrastructure of a painting.

Pendleton's flair for montage is especially evident in the exhibition's only video, which records a meeting between the artist and Yvonne Rainer. They share a meal in a Manhattan diner during which each presents something to the other. Rainer, drawing on her life as a dancer and choreographer, shows Pendleton a movement that requires them to join their hands and forearms. Pendleton asks Rainer to read aloud a text that he has composed, an amalgamation that includes excerpts from Rainer's memoir; the essay "Pitfalls of Liberalism" by Stokely Carmichael; descriptions of police killings from Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor's book From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation; and the poem "Albany" by Ron Silliman. There is a simplicity to their encounter that is captivating, and, like the wall-based works, it is marked by fluidity.

“ADAM PENDLETON: Our Ideas,” *CURA,* October 31, 2018

CURA.

ADAM PENDLETON: Our Ideas

October 31, 2018

Courtesy of Pace Gallery and © Adam Pendleton, Photos by Damian Griffiths

Pendleton, a New York-based artist, is known for work animated by what the artist calls “Black Dada,” a critical articulation of blackness, abstraction, and the avant-garde. Drawing from an archive of language and images, he makes conceptually rigorous and formally inventive paintings, collages, videos, and installations that insert his work into broader conversations about history and contemporary culture. Pendleton’s multilayered visual and lexical fields often reference artistic and political movements from the 1900s to today, including Dada, Minimalism, the Civil Rights movement, and the visual culture of decolonization.

In his own words:

Black Dada is an idea. When pressed, I often say it’s a way to talk about the future while talking about the past. It surfaced in a conversational space, when I was just talking to friends. I had Amiri Baraka’s book The Dead Lecturer, which contains the poem “Black Dada Nihilismus.” I found the language striking: “Black Dada.” Just that. The “Black” and the “Dada.” “Black” as a kind of open-ended signifier, anti-representational rather than representational. And then “Dada”—sort of nonsense. A sound, but also referencing a moment in art. So this language became a productive means to think about how the art object can function, and does function, in the world. What can art do?...Not “what is it?” It’s whatever you want it to be, but what can it do?

Our Ideas showcases the most recent developments in Pendleton’s oeuvre, alongside several pieces from earlier bodies of work the artist has been engaged with for nearly a decade. Encompassing a full spectrum of mediums, the exhibition will feature four Untitled (A Victim of American Democracy) paintings, one Black Dada painting and drawing, a video work, two grids of works on Mylar (in 36 and 32 parts each), a group of collages, and one Wall Work with several small System of Display works.

The Untitled (A Victim of American Democracy) (2018) paintings are 96–by–69-inch canvases, on which spray- painted vertical lines are layered with enlarged, cut-up language. The phrase “A VICTIM OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY,” drawn from a 1964 speech by Malcolm X, has been spray painted, photographed, laser printed, collaged, and finally screen-printed across the striated ground. The fragmented compositions function as visual counterpoints to the *Black Dada* painting and drawing (both 2018), a pair of minimal, black-on-black monochromes that translate photographs of Sol LeWitt’s *Incomplete Open Cubes.*

Pendleton’s video portrait of choreographer, dancer and filmmaker Yvonne Rainer takes centre stage in the exhibition. *Just Back from Los Angeles: A Portrait of Yvonne Rainer* (2016–17) will be presented in a black box environment in the gallery. Initially commissioned by Performa, the piece features Pendleton and Rainer sharing a meal at Rainer’s favourite Manhattan diner. Through a scripted and unscripted exchange, Pendleton and Rainer reflect on life and work, politics and art, and the relationship between memory and movement. At one point, Pendleton invites Rainer to read from quoted correspondence published in her own memoir, as well as from the writings of Stokely Carmichael, Malcolm X, Ron Silliman, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor. Later, Rainer shares a movement exercise with Pendleton. The encounter, which traverses lines of generational, racial, and gender difference, is an inquiry into the shared concerns of the two artists.

The titular *Our Ideas #2 and #3* (both 2018) are two large groups of framed Mylar transparencies. These works are based on collages that incorporate visual material from various found sources, as well as from the artist’s own drawings. Isolated images and fragments photocopied from the pages of books are layered with marks, shapes, and handwriting that frequently verges on the abstract. Recurring elements include masks, ceramics, certain phrases from the artist’s own writing and from literary sources (“WHAT A DAY WAS THIS”; “IF THE FUNCTION”), and historical images related to decolonization. A series of smaller collages on board, complementing the Mylars, are being shown as well.

For System of Display (2018), Pendleton again photocopies and crops images from his extensive library, in this case silkscreening them onto small mirrors. Each mirror is placed in a shadow box and overlaid with a plexiglass facade, upon which is printed a piece of a word—typically a single letter—indexed in each work’s title. Here, they are hung across a massive Wall Work, *Midnight (A Victim of American Democracy)* (2017), a black-and-white montage that echoes the four *Untitled (A Victim of American Democracy)* paintings.

Prapoglou, Dr. Kostas, “OUR IDEAS: ADAM PENDLETON // PACE GALLERY LONDON,” *The Seen,* October 25, 2018

THE SEEN

OUR IDEAS: ADAM PENDLETON // PACE GALLERY LONDON

Dr. Kostas Prapoglou | October 25, 2018

The solo exhibition of New York-based artist Adam Pendleton at Pace London showcases recent and new works spanning the gallery’s ground floor space. The works on view comprise of one mural piece, Wall Work, Midnight (A Victim of American Democracy) (2017) accompanied by several small System of Display works, four Untitled (A Victim of American Democracy) (2018) paintings, two silkscreen-ink-on-Mylar work groups titled Our Ideas #2 and #3 (both 2018), a small number of paper collages and one Black Dada painting and drawing. The video Just Back from Los Angeles: A Portrait of Yvonne Rainer (2016-17) is also displayed within a dark room installed at the center of the gallery.

Adam Pendleton, Our Ideas #2, 2018. Photo courtesy Damian Griffiths

A poem titled Black Dada Nihilismus, found in Amiri Baraka’s book The Dead Lecturer (1964), inspired Pendleton for the conception of “Black Dada” back in 2008. Embarking from the diversity of the Dada movement, “Black Dada” embraces an idea reflecting upon the future while simultaneously referencing the past and exploring how art may purpose within the world we live in and embrace the realities we are surrounded with. Imbued with notions of blackness, societal turbulences, colonialism and decolonization, “Black Dada” has functioned since as the conceptual foundation of the artist’s oeuvre.

Utilizing an array of techniques that he has been practicing for some time, Pendleton engages in a playful opus operandi involving collage, painted-over imagery, and transparencies. A great example for all this can be seen in Our Ideas #2 (2018) and #3 (2018), two constellations of works consisting of 36 and 32 parts each. Upon careful inspection, we observe a collection of images of African tribal masks (Chokwe, Punu, Dogon and so forth), other worship and ceremonial artifacts, as well as photographs of African people, all superscribed by naïve decorative patterns such as straight parallel lines, zigzags, and lettering. With a clear reference to institutional archiving, taxonomy and displaying practices of European and—in a broader context—Western museums, the artist challenges the potential ethical and social decharacterization of native populaces. He responds to the downgrading of such cultural items from being equal to a nation’s identity, to just being appreciated as museum objects of a certain artistic value, while they are kept inanimate behind a glass case. The two clusters of works emerge as the reimagination of an abstract and deconstructed cabinet of curiosities interrogating notions of displacement and post-colonial actualities.

Adam Pendleton, Just Back from Los Angeles: A Portrait of Yvonne Rainer, 2016-2017. Photo courtesy Damian Griffiths.

In Just Back from Los Angeles: A Portrait of Yvonne Rainer (2016-17), Pendleton follows two other video portraits he created in the recent past; that of conceptual artist Lorraine O’Grady (Lorraine O’Grady: A Portrait, 2012) and that of Black Panther movement chief of staff, David Hilliard (My Education: A Portrait of David Hilliard, 2011-14), yet here the artist appears on camera too. In the video shown dur-

ing this exhibition, Pendleton meets Rainer for the first time at her favourite Chelsea diner in New York. They engage in a conversation based on their life experiences, unavoidably taking into account the age gap between them. At the same time, Pendleton provides a collection of texts for Rainer to read out loud, some of which are by Stokely Carmichael, Malcolm X, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor. Issues surrounding identity, gender relations, social injustice and violence are brought to the table and the video ends with Rainer performing her arm drop routine; a praxis signifying trust and generosity as part of this temporary exchange.

Adam Pendleton, Untitled, 2017; Untitled, 2017; Untitled, 2017; Untitled, 2017; Untitled, 2018. Photo courtesy Damian Griffiths.

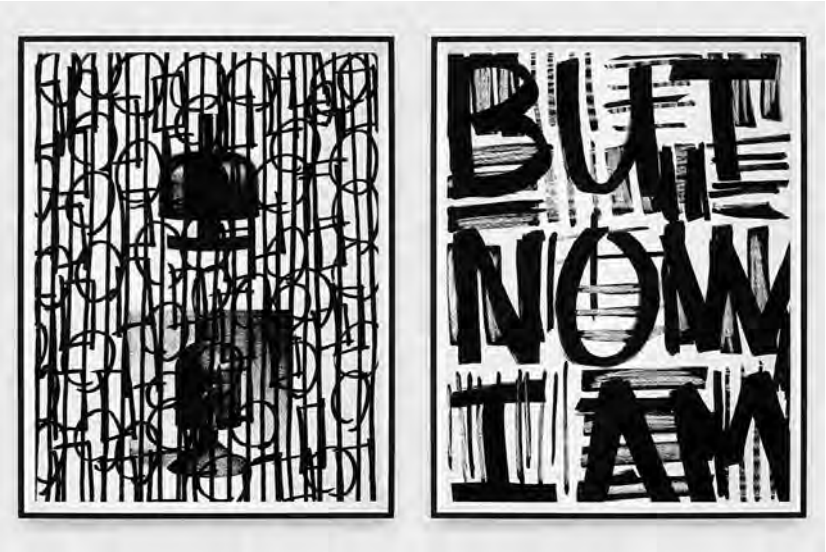
For some viewers, the visual language of Adam Pendleton might be somewhat opaque and impenetrable. The depth of his research and the plethora of the influences he has been subjected to despite his young age (34), construct a condensed, and perhaps, inaccessible conceptual platform. Yet, he succeeds in posing topical questions involving contemporary society and the way performance and effectiveness is perceived. He laboriously canvasses the genesis of ideas prompting us to explore whether this is the consequence of an individual process or the result of collectiveness. And while we are acquainted to a concealed manifesto on pressing issues, we progressively get to understand his convoluted mindset and depart having inherited an aftertaste of nowness and empathy.

Michalarou, Eli, “ART CITIES: London-Adam Pendleton,” *Dream Idea Machine,* October 9, 2018

ART CITIES: London - Adam Pendleton

Eli Michalarou I October 9, 2018

Adam Pendleton’s is a conceptual artist known for his multi-disciplinary practice in an array of different media, from collage to painting to video and performance. What draws all these threads together is a concern with language and historical narrative viewed through the lens of African-American culture and aesthetics, plus his own guiding theory,



Pace Gallery Archive

Adam Pendleton’s solo exhibition “**Our Ideas**”, presenting a full spectrum of mediums, the exhibition features four “**Untitled (A Victim of American Democracy)**” paintings, one “**Black Dada**” painting and drawing, a video work, two grids of works on Mylar (in 36 and 32 parts each), a group of collages, and one “**Wall Work**” with several small “**System of Display**” works. The artist’s largest project to date is inspired by a poem by the American writer LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) titled “Black Dada Nihilismus” (1964). Through the use of provocative language and the merging of high and low cultural references, Baraka critiques linear representations of African-Americans by creating a space for new artistic, personal, and social possibilities. Begun in 2008, this ongoing project has taken several forms, varying from large, abstract textual silkscreen paintings to Pendleton’s publication “Black Dada Reader”. In “**The Untitled (A Victim of American Democracy)**” (2018) h spray-painted vertical lines are layered with enlarged, cut-up language. The phrase “A VICTIM OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY,” which was pulled from Malcolm X’s 1964 speech “The Ballot or the Bullet”, has been spray painted, photographed, laser printed, collaged, and finally screen-printed across the striated ground. Pendleton’s “**Just Back from Los Angeles: A Portrait of Yvonne Rainer**”, is his third work in a series of portraits. Over a meal the dancer, choreographer, filmmaker, and writer Yvonne Rainer meet Adam Pendleton. The two artists get to know one another for the very first time. Over the course of their meal, the video records their unscripted conversation punctuated by poignant moments. Rainer leads Pendleton in partnered movement exercises. Pendleton invites Rainer to read from a script which combines writing from her published works with accounts and discussions of inequality, racism, and anti-black violence by such voices as Stokely Carmichael, Malcolm X, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor. For “**System of Display**” (2018), Pendleton again photocopies and crops images from his extensive library, in this case silkscreening them onto small mirrors. Each mirror is placed in a shadow box and overlaid with a plexiglass facade, upon which is printed a piece of a word, typically a single letter, indexed in each work’s title. Here, they are hung across a massive “**Wall Work, Midnight (A Victim of American Democracy)**” (2017), a black-and-white montage that echoes the four **Untitled (A Victim of American Democracy)** paintings. The titular “**Our Ideas #2**” and “**Our ideas #3**” (both 2018) are two large groups of framed Mylar transparencies. These works are based on collages that incorporate visual material from various found sources, as well as from the artist’s own drawings. Isolated images and fragments photocopied from the pages of books are layered with marks, shapes, and handwriting that frequently verges on the abstract. Recurring elements include masks, ceramics, certain phrases from the artist’s own writing and from literary sources (“WHAT A DAY WAS THIS”; “IF THE FUNCTION”), and historical images related to decolonization.

Valentine, Victoria L., “Looking in London: 10 Exhibitions to See This Season Featuring Kerry James Marshall, Julie Mehretu, and Adam Pendleton Among Others,” *Culture Type,* October 7, 2018

Looking in London: 10 Exhibitions to See This Season Featuring Kerry James Marshall, Julie Mehretu, and Adam Pendleton Among Others

Victoria L. Valentine | October 7, 2018

Installation view of “Adam Pendleton: Our Ideas” at Pace Gallery, London (Oct. 2-Nov. 9, 2018). Photography: Pace Gallery

Adam Pendleton‘s latest exhibition continues his articulation of what he calls “Black Dada,” exploring blackness, abstraction and the avant-garde. Featuring recent work and examples from earlier bodies of work dating back a decade, a range of mediums are on view, from painting and drawing, to video, collage, and works on mylar. A new catalog accompanies the show. Born in Richmond, Va., Pendleton lives and works in New York.

“‘Black’ as a kind of open-ended signifier, anti-representational rather than representational. And then ‘Dada’—sort of nonsense. A sound, but also referencing a moment in art. So this language became a productive means to think about how the art object can function, and does function, in the world. What can art do?…Not ‘what is it?’ It’s whatever you want it to be, but what can it do?” — Adam Pendleton

Green, Mazzy-Mae, “Speaking of Black Dada,” *Modern Matter,* July 11, 2018

Modern Matter

Speaking of Black Dada

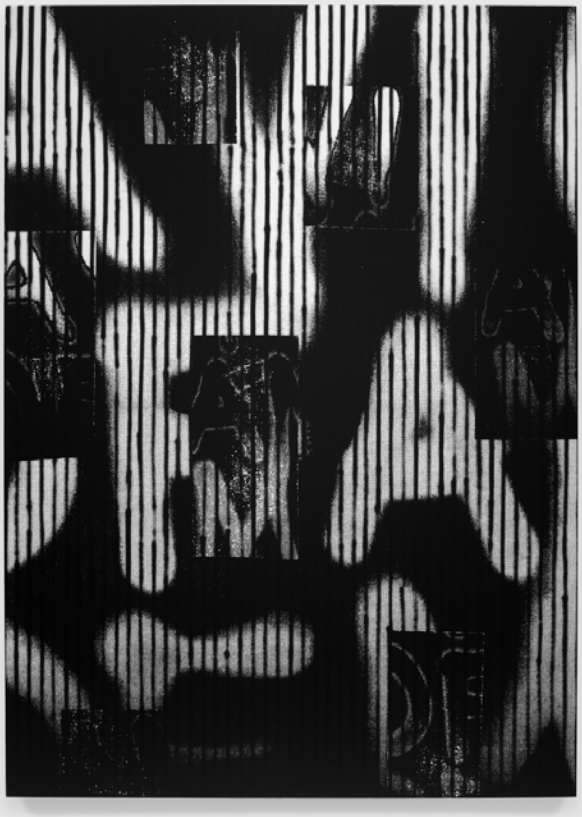
By Mazzy-Mae Green | July 11, 2018

New-York based artist Adam Pendleton is best known for the fluidity of his practice; his work moves between painting, publishing, collage and video. He engages with the visual and semiological impacts of language, and uses it to re-contextualise and re-appropriate history, in order to provide alternative means of displaying it, and open people’s minds to the existence of these possibilities. Once the discussion has been opened, one can consider the different facets of a story, and how to decipher and decide what is seen and understood as the truth. When he describes these works as “Black Dada”, he draws on the movement’s origins as a nonsensical and anti-bourgeois statement of irrationality, and connects these to blackness. The effect is twofold: firstly, he implies an alternative viewpoint – Dada was undoubtedly fascinated with non-Western culture, but in a way that conserved it as a racial “Other”; secondly, he creates a non-finite list of future artistic possibilities, underlined with the striking phonetic impact of the word “dada”. Pendleton describes Black Dada as “an idea. When pressed, I often say that it’s a way to talk about the future while talking about the past.”

Until 9th November 2018, Pace Gallery, London, is presenting an exhibition of works by the artist, spanning his career from early work until today. Through including the various stages of his artwork, the exhibition highlights the artist’s multidimensional practice, allowing narratives to form naturally as they are seen together. As you walk through the space, you see videos and photographs, and spray-painted canvases. In an interview with Thom Donovan in Bomb magazine, Pendleton describes his project System of Display as a way to “index information, an illogical approach to organising information.

I wanted to come up with a system, and what I came up with was not so much a system of organisation but a means of display.” That is exactly the filter through which Pendleton portrays such historical, political and artistic events such as Minimalism, the Civil Rights movement, and the visual culture of decolonisation. What the show allows for is the culmination of these pieces and subjects as its own, wider system of organising and analysing society.

Into this, Pendleton incorporates text and black-and-white imagery to create a striking impression of past and present events, and to stimulate discussion around them: they knowingly act as a form of optical dialogue, exploring current events from the 1900s up until today through multilayered and collaged pieces that possess the same qualities as the kind of broadsheet newspaper that you might pick up in an off-licence. This conversation is best embodied by his video-portrait of dancer and filmmaker Yvonne Rainer. The piece, which sits centre-stage in the exhibition space, follows a conversation between Pendleton and Rainer, at the former’s favourite Manhattan diner. They discuss their shared concerns on generational, racial, and gender differences in a dialogue that embodies that all-encompassing sense of Black Dada, and the possibilities it creates.



Olsen, Ivy and Victoria Stapley-Brown, “Ten public art works to see for free around New York this summer,”
The Art Newspaper, July 2, 2018

THE ART NEWSPAPER

Ten public art works to see for free around New York this summer

Ivy Olsen and Victoria Stapley-Brown | July 2, 2018

Adam Pendleton Black Dada Flag (Black Lives Matter) (2015-2018)

Adam Pendleton, Black Dada Flag (Black Lives Matter) (until 1 November), organised by Frieze New York, on Randall’s Island

Still flying high since the Frieze New York tent came down, Adam Pendleton’s Black Dada Flag (Black Lives Matter) remains on the southern tip of Randall’s Island. This is the second in a series of the banners, the first of which was commissioned for the Venice Biennial in 2015 following the death of Treyvon Martin, which in part sparked the Black Lives Matters movement. The one waving in the wind today is a larger version and takes on a new significance at its current site—once known as Negro Point.

Chow, Andrew, "Nina Simone's Childhood Home Gets 'National Treasure' Designation," *New York Times,* June 18, 2018

The New York Times

Nina Simone's Childhood Home Gets 'National Treasure' Designation

Andrew Chow | June 18, 2018

The house where the singer Nina Simone was born is in bad shape. The ceiling is crumbling, the walls chipping, the floorboards sagging; stray wooden planks are strewn against the walls. Last year, it seemed inevitable that the house would succumb to time.

The childhood home of Nina Simone has been designated a National Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.Credit. Travis Dove for The New York Times

But, thanks to the teamwork of four artists and a nonprofit, the site has a new lease on life. On Tuesday, the house in Tryon, N.C., was named a "National Treasure" by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The organization will devise a plan to rehabilitate the house so that it might be used by future artists.

The house, where Simone was born in 1933 as Eunice Kathleen Waymon, has been the subject of failed restoration attempts over the years. Kevin McIntyre, a former economic development director for Polk County, bought the house in 2005 and invested more than $100,000 of his own money before losing the property to money troubles. When the house went on the market in 2016, many assumed it would be knocked down.

Instead, four African-American artists — the conceptualist Adam Pendleton, the sculptor and painter Rashid Johnson, the collagist and filmmaker Ellen Gallagher and the abstract painter Julie Mehretu — bought the house together in order to preserve Simone's legacy. The purchase caught the interest of the National Trust, which had recently started a $25 million campaign to preserve historical sites related to African-American history. Simone died at age 70 in 2003 after a long career that made her a soul legend and civil rights icon.

"African-American women in jazz and in civil rights: their legacy is often undervalued, and there's an ongoing struggle for recognition," Brent Leggs, the director of that campaign — called the African-American Cultural Heritage Action Fund — said in a phone interview.

So, the organization decided to mark the house a National Treasure, a label that has been bestowed fewer than 100 times across the country. The team will begin an 18-month campaign with a $100,000 internal budget, working with the local community, local organizations and the World Monuments Fund to devise a long-term plan for how to preserve the space. Mr. Leggs estimates the full restoration will cost around $250,000.

Mr. Pendleton and the other three artists will be actively involved in shaping the house's future. One idea is to turn the space into a home for an arts residency program, with hopes that future artists might be inspired by the same surroundings that sparked a young Simone.

"I'm not interested in turning the house into a museum," Mr. Pendleton said in a phone interview. "I'm much more interested in restoring it so that it reflects what it was like when the Waymons lived there. I think it's important to note that it looks like a very humble dwelling."

And while the crumbling house is very much of a different time, Mr. Pendleton says it has strong symbolic power in a fraught modern era. "Nina's politics challenged what America was at the moment she was alive — and challenged what America could be and what it would become," he said. "I think those are questions that don't die."

Garcia, Maria, "Here Are The 5 Finalists For Boston's MLK And Coretta Scott King Memorial," *wbur,* June 8, 2018

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Here are The 5 Finalists For Boston's MLK and Coretta Scott King Memorial

Marcia Garcia | June 8, 2018

Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King on June 8, 1964 in new York. (AP)

The city of Boston and MLK Boston, the nonprofit behind the future Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King memorial, have announced the five artist finalists who will be competing to design the work of public art, which has also now significantly expanded in scope.

The city announced on Friday that after community input, the project has expanded to include a memorial on the Boston Common, a high-tech, immersive educational experience in Dudley Square at a location to be announced, and plans for an endowment for King-related programming developed with Roxbury's Twelfth Baptist Church, where King worshiped and preached while a doctorate student at Boston University. MLK Boston said the broadened scope for the memorial came after 14 public meetings in neighborhoods across Boston.

"We want to do something to bring his words to life and train, in particular students, about how they should think about the ideals laid out by MLK and ... how they can become effective activists," said Paul English, the CEO of online-travel service, Lola, and cofounder of Kayak who also founded MLK Boston.

After parsing through 126 submissions from local and international artists, the MLK Boston arts committee chose five finalist teams who will now each be provided with a $10,000 stipend to develop proposals for the memorial.

Garcia, Maria, "Here Are The 5 Finalists For Boston's MLK And Coretta Scott King Memorial," *wbur,* June 8, 2018

Those five proposals will be available for public in September, according to the city. The final artist is slated to be announced by November.

The final five artist teams make up an impressive batch of well-known contemporary artists exploring issues of race, colonialism and its legacy, identity, among other relevant themes.

The city had before said the memorial has an estimated budget between $3 million and $5 million. English said he had donated $1 million, and the Lewis Family Foundation had also donated $1 million. After a few other contributions, MLK Boston counts with just over $2 million, but English said he hopes to have $5 million in commitments by November, when the final design of the project will be chosen.

King studied at Boston University's School of Theology between 1951 and 1955. While here, he served as assistant pastor at Twelfth Baptist Church in Roxbury, where he met his future wife, Coretta Scott, who was studying at the New England Conservatory. Soon after the march in Selma, King returned to Boston in 1965 to testify before the Massachusetts Legislature and hold a march from the South End to the Parkman Bandstand in Boston Common.

The Boston memorial is meant to honor Coretta Scott King's own legacy in the fight for civil rights, and her and King's love.

"They met and found love in Boston. They dated here ultimately got married [in Alabama and came back to Boston] and lived together here in the South End. And she just is an important part of the Boston story and his connection to our city," said English.

Here is the information the city provided on the five finalists selected to develop design proposals:

Barbara Chase-Riboud with Michael Rosenfeld Gallery:

"Barbara Chase-Riboud has been creating abstract art for over 50 years, and has developed her own particular innovation on the bronze sculpture method by creating thin sheets of wax that she could bend, fold, meld, or sever to produce large-scale sculptures comprised of ribbons of bronze and aluminum. She later added fiber to these metal elements to create some of her most renowned works - among which were a group of 20 sculptures memorializing Malcolm X and his transformation "from a convict to a world leader." Chase-Riboud has been the recipient of numerous awards and honorary degrees, including a Doctorate of Fine Arts from Temple University (1981), the Women's Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award from the College Art Association (2007), and the Tannie Award in the Visual Arts in Paris (2013). Her work has also been exhibited at numerous institutions worldwide. Michael Rosenfeld Gallery has represented Barbara Chase-Riboud since 2014."

David Adjaye and Adam Pendleton with FuturePace:

"Born in Tanzania to Ghanaian parents, architect David Adjaye's broad range of influences, ingenious use of materials, and sculptural ability have established him as an architect with an artist's sensibility and vision. His largest project to date, the $540 million Smithsonian Institute National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. was named Cultural Event of the Year by the New York Times. Artist Adam Pendleton is known for his conceptual practice, which encompasses painting, sculpture, writing, film, and performance. He

integrates writings by Malcolm X, John Ashbery, Gertrude Stein, and others, and also incorporates the language of civil rights and social justice movements throughout his work, including the phrase “Black Lives Matter” in his installation at the 2015 Venice Biennale. Future\Pace is an international cultural partnership between Pace Gallery and FutureCity innovating multidisciplinary projects for art in the public realm. Established in 2016 by Futurecity founder Mark Davy, Pace London President Mollie Dent-Brocklehurst, and Pace worldwide CEO Marc Glimcher, Future\Pace draws on combined expertise in curating large-scale collaborative, multidisciplinary artworks through an extensive global network of contemporary artists, galleries, and resources.”

Hank Willis Thomas with MASS Design Group:

“Hank Willis Thomas is a conceptual artist working primarily with themes related to identity, history and popular culture. His work has been exhibited throughout the U.S. and abroad, including the International Center of Photography, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, and the Cleveland Museum of Art. Thomas’ work is in numerous public collections including the Museum of Modern Art New York, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC. He is also the recipient of the 2017 Soros Equality Fellowship and the 2017 AIMIA | AGO Photography Prize. MASS Design Group designs built environments that seek to improve people’s lives in measurable ways and are infused by the potential to promote justice and human dignity. Based in Boston and Kigali, Rwanda, MASS forces the building process to engage with end stakeholders, and become a catalyst for hope and change in physical space. The MASS portfolio of work includes architectural design, master planning, landscape architecture, engineering, and research.”

Martin Luther King Jr. addresses a crowd in Roxbury on April 22, 1965. (AP)

Garcia, Maria, "Here Are The 5 Finalists For Boston's MLK And Coretta Scott King Memorial," *wbur,* June 8, 2018

Wodiczko + Bonder and Maryann Thompson Architects:

"Wodiczko+Bonder is a partnership established in 2003 and based in Cambridge, Massachusetts by artist and professor Krzysztof Wodiczko and architect and professor Julian Bonder. Wodiczko + Bonder focuses on art and design projects that engage public space and raise the issues of social memory, survival, and struggle and emancipation related to urban and domestic violence, war and post war trauma, immigration and global displacement, the Holocaust and genocides, the Desaparecidos (in Argentina), the Civil War, and historical and present day slavery. The partnership's experience ranges from temporary work such as design of participatory projections on monument and communicative urban equipment to design of residential, cultural and civic buildings, institutes, museums, memorials and commemorative public spaces. Maryann Thompson Architects (MTA) is a Cambridge-based architecture firm that specializes in architecture that is sustainable, regionally driven and that attempts to heighten the phenomenological qualities of the site in which they work. The firm has received three AIA National Honor Awards and numerous AIA New England Design Honor Awards and BSA Honor Awards for Design Excellence."

Yinka Shonibare:

"Yinka Shonibare MBE was born in 1962 in London and moved to Lagos, Nigeria at the age of three. He returned to London to study Fine Art, first at Byam School of Art and then at Goldsmiths College, where he received his MFA. Shonibare's work explores issues of race and class through the media of painting, sculpture, photography and film. Shonibare questions the meaning of cultural and national definitions. His trademark material is the brightly coloured 'African' batik fabric, which is a symbol of African identity and independence. Shonibare was a Turner prize nominee in 2004, and was also awarded the decoration of Member of the 'Most Excellent Order of the British Empire' or MBE, a title he has added to his professional name. Shonibare was notably commissioned by Okwui Enwezor at Documenta 11, Kassel, in 2002 to create his most recognised work 'Gallantry and Criminal Conversation' that launched him on to an international stage. Shonibare's works are included in prominent collections internationally, including the Tate Collection, London; National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C; National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome and VandenBroek Foundation, The Netherlands."

Stoilas, Helen, “Artist to Plant Protest Flags and Stage Processions
at Frieze New York,” *The Art Newspaper,* April 5, 2018

THE ART NEWSPAPER

Artists to Plant Protest Flags and Stage Processions at Frieze New York

Helen Stoilas | April 5, 2018

Adam Pendleton Black Dada Flag (Black Lives Matter) (2015-18)

Adam Pendelton’s flag championing the Black Lives Matter movement will fly on Randall’s Island for six months, Lara Schnitger will lead a feminist march, and Alfredo Jaar will broadcast spoken messages from artists and writers as part of Frieze New York’s first Live programme this May. Organised under the title Assembly by the curator Adrienne Edwards, who recently joined the Whitney Museum, the series of performances, installations and activated works engage with the tide of collective activism that has reawakened in the US in recent years. “We’re literally still contending with things that were being dealt with 50 years ago,” Edwards said in a phone interview on Wednesday, the anniversary of Martin Luther King’s assassination. “There’s something in the air.”

Stoilas, Helen, “Artist to Plant Protest Flags and Stage Processions at Frieze New York,” *The Art Newspaper,* April 5, 2018

When planning the programme, Edwards said she considered what a curator like her, who usually works in an institutional or biennial setting, could do in the commercial context of a fair. “It became clear, maybe we could hold some space for artists reflecting and thinking about current issues”, Edwards says, like gun violence, racism and queer identity. “None of the artists are trying to restage or protest a political moment,” the curator says, the connection rather is about their practice. “They bring a very particular approach to this conversation, a performance tactic that each of them have been committed to.”

The first works visitors coming to the fair will see, planted on the southern tip of Randall’s Island where the East and Harlem Rivers meet, is a larger version of Pendelton’s Black Dada Flag (Black Lives Matter), first shown at the 2015 Venice Biennale. Edwards says that during her research, she discovered that the location, now called Scylla Point (its partner Charybdis is on the opposite Queens shore) was originally named on geological surveys and known to local sailors as Negro’s Point after a pair of large rocks in the river. Edwards suggests the work could serve as a kind of rallying point for the community, “the first public monument to Black Lives Matter in New York”, and will remain installed until November.

The rest of the Live programme will mostly take place inside the fair at various times throughout the weekend. Installed at both the North and South entrances of the tent, for example, will be Hank Willis Thomas’s flags embroidered with stars marking the number of people killed by guns, 13,471 (2016) and 15,589 (2018). Lara Schnitger is looking for volunteers to take part in one of her Suffragette City processions, which will include a new quilted banner work. Raúl de Nieves’s and Erik Zajaceskowski will parade through the fair in the Mexican-born artist’s elaborate beaded costumes. Dave McKenzie will perform a series of common gestures, such as slouching with his hands in his pockets, to examine how the black body is often seen as dangerous. Renée Green will be showing 28 new banner works and a sound piece. And Edwards invited Alfredo Jaar to directly address the fair audience with “what we need to hear now”, so he collected messages from fellow artists like Doris Salcedo, Shirin Neshat, LaToya Ruby Frazier and writers like the Chilean poet Raul Zurita that will be played at intervals on the fair’s PA system.

Loos, Ted, "Beyond Words," *WSJ. Magazine*, March 2018, pp. 74-75

WSJ.
MAGAZINE

ART TALK

BEYOND WORDS

Incorporating collage, cultural criticism, poetry and video, Adam Pendleton's work defies categorization. That's only part of what makes it so appealing to collectors and museums alike.

BY TED LOOS PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARLOS CHAVARRÍA

WHEN AN ARTIST captures a cultural moment just so, it's like a lightning bolt—there's a crackle in the air, a blinding flash, and the clouds part. At just 34, Brooklyn-based artist Adam Pendleton has proved himself capable of generating such phenomena.

Over the past decade, Pendleton's conceptual take on race in America has drawn attention and stirred discussion across the country. Last year, he had solo shows at the Baltimore Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland and Pace Gallery in Palo Alto, California.

This year, Pendleton is showing a body of work that demonstrates the range of his artistic practice: a video project at MIT's List Visual Arts Center, a multiwork exhibition at Manhattan's Lever House on view until June and an especially powerful new private installation in the offices of Emerson Collective, the philanthropist Laurene Powell Jobs's nonprofit. "Adam is a kind of citizen-poet," says Powell Jobs, one of his many influential advocates. "His work has beauty, power and raw energy."

Over coffee near his studio in the Sunset Park neighborhood, Pendleton shows the kind of interest in language you'd expect from someone who deploys words as a tool in his art, which frequently takes the form of graphic, collage-based paintings in black-and-white. If you mention that there are a lot of high-profile African-American artists dealing with race right now, he will politely but firmly correct you: "Everyone's talking about race." But he's not doctrinaire about his project, or art making in general. "When someone I don't know asks me what I do, I often say, 'I make things that go on the wall,'" he says. In fact, Pendleton's gift is partly his ability to digest and transmit ideas that are already out there.

Pendleton first came to notice at Performa, the New York performance art biennial, in 2007. He delivered an impassioned soliloquy about politics and language accompanied by a live gospel choir, moving some to tears. He was 23 at the time. The next year, he embarked on a body of work called Black Dada, still the framework and source of his art to this day.

Black Dada began as a series of paintings and as an old-fashioned manifesto, in the form of a witty, 13-page epic poem, that references some of his touchstones, including the slain activist Malcolm X and the conceptual art icon Sol LeWitt. "Black Dada is a way to talk about the future while talking about the past," he writes. Pendleton doesn't think he invented the conversation that he's a part of. "It is a continuum," he says, "but it doesn't only move forward; it moves backwards and sideways, too."

Though he works in many media, much of his visual work starts as collage, and he has a canny eye for juxtapositions that recalls one of his idols, Jasper Johns. "Already in his incredibly youthful career, he has managed to land on a graphic language that is unimpeachably his own," says Christopher Bedford, the director of the Baltimore Museum of Art. The museum tapped him for its board, making him among the youngest museum trustees around. "He bides his time, reaches a conclusion and then commands the room" is Bedford's summation of Pendleton's approach in meetings.

For the Emerson Collective commission, Pendleton designed a floor-to-ceiling panel for the main space at the headquarters in Palo Alto, California. Unveiled in January, the project is covered with pages from Malcolm X's famous 1964 "The Ballot or the Bullet" speech. On top of that, Pendleton placed 11 dense and layered works, whose words and letters collide and mix—somewhat mysteriously, inviting the viewer to engage and decipher them—punctuated with culturally resonant images like an African mask or a page from a monograph of the Dada movement. Powell Jobs, the widow of Apple's Steve Jobs, loves the way the brainy work energizes the workspace at Emerson: "Adam creates an environment to dream what's possible."

These days, Pendleton works almost exclusively in black-and-white, which might make the casual observer think that the choice is meant to evoke racial categories. "That's not how I arrived here," he says, now standing in his studio and looking down at images of collages on the floor, which will eventually turn into silkscreens. (The actual collage work he does in a separate room, away from his two assistants.) "I found that color was becoming a distraction."

Pendleton grew up in Richmond, Virginia. His mother was a schoolteacher who had a library with books by Adrienne Rich and Toni Morrison; his father was a contractor who played jazz on the side.

As a young teenager he spent hours in his basement, painting with cheap materials from Home Depot. "I was sort of always preoccupied with projects that I would create for myself, which is exactly what I do today, you know?" he says, laughing. Being gay and black gave him a useful outsider's perspective. "When you're sort of off to the side, you supply yourself with something that long term is ultimately more productive," he says. (Pendleton is now married to a food entrepreneur, and they live in Brooklyn's Fort Greene.)

In 2002, he completed a two-year independent artist's study program in Pietrasanta, Italy, but he doesn't have a bachelor's degree or an M.F.A. as so many young art stars do today. "He's not an academically trained artist," says Laura Hoptman, a curator at the Museum of Modern Art who was an early champion of his work when she was at the New Museum. She thinks it's part of why he speaks to everyone: "The nonparochial nature of it is what makes his work so great."

Hoptman says Pendleton's "masterpiece" is the video *Just Back From Los Angeles: A Portrait of Yvonne Rainer* (2016–17), the same piece that was recently presented at the List Center. As he often does, Pendleton approached the project with radical simplicity: He sat down in a diner with Rainer, the pioneering dancer and choreographer, and just talked. "The chemistry they had as strangers, that was so moving," says Hoptman of the mind-meld that resulted despite the differences in age, gender and race.

Pendleton adds, "It was an unlikely encounter with an unlikely outcome that neither of us planned. We had a sincere interaction with each other on different levels, a strange brew that by luck, by chance, got captured." Luck helps, but *Portrait* owes its success to Pendleton's gift for harnessing such moments, and his cultivation of conditions that encourage them to thrive.

Collectors have taken notice. At Christie's New York auction last fall—in the same sale that became famous for selling a Leonardo da Vinci for an all-time-record price of $450 million—a 2012 Pendleton piece, *Black Dada (K)*, got the prestigious first-lot position and sold for $225,000, almost four times its high estimate.

Pendleton is conscious that he has a platform that was denied to black artists of previous generations who are only now getting their proper due, such as Alma Thomas and Jack Whitten. "They are people who continued to make work even when no one was looking," he says. "In my work, there's this attitude of 'take it or leave it,' but also 'take what you need,'" he adds. "I think it gets lost that a lot of what I actually do is look and listen, rather than scream and shout." ●

Loos, Ted, “Beyond Words,” *WSJ. Magazine*, March 2018, pp. 74-75

MAN OF LETTERS Adam Pendleton alongside *what they used to only look at* (2017), his installation at the Emerson Collective headquarters in Palo Alto, California.

Moffitt, Evan, “What Can’t Be Read,” *Frieze,* December 18, 2017

Frieze

What Can’t Be Read

Evan Moffitt I December 18, 2017

How Bethany Collins, Steffani Jemison, Adam Pendleton and Kameelah Janan Rasheed are using the tradition of black radical poetry to examine questions of subjectivity and race

Adam Pendleton, ‘shot him in the face’, 2017, exhibition view at Baltic Centre for Contemporary art, Gateshead. Courtesy: the artist

When is a poem a picture? In his seminal theoretical text, In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition (2003), Fred Moten asks: ‘What are the internal relations within that experience between the intellection of the poem’s meaning and the sensing of its visuality and/or aurality? What are the relations between versions of or variations on the poem, manifestations of the eye and ear that raise the too deep question of the ontological status of the poem itself?’ Moten’s own poems feel good on my tongue as I recite them and their rhythm is integral to their meaning. He argues that the gap or ‘break’ between a poem’s meaning and its aesthetic effects can be fertile ground for radical politics, a space of emotional resonance that conventional language struggles to articulate.

A generation of artists inspired by Moten has seized on the poet and theorist’s title as a proposition, breaking apart texts from literary and historical sources to build new forms out of the wreckage. Language, broadly speaking, has long been a central concern for many black contemporary artists – Glenn Ligon, Pope.L, Lorna Simpson and Carrie Mae Weems come to mind – but this younger generation draws inspiration directly from literary sources: the poetry of Amiri Baraka, Tisa Bryant, Moten, Harryette Mullen, Claudia Rankine and others. Unlike many of their artistic predecessors, they fracture sentences and split words, collaging them together in ways that often refuse coherence. Their work acknowledges that identity is complicated by the language we use to define and express it.

Adam Pendleton quotes diverse literary sources in prints and wallpapers, collaged text and scanned photographs that embrace this condition of illegibility. For ‘shot him in the face’, his 2017 show at KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin, which later toured to Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead, Pendleton installed a vinyl wallpaper bearing the provocative opening line from Ron Silliman’s 1981 poem ‘Albany’, enlarged in black block letters: ‘If the function of writing is to “express the world”.’ Silliman’s poem continues in a cycle of short, flat sentences about race and class in Albany, California.

Pendleton, meanwhile, deploys a literal flatness to question art or writing’s imperative to ‘express the world’. at KW, black and white silkscreened images of work by Pablo Picasso, photographs of a dada dancer from 1916 and a dancing Congolese couple, as well as a page from a book of Chinese textiles were cropped and layered into a near-abstract pattern. Several other quotes from silliman appeared on the wall, fragmented and framed, such as the line: ‘A woman on the train asks Angela Davis for an autograph,’ from which only Davis’s name, ‘train’ and ‘woman’ were discernible.

The breakdown of language is part of what Pendleton refers to as ‘Black dada’, a term he has used since 2009 for his most important and extensive series to date. The phrase is borrowed from Amiri Baraka’s 1964 poem ‘Black Dada Nihilismus’, a seminal early text of the Black Arts Movement. Baraka invokes both the nihilism of dada and its dark depictions of the eroding social and political order in post-World War I Europe to voice the frustrations of black Americans of the Civil Rights movement fighting against systemic racism and violence during the Vietnam War.

In his ‘Black Dada’ paintings, Pendleton riffs on the famous refrain in Hugo Ball’s 1916 ‘Dada Manifesto’ – ‘dada m’dada dada mhm’ – to link different historical avant-gardes. The letters of ‘dada’ permutate alongside blown-up images of Sol LeWitt’s ‘Incomplete Open Cubes’ (1974). Like LeWitt’s modular geometry, language is a system open to endless reconfiguration and renewal. Reading Ball’s manifesto as not only a nonsense poem, but a political treatise alongside Pendleton’s own work, MoMA PS1 curator Jenny Schlenzka has argued that Pendleton ‘recovers dada’s tactical nonsense as a precursor weapon against a society that naturalizes racial identity in the service of oppression and exploitation’.

Kameelah Janan Rasheed leverages that same ‘tactical nonsense’ in her architecturally scaled, fragmentary, text-based collages. A Supple Perimeter (2017), which was included in the 2017 exhibition ‘Speech/Acts’ at ICA Philadelphia, begs to be read, though its sentences fall apart as soon as they begin to form. Across two long, black walls, photocopied and excised words are pinned in loose clusters that hover near eye level, recalling poet Douglas Kearney’s ‘performative typography’. A framed image of a hand pressed against the glass of a scanner hangs at the fulcrum of this frieze, as if to block the advance of our gaze. ‘Refuses to do that’ is pasted over the palm, while an adjacent blank page bears the simple prepositional phrase: ‘inside the offering of’. An offering and a refusal: Rasheed’s words and gestures conflict because, her work argues, one’s marginality is always a conflicted state. Nearby, the words ‘and black?’ in bold, Helvetica type have been slid across the surface of a live photocopier, creating a woozy distortion that sets even the nature of the question into doubt. ‘And black?’ What’s black? Who’s asking?

‘I want to hear./the rhythm/of rupture,’ one line reads. and elsewhere: ‘a sentence is structured/TO-AND-FRO-MOVEMENTS/sentence and race through the words.’ Rasheed’s fragmentary collage engages in a sly mimesis: it pronounces the cause of its illegibility. ‘Rupture’ recalls what Moten once wrote of one of Baraka’s favoured poetic devices: ‘Montage renders inoperative any simple opposition of totality to singularity. It makes you linger in the cut between them, a generative space that fills and erases itself.’ I linger in Rasheed’s cut, looking for fugitive meaning, only for the work to refuse my reading.

Towards the end of the installation, hung low to the floor, a framed scan of fingertips, lined up like a policeman’s record, serves as the artist’s signature. Prints are evidence, but they also leave a more personal trace of daily life, like the grease stains on the pages of a well-thumbed novel. Here we find ourselves, perhaps, at the ‘supple perimeter’ of the work’s title – a body or a text reclaimed as a margin

fertile for political discourse.

The grain of a photocopy reminds me of the many texts on art history, theory and philosophy that I received as handouts in university classes. When scanned, books that are smaller than standard A4 paper leave a black frame of negative space around the blinding whiteness of the duplicated page. The stark, two-tone aesthetic of the photocopy is central to Pendleton’s and Rasheed’s practices, just as black and white dominates the work of many of their peers. ‘Speech/Acts’, which considered six artists of colour working with poetry and the black radical tradition, was virtually monochromatic. Setting aside the obvious racial metaphor, the clash of black and white offers a dialectical contrast that alludes to the many conflicted states of marginalized identity, and to conditions of visibility and invisibility.

If the master’s tools can never dismantle the master’s house, neither can his tongue unravel his discourse. To that end, interrupted speech and written text can serve as critical poetic devices for artists to craft more inclusive, open-ended language. Steffani Jemison’s work considers the way black Americans throughout history have invented languages, spoken and unspoken, to circumvent racist attempts to silence their expression. ‘Plant You Now, Dig You Later’, Jemison’s sweeping show which opened in March 2017 at Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, focuses on a series of ‘hieroglyphic characters’ that Nat Turner, the leader of an 1831 slave rebellion, claimed he saw in a corn field and took as divine inspiration. Enlarged on sheets of acetate mounted on the gallery walls and running onto the floor, the scrawled, snaking symbols have a runic quality, as if they predate the Latin alphabet. Other sheets bear the ideographic marks of Solresol, a language based on the Solfège system of musical notation, devised by composer François Sudre in 1827.

Sudre envisioned Solresol as a universal idiom; the symbols’ unfamiliarity to the modern eye is a mark of their ultimate failure. Mixed in with Sudre’s notation are letters from the Hamptonese alphabet – a cryptic language devised by the self-taught black artist James Hampton, from Washington D.C, who spent more than a decade building an elaborate golden throne and altar from salvaged materials in response to religious visions. Indecipherable but inspired: language in Jemison’s work is as much a tool of communication as it is an expression of interiority. It’s not clear how Hampton and Turner developed their runic systems, but their lack of clarity (to the white gaze?) seems to be the point. Here, poetry and its building blocks are a means of escape, of liberation, of utopic imagination.

Jemison is a writer and poet, too, and her use of the archive often results in more legible text-based works than those of Pendleton or Rasheed. You Completes Me (2013–ongoing), a poem composed of sentences lifted from self-published novels the artist bought at street-side bookstands in Harlem, arranges words typologically to form a non-narrative story. Clusters of adjectives (fat/juicy legs/fine as fuck) compete with brand-name signifiers (Escalade/Lexus/Charger). Street slang appears alongside questions of existential melodrama: ‘Have you ever been wounded in your soul and paralyzed with grief?’ This work acquires some of the rhythms of life in Harlem, from its intellectual and pulp histories to the daily chatter of its residents. While not all of the novellas function as portraits of the neighbourhood, Jemison’s work uses language to draw our attention to issues of class, race and gender that dominate everyday life there.

Bethany Collins’s America: A Hymnal (2017) employs a similar cut-and-paste technique, compiling scores for 100 different versions of the 19th-century ballad ‘My Country, ’Tis of Thee’ to tell a story of US history through popular music and nationalistic expression. The tune for the early, pre-revolutionary

anthem was famously borrowed from ‘God save the Queen’. Later in the century, it was adapted as a battle hymn by suffragettes and abolitionists, who used the song’s title and opening line – ‘My country ’tis of thee,/ sweet land of liberty’ – as an ironic jab at the nation’s hypocrisies. Collins’s collage process recalls Robin Coste Lewis’s ‘Voyage of the Sable Venus’ (2015), a multi-part poem composed entirely of titles of Western artworks that reference the black female figure. Lewis’s devastating poem makes clear the extent to which women of colour have been treated as exotic objects throughout history. Collins’s book, too, gives me the impression of an avid reader combing the archive of US history in search of something they can recognize, only to realize that that history was written to exclude them.

‘Perhaps the most insidious and least understood form of segregation is that of the word,’ Rankine writes in her book Citizen: An American Lyric (2014), which has been a touchstone, since its publication, for many artists working with poetry. Citing an episode during the 2006 World Cup, in which a racist slur was directed at Zinedine Zidane – a french footballer of Algerian descent – Rankine notes that ‘illustrations of this kind of racial prejudice can be multiplied indefinitely’, the way a word can be repeated, on a tongue or across a chalkboard. It’s what Kearney calls a ‘stutter’: we are forced to witness the same kind of racist violence over and over again, like a word lodged in the throat. I’m reminded of the psychoanalyst and philosopher Frantz Fanon’s observation that the child who cries, ‘Look Daddy! A Negro!’ produces blackness by declaring and circumscribing difference. People turn. Fingers point. A crowd becomes a lynch mob.

In violently splitting apart the body of a text, these artists nevertheless refuse to picture the physical violence inflicted on the bodies of people of colour. Poetry’s critical evasiveness thus offers a way to articulate the effects of oppression without reproducing them in echo. By trying to capture the essence of words, poetry at once fails to express the world – per Silliman and Pendleton – while also proving indispensable to our experience of it. If race is a social construct, then language plays a key role in perpetuating and legitimizing the terms of racial difference. For these artists, words are both a trap and an escape hatch. Racist epithets and laws use language to marginalize the black body, but poetry deconstructs syntax in ways that could set it free. It might be paradoxically ‘in the break’ that things – our words, our world – become unbroken.

Bethany Collins is an artist based in Chicago, USA. In 2017, she had solo exhibitions at Patron Gallery, Chicago, and 1708 Gallery, Richmond, and was featured in ten group exhibitions, including ‘Another Country’ at Broad Art Museum, East Lansing, Michigan, ‘Gray Matters’ at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio, and ‘Excerpt’ at The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (all USA).

Steffani Jemison is an artist and writer based in New York, USA. In 2017, she had solo exhibitions at Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, USA, and Jeu de Paume, Paris, France, and was included in group exhibitions at Sprüth Magers, Los Angeles, USA, Brennan & Griffin, New York, and Ulises, Philadelphia, USA.

Adam Pendleton is an artist based between Germantown and New York, USA. In 2017, he had solo exhibitions at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK, and the Baltimore Museum of Art, USA, and was included in group exhibitions at Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA, and Mana Contemporary, Jersey City, USA. His solo show at MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, USA, runs from 3 January until 11 February, 2017.

Kameelah Janan Rasheed is an artist and writer based in New York, USA. In May 2017, her solo exhibition ‘A Supple Perimeter’ opened at the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Governors Island, New York. Also in 2017, she was included in group exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, USA, Visitor Welcome Center, Los Angeles, USA, and Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Venice, Italy.

Nonnenberg, Sherl, “There in black and white: Pace Gallery presents work by Adam Pendleton,”
Palo Alto Online, November 29, 2017

There in black and white

Pace Gallery presents work by Adam Pendleton

By: Sheryl Nonnenberg | November 29, 2017

The management at Pace Gallery likes to keep us guessing. Last month, the downtown Palo Alto space was filled with the colorful, graphic and self-revelatory paintings of Loie Hollowell. The current exhibition, “Adam Pendleton: Which We Can” (on view through Dec. 22), is a stark contrast. Consisting of black-and-white silkscreens, collages and spray-painted canvases, the exhibition requires close examination and time to parse the artist’s messages.

It is the gallery’s policy to avoid the use of labels, wall statements or other didactic material (although the exhibition’s press release is available at the front desk). In order to better understand the work, it is always beneficial to go straight to the source. Fortunately, Pendleton was in town for the opening reception and agreed to sit down for an interview.

Pendleton is a quiet, thoughtful man in his mid-thirties who is as deliberate and measured in his speech as he is in his artistic expression. He was born in Richmond, Virginia to a family that appreciated and encouraged his artistic aspirations. Following high school graduation at age 16, he traveled to Italy, on his own, in order to study art. After two years, he returned to the U.S. and found a loft in New York City where he set up a studio.

“It was clear to me at a young age that I wanted to pursue the life of an artist,” he said. He found gallery representation shortly thereafter and his career began in earnest. Although it sounds somewhat like an overnight success story, Pendleton said that there has been a 15-year period of working and maneuvering through the art world.

“I think that one of the core qualities an artist must possess is that they must be patient,” he said. “It requires patience in terms of the development of the work itself and in how you are perceived.”

This exhibition is his fourth solo show at Pace, where he is one of the youngest artists in the gallery’s stable. He is considered a conceptual artist, working in a variety of media including painting, collage, murals, video and live performances. A voracious reader, Pendleton said “writing is integral to my process and thinking.” In much of his work there are fragments of text, interspersed with images that he has appropriated from a variety of sources. In “Our Ideas,” 30 silkscreens on Mylar are assembled in a grid on one wall of the gallery. Some just consist of slashes of black strokes while others have remnants of photographs, text and African masks. Acutely aware of the unsettled state of race relations in this country, Pendleton wrote “The Black Dada Reader,” a treatise that unites the philosophy of the post-World War I art movement with the writings of noted figures from the Black Art Movement. When asked if his work was political, he mulled over the question and responded, “There is a drive toward the political in the sense that we have to question ourselves as citizens, as human beings.”

He explained that the gestural quality of the work reflects how he was “thinking very fast, making marks because there is a tension of something done quickly and then sort of left on its own terms.” The fragmentation of text is also a conscious decision on Pendleton’s part because, “We pay more attention to language the harder it is to read.” Similarly, the use of the masks was chosen because, “masks conceal and reveal and I am interested in the dualities of that.” He chose Mylar as reflective background for these pieces because, “mirrors tend to change the dynamic between artist and viewer.”

The other works in the show are untitled, large-scale paintings in which Pendleton has used a white background, upon which fragments of letters and shapes have been silk-screened. He then applies broad, black swaths, using spray paint. It is a medium he likes because “it is so democratic. Anyone can pick up a can of spray paint.” The end result is an enigmatic melange of shapes and strokes. What about the monochromatic quality of using just black and white, and will he ever use color? Pendleton smiled and said, “Black is a color. Let’s just say that I have refined my palette.”

Although Pendleton likes to create works in series, he explained that there is no effort made towards completion. He may add to “Our Ideas” in the future because, “each piece is a continuum. I am always thinking about each piece as it has been and will continue to be.”

To the casual eye, Pendleton’s work appears very controlled and carefully planned, but he shared that “Making art requires a healthy dose of chaos. You have to be open to chance, to any sort of swerve.”

Silicon Valley is a progressive and entrepreneurial environment where distractions abound and immediate gratification is the norm. It begs the question of whether this demographic would be open to the time and thought process required to consider his art. After some thought, Pendleton responded, “The gallery or museum can be a place where we can stop and slow down ... where there is a shift of your geometry of attention.”

Having achieved critical attention in the art world, including exhibitions in major museums and inclusion in the 2015 Venice Biennale, has his career gone according to plan?

Pendleton laughed softly and replied, “I am very happy to wake up and do what I do.”

Edalatpour, Jeffrey, “Adam Pendleton’s Totally Absurd Art,” *Metro Active*, November 22, 2017

metroactive

Adam Pendleton’s Totally Absurd Art

Rising New York artist plays with indecipherable nature of modernity at Pace Gallery

By: Jeffrey Edalatpour I November 22, 2017

Featured in ‘Vogue’ and the ‘New York Times’ this year, Adam Pendleton’s work is on display at the Pace Gallery in Palo Alto.

A champion of nonsense and irrationality arrived in Palo Alto last week at the Pace Gallery. Adam Pendleton’s solo show in California, “Which We Can,” is just one of many stops on the Brooklyn-based artist’s move toward cultural ubiquity.

Pendleton’s work has recently been displayed in Detroit, Minneapolis, Baltimore, Berlin, New York and, not least of all, the 2015 Venice Biennale. Vogue and the New York Times have featured interviews with him this year. At the age of 33, Pendleton has gazed at the zeitgeist, and now it’s gazing back at him.

We’re living through an era that’s resistant to the idea of definitive meanings. Headlines are now filed on a daily basis with accusations, recusals, apologies and denials. Truth suffers from dubious slippages as it moves from the left to the right and back again. In a coded response, here comes Pendleton, boldly forsaking color and easily decipherable canvases. In some of the literature printed about him, there are references to his influences, including Ad Reinhardt.

But when Reinhardt’s abstractions went black, the temperature in the gallery cooled down. The point of view is from absolute darkness—the bottom of the sea or somewhere out in distant space. That’s not the case with Pendleton’s series of 30 silkscreens, Our Ideas. Mounted on the wall in a grid formation (10 images across by three down), these messy squiggling inks provoke and agitate. They share more DNA with Franz Kline’s angry language of unidentifiable shapes, his mangled hieroglyphic paintings from the 1950s.

If you walk into the gallery unfamiliar with what you’re about to see, the scrawls and masks, the distorted faces and inverted words, they’ll all resist your best and most logical interpretations. The artist’s own treatise on his work—what he tells us we’re looking at—is crucial to be able to read meaning into it, if being told what to look for appeals to you. Collectively, the walls shimmer with rage and disorder, although those chaotic thoughts and emotions are carefully contained in glass-fronted, framed rectangles. Pendleton has also written, with other contributors, a book-length manifesto on his practice entitled Black Dada Reader.

In an interview with Pin-Up Magazine, Pendleton says he discovered the term in the Amiri Baraka poem “Black Dada Nihilismus.” The artist explained that “Black Dada is a way for me to talk about the future of the past.” Without risking further obfuscation, his statement in the April New York Times feature is a clearer statement of purpose: “[Black Dada is] a way of articulating a broad conceptualization of blackness.” More helpful still is Behind the Biennale: Adam Pendleton Brings “Black Lives Matter” to Venice, a short video posted online by Artsy.

Pendleton stands in his studio and explains the idea behind his contribution to the Biennale. He says, “Some things end up really signifying the moment they came into being.” The moment he was addressing in 2015 was the one in which Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown were fatally shot. The camera hovers over some of the work in which the artist has incorporated language from the Black Lives Matter movement. One of the larger works at Pace, Untitled (A Victim of American Democracy), also employs this strategy.

Pendleton takes the title from a 1964 speech “The Ballot or the Bullet” by Malcolm X. It’s also part of a series of paintings that could have been one enormous wall of graffiti that’s been cut apart and separated. They’re silkscreens that have also been spray painted, again, only in black and white. You can make out letters but they’re cut off or solitary. Faces appear from spreading blots that seem like Rorschach tests. Do you see anguish and terror, or the blankness and dread of nothing at all? If as Pendleton suggests in the Artsy video that his work reflects our particular political moment, it’s no wonder that he’s in such high demand at galleries around the world.

Trouillot, Terence, “What is ‘Black Dada’? Artist Adam Pendleton Lays Out His Disruptive Theory in a New Book,”
artnet news, October 4, 2017

artnet news

What is ‘Black DaDa’? Artist Adam Pendleton Lays Out His Disruptive Theory in a New Book

By: Terence Trouillot I October 4, 2017

Adam Pendleton. Courtesy of Matthew Septimus

The artist Adam Pendleton is difficult to pin down. He works in an array of different media, from collage to painting to video and performance. What draws all these threads together is a concern with language and historical narrative viewed through the lens of African-American culture and aesthetics—plus his own guiding theory, dubbed “Black Dada.”

That last element of Pendleton’s work is now getting the star treatment with the US launch this week of a full-fledged Black Dada Reader.

During a 2010 residency at MoMA, he already had begun to explore ideas of blackness and institutional critique, Xeroxing passages of texts from an unexpected assortment of figures. The personal canon he would cobble together ultimately included Zurich Dada ringleader Hugo Ball, experimental writer Gertrude Stein, abstract painter Ad Reinhardt, Afrofuturist jazz pioneer Sun Ra, Black Power icon Stokely Carmichel, and many more.

Trouillot, Terence, “What is ‘Black Dada’? Artist Adam Pendleton Lays Out His Disruptive Theory in a New Book,” *artnet news*, October 4, 2017

The cover of the Black Dada Reader.

Trouillot, Terence, “What is ‘Black Dada’? Artist Adam Pendleton Lays Out His Disruptive Theory in a New Book,” *artnet news*, October 4, 2017

(In addition to the historical essays, the final Reader includes a number of original essays from Adrienne Edwards, Laura Hoptman, Tom McDonough, Jenny Schlenzka, and Susan Thompson.)

Interviewed in his studio, Pendleton is quick to point out that the book, like much of his work, has always been an experiment. The Reader began its life as a spiral-bound book that lived in the artist’s studio, an attempt to create “a collage in book format” of texts that inspired him.

“Originally it was an in-studio publication, in the sense that it wasn’t really meant necessarily for a wide distribution,” he explained. “It was really meant for me to refer to in the space of the studio while I was working on different projects. But I did hand out maybe a dozen copies, maybe more, to the people who would come to the studio, or people who were interested in the work and or the concept of Black Dada.”

However, the project quickly grew and evolved into something that, he says, “demanded to be made.”

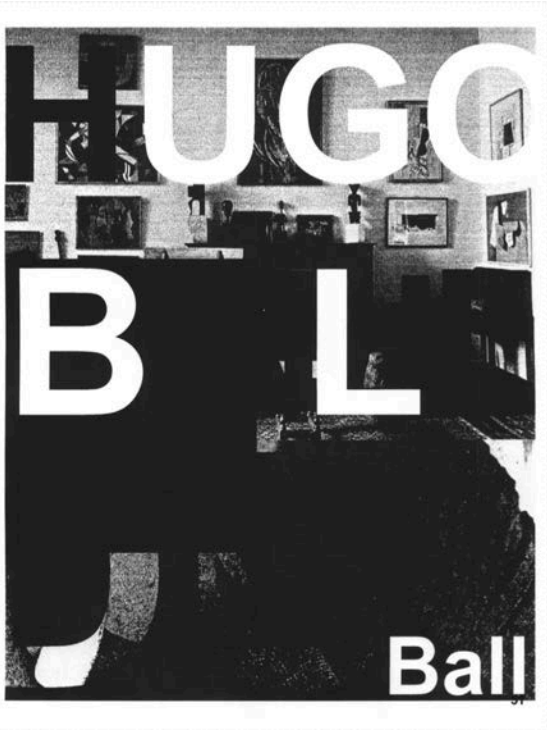
As an idea, “Black Dada” has had legs: This fall, Pendleton’s work exploring the notion is featured in shows at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit, and the Walker Art Center. In some ways the Reader became necessary as a way to make Pendleton’s “Black Dada” aesthetic more digestible for the audience drawn in by his more abstract installations.

So what is Black Dada, in a nutshell?

The variety of sources within the Reader, the artist explains, are about “radical juxtapositions,” i.e. bringing voices together in a way that disrupts easy logic and established history.

And yet his juxtapositions do have a point. In this case, Pendleton is drawing connections between classic European Dadaist texts, which were responding to the violence and trauma of World War I, and the writings of figures like Black Arts Movement leader LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka), responding to the violence of racism in the 1960s. Relating these art historical threads creates an avenue for considering the experiences of shock and displacement in both anew, opening up new potential associations.

The Black Dada Reader celebrates its US launch at the Kitchen on October 4, with readings by the artist himself, the book’s editor Stephen Squibb, and a performance by the New Orleans-style brass band SugarTone Brass Band.



(Above) Images from Black Dada Reader.

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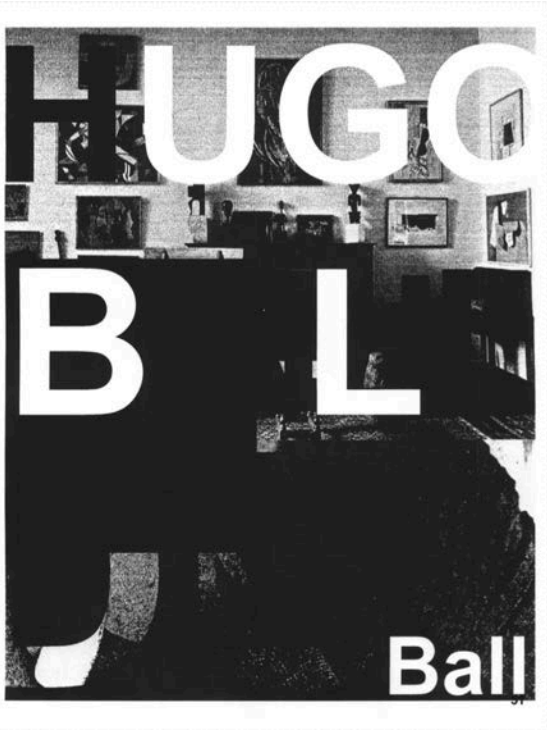

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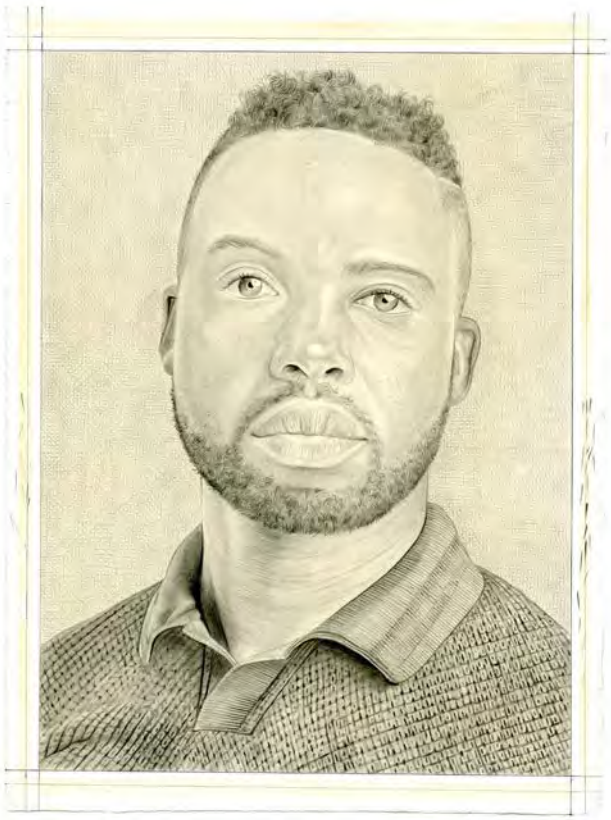
Biswas, Allie, "ADAM PENDLETON with Allie Biswas," *The Brooklyn Rail*, September 2017

THE BROOKLYN RAIL

ADAM PENDLETON with Allie Biswas

By: Allie Biswas | September 2017

Words are essential in Adam Pendleton's art. The artist's engagement with experimental prose and poetry over the past ten years, along with his cross-referencing of visual and social histories, has made space for new types of language within conceptual art. Pendleton's largest U.S. museum show to date, Adam Pendleton: Becoming Imperceptible, opened at Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans in April, before traveling to the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, where it is on view through September 25.



Portrait of Adam Pendleton. Pencil on paper by Phong Bui. From a photo by Taylor Dafoe.

Allie Biswas (Rail): You made an instrumental move in getting your career off the ground by taking your art to galleries and making them look at it. There's a story that your work was included in a show in New York at Gallery Onetwentyeight, the director of which assisted Sol LeWitt, and that's how LeWitt saw your work.

Adam Pendleton: Yes, that's true. Those earlier works (almost) always incorporated language, for one. Otherwise, there was a system to how the thing was composed. So I was convinced that, even though visually they looked like abstract painting, they were very much conceptual. That was actually the most gratifying thing, of course, when LeWitt came into the gallery and commented on my work. Whatever my view on this paternalistic language and its historical accuracy, he's been called the father of conceptual art, so when he said, "Oh, I like this!" I was this young kid who was totally sure of this already and could turn around and say to anyone who would listen, "See, it is conceptual!" [*Laughter.*] But who knew why he was drawn to the piece. I never had the opportunity to talk with him about it, but we did trade at the time.

Some of the earlier works I appreciate more than others, like any artist. But for me, it was all happening in public. So I sometimes think that I basically went to art school in public. I did my first solo show in New York at Yvon Lambert in 2005, and I did a project at Wallspace in 2004 just before that. I was twenty.

Rail: It sounds a bit absurd, doesn't it?

Pendleton: Now it does. [*Laughter.*]

Rail: What was happening to your work and your process during this time?

Pendleton: The work changed, and—I guess because of my age—I was very open to that. I think a lot of what art students are trying to do is related to trying to find something—the thing that they feel "works." You look around, and it does seem like artists who have had any kind of trajectory have been able to maintain a kind of logical progression of their work. So I think a lot of people are trying to find that first thing that works for them. But actually, the thing that works is learning how to manage the chaos of making art. That's what really works.

Rail: Your performance from 2007 [*The Revival*] caught the attention of a lot of people. Would you agree that this work took your career in a different direction?

Pendleton: That was when my own thinking about my work changed dramatically, yes. You have all of these ideas, and then you realize that what you make can't be a half-step toward those ideas. You actually have to manifest it. So I had this idea of taking a Southern-style religious revival, and turning it on its head, and then fusing it with experimental language. It was really that simple. I think it was the first time I had the idea to deconstruct, reconfigure, and reimagine an existing form and ask: what else could this be? What happens if you remove the religious aspect, but you leave the gospel music, the musical component? What happens if you take out the religious language and put in language that's related to queer activism or contemporary poetics? It was about creating a capacious space, breaking down one form and creating something else.

Rail: Was *The Revival* the first time that you had made a performance?

Pendleton: On that scale, for sure, but I had been collaging texts and making performances before that.

Rail: When did language start to be laid into your photographic painting works?

Pendleton: Well, language was always an important part of my life. I used to write poetry—don't all teenagers write poetry? [*Laughter.*] It's funny that, while things have changed a lot, they haven't changed much at all, and I think a lot of this was just the environment that I grew up in. My mom had Adrienne Rich's books in the house and June Jordan and Audre Lorde, so I was reading their work when I was very young. My dad was a musician—not professionally, but he played music when he was at home. In many ways I think that we are a product of our environment, although I am not inclined toward reading people's biographies to make sense of who they are and what they do. My brother and my sister were in the same house and they're not artists. But of course you see these things going on, and they piqued my interest. But there was also a political drive from a very early age. I always thought that art was something that could effect change, and I think that in a strange way that was the real drive. What could I do that would actually change things around me, or change how we imagine the world and our built environment? Art was this thing that could shift attention.

Rail: Maybe now is a good time to talk about Black Dada, which could be read as connecting language to a political drive.

Pendleton: The paintings that I showed in my first solo show in New York were text paintings, and they appropriated the writing of people like Toni Morrison, Rich, Jordan, and Lorde. They basically attempted to represent the cadence of someone speaking the words that were visually present. They were two-color silkscreens, and

I think quite special in a way. Linguistically, they referenced one poetic tradition, but in terms of layout and so on they had a concrete poetry aspect, though less austere somehow than that might sound. They were quite erotic and loving. Later I became introduced to writers like Joan Retallack, Ron Silliman, Leslie Scalapino, and Charles Bernstein.

Installation view: *Becoming Imperceptible*, Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans, April 1 – June 1, 2016. Courtesy the artist.

Rail: What impact did those writers have on you?

Pendleton: Reading their work caused a big shift in my own work. It wasn’t a visual thing. It had more to do with theoretical positions around language, going from one school of thought—I guess you could call it a lyrical school, which the poets I was reading had a very political foundation with regards to content—to a very different school, which was more aligned with how conceptual artists thought about language: language as material. So there was this productive overlap between language, conceptual art, lyrical poetry, and activism—whether formal or content-based or both. I didn’t feel it necessary so much to take sides. I wasn’t a poet as such, and think I took from the different genres or schools what felt useful at that time. *The Revival* was the first time those ideas were presented publicly and cohesively, and it just happened to be a performance. Black Dada, in one sense, represents the things that I started to do with language in a visual space following *The Revival*.

Rail: So this political drive was the foundation for how you were approaching everything that you were making. But what was the actual intention?

Pendleton: Black Dada is an idea. When pressed, I often say it’s a way to talk about the future while talking about the past. It surfaced in a conversational space, when I was just talking to friends. I had Amiri Baraka’s book *The Dead Lecturer*, which contains the poem “Black Dada Nihilismus.” I found the language striking: “Black Dada.” Just that. The “Black” and the “Dada.” “Black” as a kind of open-ended signifier, anti-representational rather than representational. And then “Dada”—sort of nonsense. A sound, but also referencing a moment in art. So this language became a productive means to think about how the art object can function, and does function, in the world. What can art do? I think all artists should be asking themselves this question. Not “what is it?” It’s whatever you want it to be, but what can it do? What do you, as an artist, want it to do? Black Dada also became a way to create a conversation and to insert my work into conversations about appropriation that I was observing at that particular time, in about 2008. I don’t know if you remember how everyone was talking about appropriation around that time, as though it was something new, and it, of course, wasn’t. So it was a way to shift perspectives, but it also, again, created space for myself as an artist. I still reside there as an artist, but I keep pushing it and trying to change the shape of it, and of the space(s) it creates.

Rail: And you put together a Black Dada book. How did that develop?

Pendleton: I created a reader, yes. That began as a conversation with Jenny Schlenzka, who is a curator at MoMA PS1, about this idea of Black Dada in relationship to institutions, and how it could change institutional dynamics. The reader is essentially organized into three different sections: "Foundations"—so, foundational ideas to Black Dada, which are represented in text by thinkers from W.E.B. Du Bois to Gilles Deleuze to Stokely Carmichael—and then it shifts into "Language," which includes a range of writers whose works I've been drawn to such as Harryette Mullen, Retallack, Jordan, and others. The third section is "Artists' Positions," which collects texts by or about artists whom I relate to Black Dada, including Ad Reinhardt, Joan Jonas, and Stan Douglas, who is represented by his screenplay for *Inconsolable Memories*. It's going to come out next year for a show I'm doing in Berlin. The original version was spiral-bound, really an old-school reader. The version that is being published will include the content of the original reader along with essays by curators and critics who have engaged deeply with Black Dada including Adrienne Edwards, Laura Hoptman, Tom McDonough, and Susan Thompson.

Rail: I'm currently working on an anthology of black art, which compiles texts that were written by and about artists in the 1960s and '70s. At present there isn't any publication like it that people can refer to. You wonder, why does this sort of book not already exist?

Pendleton: It's interesting that you say that, because around that time, in 2007, I started to think that a lot of gestures that I had made were actually retroactive. I felt that I was creating something that should have existed ten, twenty, forty years ago. It was like I was inserting things into the art-historical canon. For example, with the Black Dada paintings—which relate formally to modernist painting and the monochrome—I was infusing that space with very different language, quite literally, and also sort of messing it up. Messing it up slightly, but a lot at the same time, so it's also a contradiction, this duality, how a little bit is *a lot*. So, again, maybe these paintings were made in 1914. It's illogical. What did LeWitt say: "Illogical judgments lead to new experiences."

Rail: Tell me about your residency at MoMA.

Pendleton: The initial aspect of it is over, yet the broader project continues. It was an incredible opportunity to interact with the collection, but also with the institution, in a more intimate fashion. It was really just the institution saying, "Let's see what happens."

Rail: So what did happen? And how does the context of a residency affect your way of working?

Pendleton: The one problem I have with residencies is that I don't really like working in places outside of my own spaces. I like to be around my books, my things. I can't really pack up the studio and go to Beirut. So I thought about my work in relationship to the institution in an antagonistic way. I also thought about what kind of discursive or formal gesture I could make that could disrupt the ebb and flow of how this very large entity functions. I began a conversation with Joan Retallack—who is an essayist and poet, and who used to teach at Bard College—saying, "What if we did something at this place, at the Museum of Modern Art? What could we do?" At the time I was reading a short text that was published for *Documenta 13* by Michael Hardt titled *The Procedures of Love*, and so I was initially going to do something around that text, whether that be a public conversation with

Hardt, or something else. In the text, and this is a real summary, he talks about the political potential of embracing difference. In essence, potential resides in the differences between us, not in the similarities. I started talking to Joan about this and she went back to this idea of love and eros, and to Plato, to the Symposium. She conceived this event called the *Supposium* and the basic premise was that she invited different people—myself, along with poet Anne Carson, Sandi Hilal of Decolonizing Architecture, film theorist Peter Krapp, and literary theorist/poet Fred Moten—to give talks that began with the word "suppose." So "Suppose. . ." That was the conceptual conceit, or the point of departure: *suppose*.

Rail: How was the event executed?

Pendleton: We delivered the talks in MoMA's Founders Room to about 100 participants. Each person was asked to take notes during the talks of phrases or words that captured their attention, and then these notecards were collected and redistributed, and we created a kind of group text from these fragments. As I say this to you now I realize that in a strange way the *Supposium* did somehow articulate what Hardt was talking about. Joan described it as a procedural thought experiment. For me, it became this question about how to have productive dialogues. How can we have productive public conversations and exchanges? How do we repurpose this idea of "I'm talking and you listen?" How does that become more about call and response? That was also a key aspect of *The Revival*: call and response and community through difference, something that has often been a key to black music as well.

Rail: During *Supposium* you talked about Black Lives Matter. You had previously used the slogan in your installation in the Belgian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2015, but prior to this you had shown paintings in London, earlier on in the same year, that incorporated these words.

Adam Pendleton, *WE (we are not successive)*, 2015. Silkscreen ink on mirror polished stainless steel. 46 13/16 x 61 1/2 x 5/8 inches (W) 46 13/16 x 35 5/8 x 5/8 inches (E). Courtesy the artist.

Pendleton: Yes, my show in London was the first time that I exhibited work using that language. But the subject matter came up during *Supposium*, because that was shortly after George Zimmerman was found not guilty for murdering Trayvon Martin. I was asking the question, "What language stands its ground?" "Stand Your Ground" was the law that created the legal gray area where Zimmerman got off. He was "standing his ground." I thought: we need language that stands its ground.

Rail: So you were reacting in real time, as it were. It's not as though two years went by after these incidents took place, and then you decided to respond through your work.

Pendleton: I couldn't help but respond to the absurdity of the situation. It was the absurdity of it all coupled with the ongoing task I've set for myself of figuring out what Black Dada is. It is a kind of "black space" one could say. It is also a social space—it creates a social space. I think it gave me the room to respond to Black Lives Matter,

even just on the level of the language. They are both very clear short statements.

Rail: And you were looking at these two statements in relation to each other.

Pendleton: Beyond anything else, I wanted to look at them in relation to each other—first as an artist, but then as a citizen. And in that context, as a citizen, there was another set of concerns. Jenny and I joined the protest in New York after the Zimmerman verdict. They had to close down Times Square for a short period of time. People were singing “Ella’s Song” by Sweet Honey in the Rock: “We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes.” Just thinking about the role of voice in general, and how Occupy Wall Street was a collective voice, but there was no individual voice that rose above all others. During the protests against the Zimmerman verdict, I was looking for a voice. There were different utterances, but you could tell that no one really knew how to speak, which fascinated me for many different reasons. Was that an evolution? Something new and important? Or was it somehow a weakness? So it was almost as though, after that, I was asking, “Does ‘Black Lives Matter’ function? Does this language function? What can it *do*, what does it do?” and I brought those questions along with others into the visual and conceptual space of my work.

Rail: Is Black Dada shorthand for “This is Adam”?

Pendleton: No. It’s a kind of refusal.

Rail: Regardless, people understand that you’re not coming to it in this very straightforward way—

Pendleton: —In 2008 I was invited by curator Krist Gruijthuijsen to be a part of a show he curated within Manifesta 7 called it’s a *matter of fact* and I ended up writing a Black Dada manifesto. Basically it was a system for collecting sentences. So the first line of my text is the title of his exhibition *it’s a matter of fact*,and then it collects. So it goes from one, two, four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two, sixty-four, et cetera, accumulating a repeating series of sentences that are also attracting new language to them as it evolves. In effect it is the theoretical underpinning of the Black Dada project, it deliberately aligns aesthetic/political distinctions, creating a chronology-based affinity between conceptual art and political actions in the ’60s, for example, which had this conceptual and performative intelligence. What always fascinated me was that shortly after I wrote that, I read it publicly in a few places. But then the graphic designer/artist Will Holder also started reading the text around the world in quite different places, and I love this idea of Holder as my doppelgänger or something. You know, going around as the ambassador of Black Dada. It’s so simple—the “Black” and the “Dada.” But you’re right, there is nothing straightforward about it.

Rail: By taking the hashtag Black Lives Matter and inserting it into the work, and being in a position where you can present it widely, do you think that you are one of the only artists to have really gone public with it? Do you think this has given you a kind of “credibility” in the minds of certain other people, in the sense that they are presented with an artist who feels very strongly about this current moment in time and he has acted upon it? Given the expression’s widespread usage, obviously through social media in particular, its popularity could perhaps even be viewed as “fashionable.” That sounds inappropriate, but I think you’ll understand what I’m getting at.

Pendleton: You're the second person to use the word "fashionable." The thing is that there are stakes involved in everything that we do. This is paraphrasing the words of Rachel Blau DuPlessis: my intention as an artist is not to use the modes and methods of protest in the sense of saying, "This is wrong" and "That is right." It is, however, to draw attention to things at times, in different ways through different registers. So I wanted to bring it out of the space of actual fashion, where things are short. Occupy Wall Street, in a strange way, is like the past already, even though it's not, and even though it impacts everyone's life. The same thing with Black Lives Matter—you have it in the media and everyone's talking about it. In 2013 it came about and now, in the mainstream media, it's like, "Oh would they stop carrying on" or, "Okay, we get it" or, "They're interrupting Bernie Sanders now? Don't they know he's on *their* side?" Again, this language *has* not and *will* not leave the space of my work. It was about bringing a different kind of rhetoric and attention to the language, to the moment, to the movement.

Rail: It was about extending the temporary space that it exists in, and creating a legacy.

Pendleton: Let's bring Black Lives Matter into the temporality that art objects and discourse can often afford. I showed these paintings in a show at the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver in 2015 and the local art critic came around and said, "Oh, yes, these are nice paintings but this is so yesterday. Six months ago maybe this would have meant something, but it just seems so old." There is the case in point—"this is so old"—when actually these are things that as a country we have been grappling with for hundreds of years. It is neither new nor old.

Rail: For those who appreciate the importance of not forgetting about this moment in history, you have made sure that it doesn't get forgotten about.

Pendleton: —Which goes back to that question about how things function retroactively.

Rail: Let's talk about your show, *Becoming Imperceptible*, which was presented at the Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans this year, and has now traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver.

Pendleton: I wonder what people will make of it when they see the exhibition because the work is very slow moving. It's open but also hermetic and a lot of the decisions and steps I make are very slow and deliberate. And not necessarily in a way that I think would be readily apparent to anyone else. So I am curious.

Adam Pendleton, *My Education: A Portrait of David Hilliard, 2014*. Three-channel black-and-white video, 9 minutes 19 seconds. Courtesy the artist.

Rail: The show is curated by Andrea Andersson. What conversations were you having with her?

Pendleton: Andrea has a Ph.D. in comparative literature, and she has a background in contemporary poetry. So that’s actually where the conversation started. Then we moved to how I think about ideas of representation, of politics and abstraction—how these two things relate—which is how my body of work has evolved: from language, to language and image, to a more abstracted or abstract space. So in the exhibition, we really thought about the operation of each floor.

Rail: It’s a substantial exhibition—you cover three floors.

Pendleton: Yes. We thought critically about the operation of each floor.

The first floor is visually similar to the installation I conceived for the Belgian Pavilion in 2015. It is maximalist, a kind of system of displaying a complete overview of the work. There’s a distinct visual rhythm. It’s a collage in space.

Rail: What happens on the next floor?

Pendleton: On the second floor things begin to empty out, and you begin to see that very much in the work itself. I use one piece to create another piece to create another piece. It becomes a part as a whole or a whole as a part. But again this idea of how to represent something comes up, modes and mechanisms of representation. What is a fragment? So you have a portrait of Satomi Matsuzaki, the lead singer of Deerhoof, who I filmed for a 2009 three-channel video called *Band*. She is taken out of the space of that original, which documents Deerhoof in a recording studio working on a new song, and it now exists as a six-second loop where all you see her do is turn her head. It’s just on repeat, an index of a larger work. Then the same thing happens with Baraka’s poem “Black Dada Nihilimus.”I represent it through a wall painting that lists almost all of the proper nouns from his text in the order that they appear. It’s a kind of visual note taking.

Then you have the “System of Display” works, also on the first floor, which began by using many images, but now use very few images and again look at the question of what bears the burden of representation. Is it the language or the image? How do they function together? There are also ceramic floor pieces that I made via the influence of “clairvoyant poet” Hannah Weiner. Then, as you move up to the third floor, this idea of portraiture that began with the loop of Satomi carries over, but this time it’s a video portrait of David Hilliard, who was Chief of Staff of the Black Panther Party. This portrait is related to another I made of Lorraine O’Grady and both are partially influenced by Gertrude Stein’s textual self-portraits.

Rail: What are the final works that the viewer encounters?

Pendleton: Three large, five-foot by ten-foot silkscreens on mirror-polished stainless steel that are based on a photograph of water taken by Josef Albers. They’re hung in a raw, corridor-like space along one wall. In the end, they look like abstract columns that distort the viewer’s image of her- or himself. The show encompasses various historical references, from the Bauhaus to Malcolm X to the Black Panthers to Godard. The objects carry these histories and ask them to coexist in a way—to ask, what is their potential?.

Rail: How do you make the works? I have read a lot about the role of photocopying in your practice.

Pendleton: A lot of the things I do are very matter of fact. Let’s say for the Black Dada paintings, I use an image of LeWitt’s incomplete open cubes: Xeroxing it, cropping the Xerox, scanning it, enlarging it, and then laying this text over top of it. I take an object and do something to it, and then do something else to it. I would say everything is some sort of collage and has always been. This is true even in the earlier works that didn’t necessarily look like a collage, because what I was doing was taking someone else’s language and then I was sort of inserting myself on top of it—inserting my own rhythm and my own mode of presentation.

Rail: What is appropriation for you? What is that doing within the work?

Pendleton: To borrow or steal? It’s a complicated question. I think that’s why I’m very slow, because I have to create the space where a kind of transition can occur—where it can go from being an image of an incomplete open cube to a mark or a line. That’s a conversation that you have with the material, slowly, over time. Now, because I’ve been using these images, these materials for so long, I no longer even think of my use as an act of appropriation. I think about it in a more discursive sense of just being in conversation with, or rubbing up against, something. I said once that we are appropriated as human beings, that’s what we are. I mean, how can anything be anything other than appropriation—which is why the term is so loaded and also so over-determined.

Lee, Yaniya, “Adam Pendleton ‘Black DaDa Reader’,” *Flash Art*, September 18, 2017

FLASH ART

Adam Pendleton’s *Black DaDa Reader*

By: Yaniya Lee | September 18, 2017

Adam Pendleton, “Black Dada Reader” (detail) (2017). Courtesy the Artist and Koenig Books.

The assembled texts in Adam Pendleton’s *Black Dada Reader* (2017) are varied, difficult and niche in all the weirdest ways. Black Dada is a theoretical proposition, “a way to talk about the future while talking about the past,” the American artist explains in his manifesto. The poets and artists and literary theorists he selects each deconstruct, in their own way, the significance of both representation and language.

Although at first writings by the likes of Hugo Ball, W.E.B. Du Bois, LeRoi Jones, Ron Silliman and Gertrude Stein seem discordant alongside artist projects by Ad Reinhardt, Adrian Piper, William Pope.L, Sun Ra and Thomas Hirschhorn, under the general concept of Black Dada they function well because of how they inform one another. It is implied that in conjunction their ideas offer an approach to understanding Black Dada as a concept.

The nearly four-hundred-page hardcover book is an expanded version of a 2011 spiral-bound zine of photocopied texts Pendleton brought together to contextualize his work. This new version is organized into parts. It opens with several original essays by critics and curators presenting different interpretations of Black Dada and how it informs Pendleton’s performance, video, painting and photographic collage. Then the “FOUNDATIONS,” “LANGUAGE” and “ARTIST’S POSITIONS” sections round out a broad foundation of influences and exemplars of the concept.

Pendleton is concerned with black life and the absurdity of our present grammars of being. “It has been said that the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house, but what about the people the master treated as tools? That is, the ‘tools’ that were themselves capable of practicing abstraction, those three-fifths?” Pendleton asks in his afterword. “Black Dada is the name I borrow for the immanent historical possibility of this transformation: *Black* for the open-ended signifier projected onto resisting objects, Dada for *yes, yes*, the double affirmation of their refusal.” In many ways Dada allows a reconsideration of traditional “identity politics” discourses, which have been so inextricably tied to representation. Pendleton wants an afro-conceptualism. He suggests the subject-self can shift away from objecthood through abstraction, that politics are in fact an implicit part of abstraction.

In a very straightforward way, *Black Dada Reader* provides a theoretical background for engaging with Pendleton’s practice. By selecting the texts and outlining what Black Dada came from and can be, the artist deftly shapes an emergent concept.

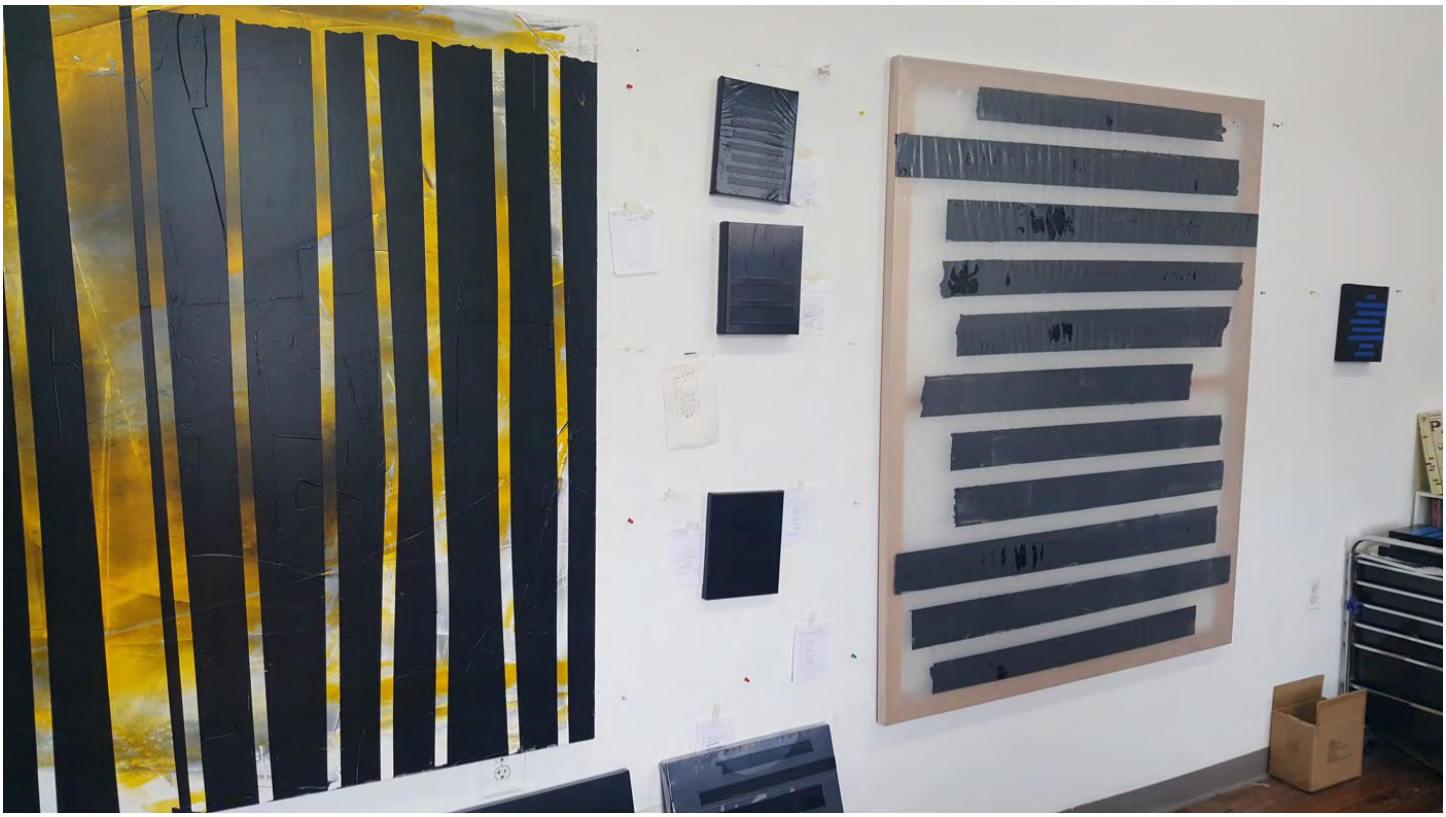
Rodney, Seph, “How to Embed a Shout: A New Generation of Black Artists Contends with Abstraction,”
Hyperallergic, August 23, 2017

HYPERALLERGIC

How to Embed a Shout: A New Generation of Black Artists Contends with Abstraction

A new wave of black abstract artists are exploring ways to push the language of abstraction and still retaining their cultural specificity. And they’re not doing it alone.

By: Seph Rodney I August 23, 2017



Tariku Shiferaw’s studio in Bushwick (photo by the author for Hyperallergic)

I’m in Tariku Shiferaw’s studio because of a conversation about black masculinity. We met several months ago at a dinner event, Elia Alba’s Supper Club, held at the 8th Floor gallery where we collectively — several artists, historians, curators — chewed over how we now deal with each other as black men and how me might improve our relationships. Shiferaw is a 34-year-old artist originally from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, who earned his MFA degree from Parsons School of Design. He invited me to his studio in Bushwick to check out his work, and then we ran into each other again, randomly at a opening a few weeks later, thereby reminding me of our scheduled meeting. After I place my backpack down, I take out my notebook and pen, but don’t write yet. I take stock of how orderly Shiferaw has placed the work he wants to show me. There is rigor apparent just in that choice. I start mentally listing the obvious aspects of his paintings which hang on the two walls nearest the entrance, at eye level: first of all, the “canvas” isn’t canvas; it’s clear plastic that’s stretched taut over wood frames, acrylic paint thinly applied in inch-wide, horizontal bars that are ruler straight and evenly spaced, but with jagged ends, the palette a matte black or a darker royal blue. The paintings are big squares, perhaps two feet by two feet. This is some hard-hearted abstraction — giving me no narrative, hardly any painterly flourishes, and no reference to anything from life that I recognize, not even symbolically. I want to mention Pierre Soulages, who is now a very old French modernist painter, but his work was much more texture and uses reflective and non-reflective blacks against each other, and

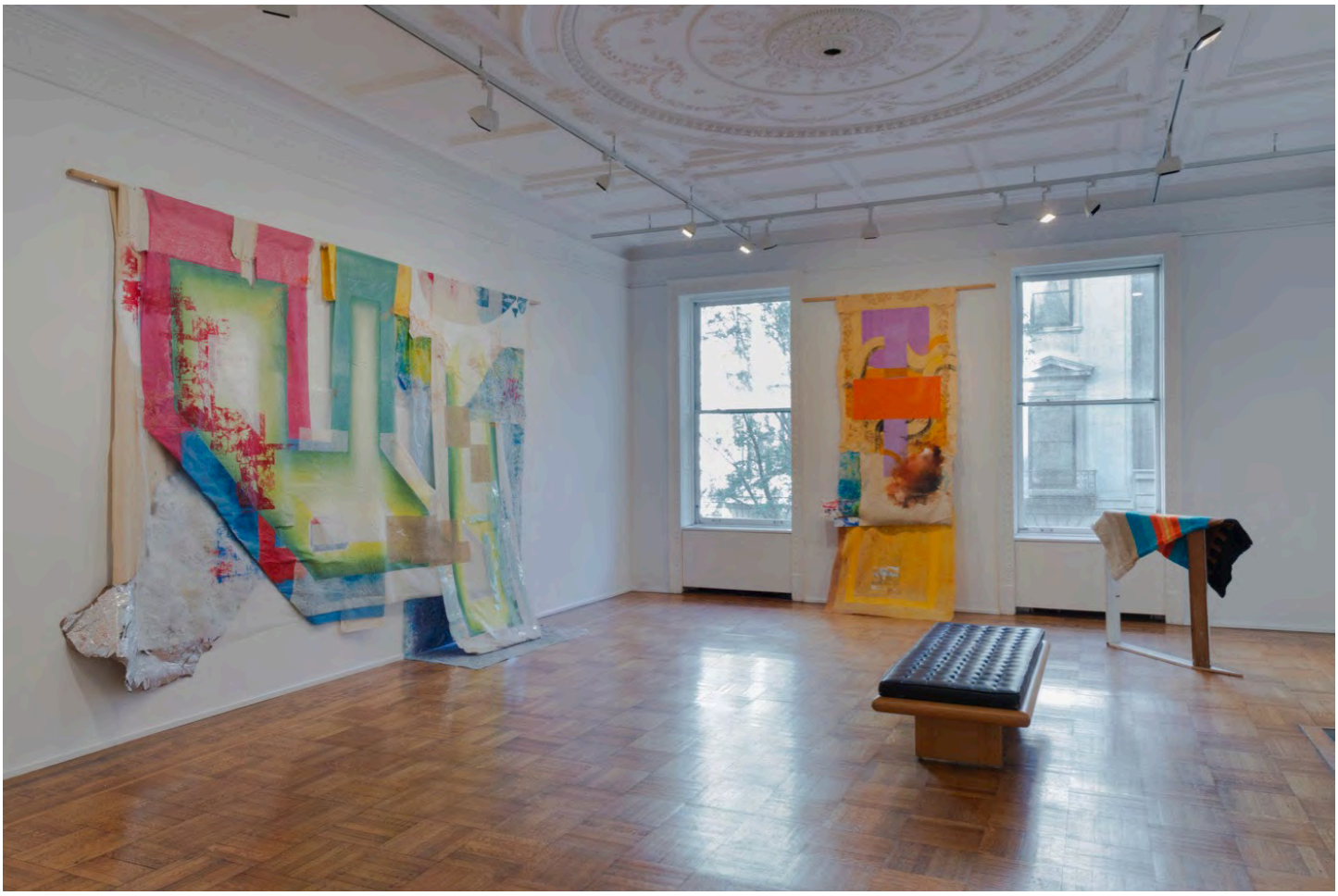
his paintings tend to be grand flights of ego. Shiferaw’s work is so much quieter, tightly held, reserved. Shiferaw offers me a beer; we sit facing each other and then get into it.

Tariku Shiferaw, “Embrace the Martian (Kid Cudi)” (2017) (photo by the author) at the exhibition One of These Black Boys

He tells me that many of these are destined to be in a show at Anthony Philip Fine Art, under the title One of These Black Boys. Shiferaw has given all the paintings titles that refer to hip-hop culture, using popular song titles like: “That Black Boy Fly” (Kendrick Lamar), “The Blacker the Berry” (Tupac), “War” (Bob Marley), and “If I Ruled The World” (Nas ft. Lauryn Hill). I ask him to tell me where the titles come from, and he mentions an incident that occurred when he was an undergraduate at USC. It’s not a story I want to hear — because I’ve heard it so often and I have my own lived versions of the story. He tells me he visited a friend, a fellow student who is white, at her parents’ house in Westwood. When the mother and father arrived and saw she and Shiferaw hanging out in the kitchen, he says they responded to his presence in a distinctly unfriendly way. He felt they wanted him to know that he was not welcome in their house. While listening I realize that the strategy he’s employing — using an obstinately formalist language of almost geometric abstraction, while signaling to his audience that the maker is black, that is, ethnically and politically black — is something I had seen other artists do. These artists, all black, born both in the US and outside of it, have taken up a rigorously unemotional aesthetic to spirit in a set of politics not typically or historically related with this aesthetic. I recall seeing something similar in uptown Manhattan.

In the winter of 2016, at Jack Tilton gallery, Tomashi Jackson had showed several mixed media pieces in her The Subliminal is Now exhibition. Jackson’s work is far more materially and visually complex than Shiferaw’s. She uses gauze, canvas, paper, cotton, wood, and other elements to make colorful mixed media assemblages that look like sculptures intentionally migrating towards the wall, or paintings wanting to come down to engage the solidity of the ground. For example, her “Dajerria All Alone (Bolling v Sharpe (District of Columbia))(McKinney Pool Party)” (2016) consists of a wood pole resting on pins in the wall, holding up a large, red cotton cloth with a main decoratively abstract pattern in darker tones. The red cloth has other colorful patterns and pictures scattered across its surface, including painted geometric patterns, glued-on photographic images of black people, and stitched-on envelopes of folded canvas containing objects hidden in black bags. The Subliminal is Now also contained video collages, framed photographic prints, and framed textile pieces. Jackson tells me that the photographs are sourced from the NAACP’s Legal Defense and Educational Fund, which contains a trove of visual documentation

Rodney, Seph, “How to Embed a Shout: A New Generation of Black Artists Contends with Abstraction,”
Hyperallergic, August 23, 2017



Tomashi Jackson, The Subliminal is Now exhibition at Tilton gallery winter 2016 (photo courtesy Tilton Gallery, New York, New York and the artist)

NAACP lawyers used to prosecute their cases, arguing that school segregation was inherently illegal.

Jackson, who was born in Houston, Texas in 1980, has an aesthetic far more magpie and effulgent than Shiferaw’s, but the most salient aspects of the work for me is its use of an abstract, formalist vocabulary where geometric objects and images consistently appear (along with a good deal of experimentation with materials and textures). What else the two have in common is the use of provocative titles, such as her “The School House Rock (Brown, et. al. v Board of Education of Topeka) (Bolling v Sharpe (District of Columbia))” (2016). By referring to landmark court cases which addressed issues of civil rights and racial segregation, Jackson explicitly evokes the socio-political history of protest and struggle on the part of black people (and other people of color) in the US. At first seeing them, I wondered whether Jackson was just identifying herself to the viewer with her use of images of black people engaged in protest or being confronted by police. More than that, says Rujeko Hockley, an assistant curator of contemporary art at the Whitney Museum, she is “embedding an affiliation and embedding a politics.” This sounds absolutely right to me, so I ask her to say more.

Rodney, Seph, "How to Embed a Shout: A New Generation of Black Artists Contends with Abstraction,"
Hyperallergic, August 23, 2017

Tomashi Jackson, "Dajerria All Alone (Bolling v Sharpe (District of Columbia))(McKinney Pool Party)" (2016) (photo courtesy Tilton Gallery, New York, New York and the artist)

Referring to the visual strategies employed by both Shiferaw and Jackson, Hockley tells me: "I read these gestures as ways to engage questions of equity, justice, race-related questions, but also embed them, embed them in the sense of, you don't know what you're buying." I also mention Adam Pendleton, a 34-year-old artist, born in Virginia, whose Becoming Imperceptible exhibition was recently mounted at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Cleveland. His practice draws on the legacy of non-symbolic abstraction in making the series of works he terms "Black Dada," which in the MOCA show included large paintings of silkscreen ink on canvas, such as "Black Dada/Column (A/A)" (2015). That particular work is all colored black, but segmented into distinct fields by a precisely ruled stripe of more reflective pigment running through the two panels placed together. The work is reminiscent of Barnett Newman, and Pendleton consciously visually references older artists in the traditions of abstract painting and sculpture, such as Sol Lewitt and Carl Andre. The show also included several films that contain fragmented biographies and texts from key figures in the Civil Rights Movement, floor-based abstract ceramic sculptures, and a large vinyl wall work, with a title that, as with Shiferaw and Jackson, further signals his politics, "Black Lives Matter #3 (wall work)" (2015). Among black artists working now, Pendleton stands out as one who explicitly aims to examine the history of blackness in the US.

For Hockley, this remixing of a formal artistic language with political engagement importantly makes "a kind of claim through the work, for the suitability of the work in combination with the aesthetic of abstraction and material and technical experimentation." This suitability lies in a couple facts: one cultural, and another which is historical. Adrienne Edwards, curator at Performa, the Walker Art Center, and a scholar who has written a good deal about Pendleton's work, professes: "Blackness is the original abstraction; people are living abstractions, meaning [they are] made up, conjured." Yes. I have to agree. For others, this sign of dark skin might symbolize anything and its opposite: strength, weakness, triumph, and debacle, membership or exile. The racial imaginary conditions all of us raised under its auspices to project onto black people one's fears or desires, so that it becomes difficult to be seen as a human being rather than a space for projection. Lowery Stokes Sims, a curator and former director of the Studio Museum in Harlem, adds the historical fact: "If you take the track that abstraction came out of African art, then we are just claiming our birthright."

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Installation view, Adam Pendleton: Becoming Imperceptible (photo: Jerry Birchfield ©MOCA Cleveland 2017)

Yet why is this generation of black artists (these artists are all under 40) staking their claim to that birthright now and in these particular ways? Both Adrienne Edwards and Valerie Mercer, curator and head of the GM Center for African American Art at the Detroit Institute of Arts, agree with me that a, “confidence in this sense of promiscuity,” as Edwards puts it, does have a generational cast. These artists’ outlooks have to do with when they were born and the circumstances of their coming of age. Edwards says, “A lot of these [artists] growing up in the 80s, coming to consciousness around racial violence that really appeared on a national scale for the first time around the Rodney King moment.” In 1991, King was beaten savagely by four Los Angeles police officers, and a bystander’s film of the incident was seen worldwide. Then, the subsequent trial and acquittal of the police officers involved sparked an uprising and riots that lasted for five days and caused the death of more than 50 people.

That systematic physical and legally sanctioned brutalization of that black man’s body was understood as a symbolic devaluation of him. The King beating, along with a multitude of similar subsequent incidents circulate the idea that officers of the state (and by extension the state itself) won’t allow themselves to be accountable for the bodies of black people. The burgeoning movement, particularly evident in urban areas, to film police officers carrying out their duties, especially when confronting people of color has much to do with holding police to account and taking responsibility for each other. Mercer confirms that this generation “want to be responsible.” She continues, “I know young artists who say to me that they abhor the notion that their work would not be relevant or not connect with what’s going on in the world.”

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Installation view, Adam Pendleton: Becoming Imperceptible (photo: Jerry Birchfield ©MOCA Cleveland 2017)

Shiferaw’s experience was a kind of violence — the soft, stage whispered brutality telling him that he did not belong there and was not welcome because of the sign of his color. Decades ago Pierre Bourdieu made a similar observation regarding socioeconomic class and its intersection with the art museum. He termed the ways in which the poor and working class were made to feel that they did not belong in the museum “symbolic violence” to explain why the museum continues to be a primarily middle-class space. With his paintings of black bars rendered as elements within a cultural score Shiferaw asserts he does indeed belong here, in this tradition, though as Edwards says, “Abstraction has always been perceived as not at hand for artists interested in blackness.” His paintings are hushed, but they are rooted in a shout.

Sims reminds me that this perception also came from within the black community as well, noting that Stanley Whitney had observed in conversation with her that “the assumption was that if you were doing abstraction, you were copping out, doing mainstream art, and that you couldn’t possibly be relevant or committed.” It is widely known that artists of Sims’ generation (she was born in 1949) felt these pressures. The often repeated story summarizing this state of things is Howardena Pindell, who in the mid-1960s showed her work to the then director of the Studio Museum. At the time, her work consisted of tiny paper dots collaged onto cut-and-quilted canvases. She was told, “Go downtown and show with the white boys.”

In the period between Pindell’s rejection and now, several black artists have risen to prominence by resolutely working with the black figure, shifting it from the margins of culture. Kerry James Marshall, Fred Wilson, Kara

Walker, Kehinde Wiley, Mickalene Thomas, Chris Ofili, and Jordan Casteel have all championed the black body, reinserting it into the art histories from which it had been excised. Jackson tells me that this work “let’s us be physically alive in a world that is constantly trying to disappear us.” For this gift, she says she is glad to be among a “generational cohort that I love and respect.” At the same time she acknowledges, “What I see in the market is a desire for black figuration, blunt and blatant figuration.” This mode of presentation does make the black body visible and esteemed. However, Shiferaw, Jackson, and Pendleton have taken a divergent, strategic approach in which, as Jackson tells me, the body is implicit, but these artists carefully calibrate how and under what conditions it is seen. It is not for ready consumption. This body will not provide sustenance for appetites desiring the exotic, the sumptuous ethnic flesh that in the larger culture is as much longed for as it is held in contempt.

Paul Anthony Smith, “Afternoon Brew” (2016) 95 x 48 inches (photo courtesy Ziehersmith Gallery, New York)

Other artists have that work aligns with this wave, including Paul Anthony Smith, a 29-year-old artist born in Jamaica but raised in Miami, whose photo-based works, shown at Ziehersmith gallery utilized images of black people in a parade underneath a scrim of pointillist geometric patterns, and they derive their titles from classic jazz albums. Though he was born in 1965, Hurvin Anderson falls within this group as well. His exhibition at Michael Werner last winter stunned me with how smoothly he slips between delicately rendered organic shapes, geometric abstraction, and images of civil rights leaders.

For all these makers there is a poise in using this most formal of formalist aesthetics to slip in a set of politics under the cover of a bulletproof abstraction. They find rewards smuggling in their own bodies under the sign of a practice that renders these bodies more valuable, more sophisticated, and present in unanticipated ways.

However, these artists have not operated in a vacuum. I think of this development of a kind of insistently woke abstraction as situated on three legs: the artists, the financial markets, and the infrastructure of criticism. The question is how these strategies used by Shiferaw, Jackson, and Pendleton have come to public notice and serious consideration. The indications are that the financial market has not significantly changed in the last generation. According to Michael Chisolm, an art historian, art appraiser, and consultant who has been tracking the market for decades now, it “has been more receptive to artists of color for quite some time.”

“It is a different day from the ’60s and ’70s,” he states. Since that era, “the market has been widening for people of color,” and “now it is helping them and welcoming them.” By “mar-

Rodney, Seph, “How to Embed a Shout: A New Generation of Black Artists Contends with Abstraction,”
Hyperallergic, August 23, 2017

Installation view, Adam Pendleton: Becoming Imperceptible (photo: Jerry Birchfield ©MOCA Cleveland 2017)

ket” Chisolm primarily means the auction market, and he cites the remarkable prices garnered by artists such as Jean-Michel Basquiat, Mark Bradford, and Kehinde Wiley. However, he goes on to assert that the expansion of a critical infrastructure to support artists’ experimentation, to make their work comprehensible to collectors, dealers, and curators, to establish the lineages within which they are operating, is pivotal.

Chisolm says, “There has to be literature; that’s almost more important than a market. It means it is respected and received by the field.” He tells me how scholarly work has this impact: “I know many collectors who follow the literature very closely and are influenced by it, by critics, and that helps build the market.” What has also recently changed, according to Chisolm, is that there are many more critics writing about art, thus the criticism is much more varied and, in his words, “user friendly.” I myself found several prominent scholarly voices who have spent the requisite time studying and writing and considering the work of artists of color to create and sustain this infrastructure. Sims, Mercer, Edwards, and Hockely are key figures in it. And there are more. I reached out to Kellie Jones, a MacArthur fellow and historian and curator of contemporary art that issues from the African Diaspora, to gain her input for this piece. She wasn’t able to speak to me, but did suggest four other curators and art historians (one of whom is Hockley) that she thought would be able to address this topic. Thus my own experience writing

this piece has connected me to a network of writers and thinkers who help to convey these (implicit) black bodies across the thresholds of market valuation while also identifying their incommensurable cultural and aesthetic worth.

Shiferaw says that he feels he has a community and thus can have “a conversation with artists, curators, and directors and writers, a conversation that is deep and helpful.” Jackson tells me that she first encountered new ways to think about the historic role of abstraction during her undergraduate tenure at Cooper Union, where several artist teachers, including Walid Raad, Dore Ashton, and Doug Ashford, showed her that artists could be part of critical, public political theory.

“They are the ones who brought these radical notions that caring about the world could and actually was embedded in the history of Color Field painting and abstract processes,” she explains. These teachers who provided a critical framework for Jackson, impelled her to move beyond the established orthodox oppositions between abstraction and a lived set of politics. They urged her to see that what Ad Reinhardt and Barnett Newman set out to do had parallels with Ana Mendieta and Eva Hesse. Yet doubt persists. “I’m still not sure where I fit in,”Jackson admits. But she is surrounded by fellow artists Shiferaw, Smith, Anderson, and Pendleton, and writers, curators, and historians who will help her carve out this space and give it its proper name.

Scher, Robin, “Baltimore Museum of Art Appoints Adam Pendleton to Its Board Along with Six Other New Trustees,” *ARTnews*, August 22, 2017

ARTnews

Baltimore Museum of Art Appoints Adam Pendleton to Its Board Along with Six Other New Trustees

By: Robin Scher | August 22, 2017

The Baltimore Museum of Art has appointed seven new trustees to its board, including the artist Adam Pendleton along with Heidi Berghuis, Maya Rockeymoore Cummings, Brooke Lierman, David H. Milton, Scott Schelle, and Wilma Bulkin Siegel.

Adam Pendelton. COURTESY BMA

Pendleton is a New York-based artist known for work that questions the inter-related concepts of language, politics, and identity. His work is currently on view in the Baltimore Museum’s Front Gallery—in the form of paintings, collages, screen prints, and large-scale wall works—and is in the permanent collections of the Guggenheim Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Studio Museum in Harlem, and Tate Modern in London, among others. The other appointees joining him on the board include figures prominent in the worlds of business, politics, art, and design around Baltimore and nearby Washington, D.C.

In a statement, the Baltimore Museum’s director, Christopher Bedford, said, “This is an exciting time to participate on the BMA’s board of trustees as we embark on creating a new strategic vision for the next five years. These new trustees have joined a group that is passionate about art and seeing how it can serve the community in Baltimore City and beyond.”

Civin, Marcus, “Critics’ Picks,” *Artforum.com*, May 25, 2017

ARTFORUM

Critics’ Pick

By: Marcus Civin I May 25, 2017

Adam Pendleton, *if the function of writing*, 2016, silk-screen ink on Mylar, 29 × 38”

BALTIMORE

Adam Pendleton

BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART
10 Art Museum Drive
March 26–October 1, 2017

In Baltimore—the southernmost northern city and the northernmost southern city, as some call it—Adam Pendleton evokes Malcolm X, who in his 1964 speech *The Ballot or the Bullet* rallied black people to resist the comprehensive conspiracy of American racism. “We haven’t benefited from America’s democracy,” he said. “Stop talking about the South. As long as you south of the Canadian border, you South.”

As seen in one of Pendleton’s various floor-to-ceiling wall works, a reproduction of a historical installation of paintings by Holocaust escapee Marc Chagall appears to be disintegrating or reforming, as are elsewhere a towering knife and hatchet. In a central grouping of pieces, four tall shadowy paintings hang on top of a separate text-based wall work. The paintings, Untitled (A Victim of American Democracy), 2017, and the text work, *A Victim of American Democracy IV (wall work)*, 2016, contain letters but refuse any standard formation of them into words. So too for a new lobby installation, *A Victim of American Democracy II (wall work),* 2015. What looks like a partial D next to an E might be the start of the word democracy, but as they are here, enlarged and printed from a collage of letter fragments, they are typographically and linguistically obstructed, cut off from other jaunty, orphaned, and inchoate neighbors.

For what is… (study), 2017, Pendleton wrote and repeated the phrase “What is Black Lives Matter” across and down a piece of Mylar, bounding off the page at the end of each line, filling it up, then turning it ninety degrees to continue on. Where different letters overlap, they negate each other and allow for new forms, nonsense quasi-words such as –ciives, *kue_, and *bluac*. If this is language, it is a dissonant one—a radical cacophony, more of which could maybe knock against disgusting truths.

— Marcus Civin

Porbic, Pac, “Frieze New York gets theatrical,” *The Art Newspaper*, May 4, 2017

THE ART NEWSPAPER

Frieze New York gets theatrical

For this year’s Frieze Projects tribute, four artists will recreate and riff on Galleria La Tartaruga’s historic Teatro delle Mostre exhibition, which turned experiences into works of art

By: Pac Porbic I May 4, 2017

Adam Pendleton’s Untitled (1958). Courtesy of the artist and Scott & Co

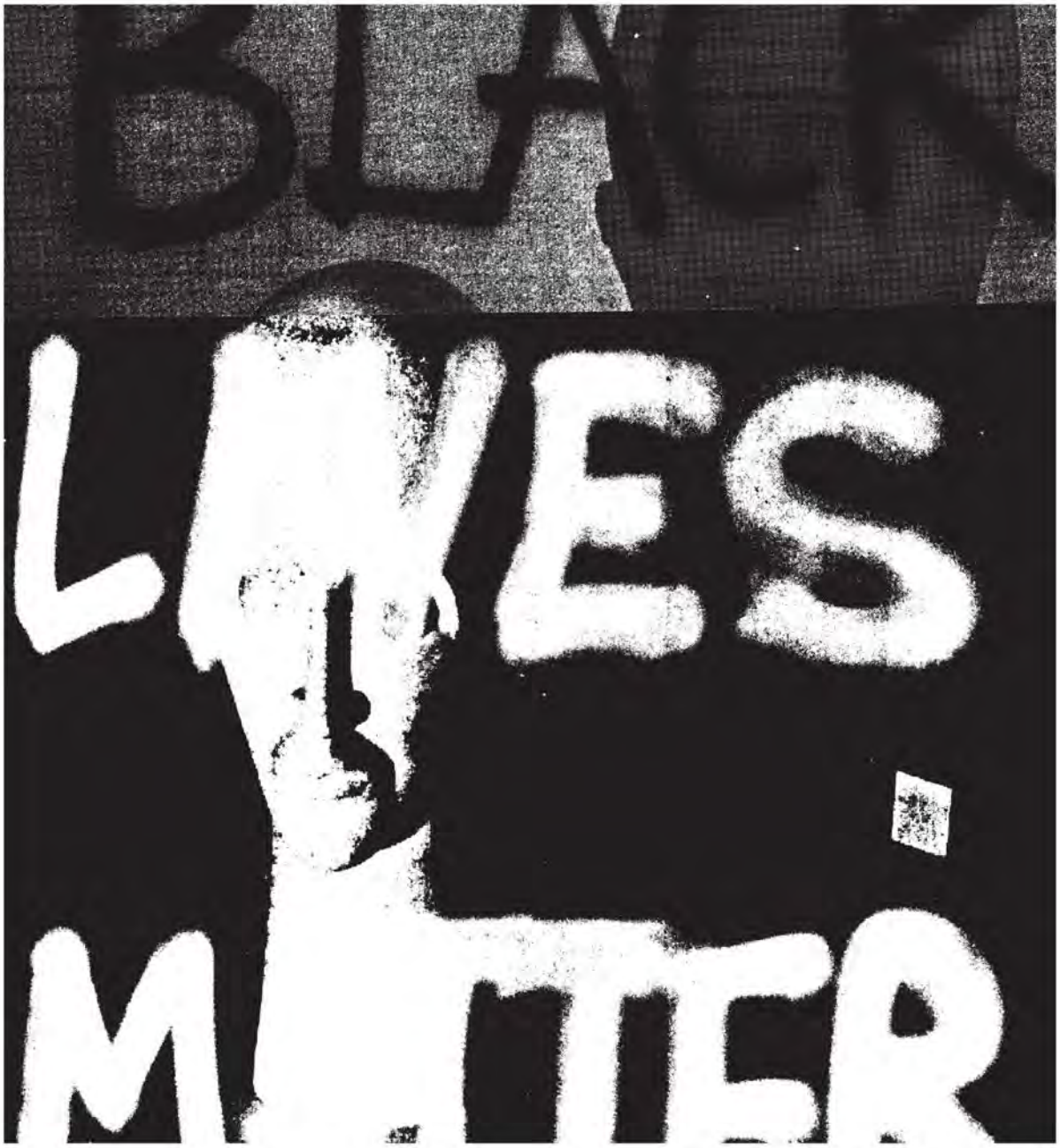
Adam Pendleton

Saturday 6 May

“When I’m presented with the idea of responding to historical material, I think of parallel tracks, rather than trying to get into the same lane,” Pendleton says of his performance, which is done in collaboration with the singer and songwriter Alicia Hall Moran. With a string quartet and two gospel singers, Moran will perform an aria she composed, for which Pendleton wrote the libretto. “The booth will be on the spare side,” Pendleton says, focused on an installation based on an earlier collage of his that will “function like a traditional theatrical backdrop”. His libretto is also based on an earlier work: it expands on his 2007 Performa commission, The Revival, which was the first project he collaborated on with Moran.

Biswas, Allie, “In Conversation: Adam Pendleton with Allie Biswas,” *The Brooklyn Rail*, September 2016, pp. cover, 63-65

THE BROOKLYN RAIL



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SEPTEMBER 2016

Biswas, Allie, "In Conversation: Adam Pendleton with Allie Biswas," *The Brooklyn Rail*, September 2016, pp. cover, 63-65

*in*conversation

Adam Pendleton
WITH ALLIE BISWAS

Words are essential in Adam Pendleton's art. The artist's engagement with experimental prose and poetry over the past ten years, along with his cross-referencing of visual and social histories, has made space for new types of language within conceptual art. Pendleton's largest U.S. museum show to date, *Adam Pendleton: Becoming Imperceptible*, opened at Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans in April, before traveling to the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, where it is on view through September 25.

Installation view: *Becoming Imperceptible*, Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans, April 1 – June 1, 2016. Courtesy the artist.

ALLIE BISWAS (RAIL): You made an instrumental move in getting your career off the ground by taking your art to galleries and making them look at it. There's a story that your work was included in a show in New York at Gallery Onetwentyeight, the director of which assisted Sol LeWitt, and that's how LeWitt saw your work.

ADAM PENDLETON: Yes, that's true. Those earlier works (almost) always incorporated language, for one. Otherwise, there was a system to how the thing was composed. So I was convinced that, even though visually they looked like abstract painting, they were very much conceptual. That was actually the most gratifying thing, of course, when LeWitt came into the gallery and commented on my work. Whatever my view on this paternalistic language and its historical accuracy, he's been called the father of conceptual art, so when he said, "Oh, I like this!" I was this young kid who was totally sure of this already and could turn around and say to anyone who would listen, "See, it is conceptual!" [*Laughter.*] But who knew why he was drawn to the piece. I never had the opportunity to talk with him about it, but we did trade at the time.

Some of the earlier works I appreciate more than others, like any artist. But for me, it was all happening in public. So I sometimes think that I basically went to art school in public. I did my first solo show in New York at Yvon Lambert in 2005, and I did a project at Wallspace in 2004 just before that. I was twenty.

RAIL: It sounds a bit absurd, doesn't it?

PENDLETON: Now it does. [*Laughter.*]

RAIL: What was happening to your work and your process during this time?

PENDLETON: The work changed, and—I guess because of my age—I was very open to that. I think a lot of what art students are trying to do is related to trying to find something—the thing that they feel "works." You look around, and it does seem like artists who have had any kind of trajectory have been able to maintain a kind of logical progression of their work. So I think a lot of people are trying to find that first thing that works for them. But actually, the thing that works is learning how to manage the chaos of making art. That's what really works.

RAIL: Your performance from 2007 [*The Revival*] caught the attention of a lot of people. Would you agree that this work took your career in a different direction?

PENDLETON: That was when my own thinking about my work changed dramatically, yes. You have all of these ideas, and then you realize that what you make can't be a half-step toward those ideas. You actually have to manifest it. So I had this idea of taking a Southern-style religious revival, and turning it on its head, and then fusing it with experimental language. It was really that simple. I think it was the first time I had the idea to deconstruct, reconfigure, and reimagine an existing form and ask: what else could this be? What happens if you remove the religious aspect, but you leave the gospel music, the musical component? What happens if you take out the religious language and put in language that's related to queer activism or contemporary poetics? It was about creating a capacious space, breaking down one form and creating something else.

RAIL: Was *The Revival* the first time that you had made a performance?

PENDLETON: On that scale, for sure, but I had been collaging texts and making performances before that.

RAIL: When did language start to be laid into your photographic painting works?

PENDLETON: Well, language was always an important part of my life. I used to write poetry—don't all teenagers write poetry? [*Laughter.*] It's funny that, while things have changed a lot, they haven't changed much at all, and I think a lot of this was just the environment that I grew up in. My mom had Adrienne Rich's books in the house and June Jordan and Audre Lorde, so I was reading their work when I was very young. My dad was a musician—not professionally, but he played music when he was at home. In many ways I think that we are a product of our environment, although I am not inclined toward reading people's biographies to make sense of who they are and what they do. My brother and my sister were in the same house and they're not artists. But of course you see these things going on, and they piqued my interest. But there was also a political drive from a very early age. I always thought that art was something that could effect change, and I think that in a strange way that was the real drive. What could I do that would actually change things around me, or change how we imagine the world and our built environment? Art was this thing that could shift attention.

RAIL: Maybe now is a good time to talk about Black Dada, which could be read as connecting language to a political drive.

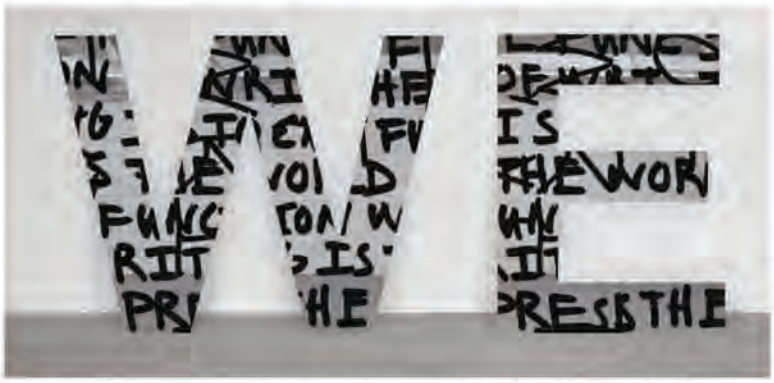
PENDLETON: The paintings that I showed in my first solo show in New York were text paintings, and they appropriated the writing of people like Toni Morrison, Rich, Jordan, and Lorde. They basically attempted to represent the cadence of someone speaking the words that were visually present. They were two-color silkscreens, and I think quite special in a way. Linguistically, they referenced one poetic tradition, but in terms of layout and so on they had a concrete poetry aspect, though less austere somehow than that might sound. They were quite erotic and loving. Later I became introduced to writers like Joan Retallack, Ron Silliman, Leslie Scalapino, and Charles Bernstein.

Portrait of Adam Pendleton. Pencil on paper by Phong Bui. From a photo by Taylor Dafoe.

RAIL: What impact did those writers have on you?

PENDLETON: Reading their work caused a big shift in my own work. It wasn't a visual thing. It had more to do with theoretical positions around language, going from one school of thought—I guess you could call it a lyrical school, which the poets I was reading had a very political foundation with regards to content—to a very different school, which was more aligned with how conceptual artists thought about language: language as material. So there was this productive overlap between language, conceptual art, lyrical poetry, and activism—whether formal or content-based or both. I didn't feel it necessary so much to take sides. I wasn't a poet as such, and think I took from the different genres or schools what felt useful at that time. *The Revival* was the first time those ideas were presented publicly and cohesively, and it just happened to be a performance. Black Dada, in one sense,

Biswas, Allie, "In Conversation: Adam Pendleton with Allie Biswas," *The Brooklyn Rail*, September 2016, pp. cover, 63-65



Adam Pendleton, *WE (we are not successive)*, 2015. Silkscreen ink on mirror polished stainless steel. 46 13/16 × 61 1/2 × 5/8 inches (W) 46 13/16 × 35 5/8 × 5/8 inches (L). Courtesy the artist.

What could I do that would actually change things around me, or change how we imagine the world and our built environment? Art was this thing that could shift attention.

represents the things that I started to do with language in a visual space following *The Revival*.

RAIL: So this political drive was the foundation for how you were approaching everything that you were making. But what was the actual intention?

PENDLETON: Black Dada is an idea. When pressed, I often say it's a way to talk about the future while talking about the past. It surfaced in a conversational space, when I was just talking to friends. I had Amiri Baraka's book *The Dead Lecturer*, which contains the poem "Black Dada Nihilismus." I found the language striking: "Black Dada." Just that. The "Black" and the "Dada." "Black" as a kind of open-ended signifier, anti-representational rather than representational. And then "Dada"—sort of nonsense. A sound, but also referencing a moment in art. So this language became a productive means to think about how the art object can function, and does function, in the world. What can art do? I think all artists should be asking themselves this question. Not "what is it?" It's whatever you want it to be, but what can it do? What do you, as an artist, want it to do? Black Dada also became a way to create a conversation and to insert my work into conversations about appropriation that I was observing at that particular time, in about 2008. I don't know if you remember how everyone was talking about appropriation around that time, as though it was something new, and it, of course, wasn't. So it was a way to shift perspectives, but it also, again, created space for myself as an artist. I still reside there as an artist, but I keep pushing it and trying to change the shape of it, and of the space(s) it creates.

RAIL: And you put together a Black Dada book. How did that develop?

PENDLETON: I created a reader, yes. That began as a conversation with Jenny Schlenzka, who is a curator at MoMA PS1, about this idea of Black Dada in relationship to institutions, and how it could change institutional dynamics. The reader is essentially organized into three different sections: "Foundations"—so, foundational ideas to Black Dada, which are represented in text by thinkers from W.E.B. Du Bois to Gilles Deleuze to Stokely Carmichael—and then it shifts into "Language," which includes a range of writers whose works I've been drawn to such as Harryette Mullen, Retallack, Jordan, and others. The third section is "Artists' Positions," which collects texts by or about artists whom I relate to Black Dada, including Ad Reinhardt, Joan Jonas, and Stan Douglas, who is represented by his screenplay for *Inconsolable Memories*. It's going to come out next year for a show I'm doing in Berlin. The original version was spiral-bound, really an old-school reader. The version that is being published will include the content of the original reader along with essays by curators and critics who have engaged deeply with Black Dada including Adrienne Edwards, Laura Hoptman, Tom McDonough, and Susan Thompson.

RAIL: I'm currently working on an anthology of black art, which compiles texts that were written by and about artists in the 1960s and '70s. At present there isn't any publication like it that people can refer to. You wonder, why does this sort of book not already exist?

PENDLETON: It's interesting that you say that, because around that time, in 2007, I started to think that a lot of gestures that I had made were actually retroactive. I felt that I was creating something that should have existed ten, twenty, forty years ago. It was like I was inserting things into the art-historical canon. For example, with the Black Dada paintings—which relate formally to modernist painting and the monochrome—I was infusing that space with very different language, quite literally, and also sort of messing it up. Messing it up slightly, but a lot at the same time, so it's also a contradiction, this duality, how a little bit is *a lot*. So, again, maybe these paintings were made in 1914. It's illogical. What did LeWitt say: "Illogical judgments lead to new experiences."

RAIL: Tell me about your residency at MoMA.

PENDLETON: The initial aspect of it is over, yet the broader project continues. It was an incredible opportunity to interact with the collection, but also with the institution, in a more intimate fashion. It was really just the institution saying, "Let's see what happens."

RAIL: So what did happen? And how does the context of a residency affect your way of working?

PENDLETON: The one problem I have with residencies is that I don't really like working in places outside of my own spaces. I like to be around my books, my things. I can't really pack up the studio and go to Beirut. So I thought about my work in relationship to the institution in an antagonistic way. I also thought about what kind of discursive or formal gesture I could make that could disrupt the ebb and flow of how this very large entity functions. I began a conversation with Joan Retallack—who is an essayist and poet, and who used to teach at Bard College—saying, "What if we did something at this place, at the Museum of Modern Art? What could we do?" At the time I was reading a short text that was published for Documenta 13 by Michael Hardt titled *The Procedures of Love*, and so I was initially going to do something around that text, whether that be a public conversation with Hardt, or something else. In the text, and this is a real summary, he talks about the political potential of embracing difference. In essence, potential resides in the differences between us, not in the similarities. I started talking to Joan about this and she went back to this idea of love and eros, and to Plato, to the Symposium. She conceived this event called the *Supposium* and the basic premise was that she invited different people—myself, along with poet Anne Carson, Sandi Hilal of Decolonizing Architecture, film theorist Peter Krapp, and literary theorist/poet Fred Moten—to give talks that began with the word "suppose." So "Suppose. . ." That was the conceptual conceit, or the point of departure: *suppose*.

RAIL: How was the event executed?

PENDLETON: We delivered the talks in MoMA's Founders Room to about 100 participants. Each person was asked to take notes during the talks of phrases or words that captured their attention, and then these notecards were collected and redistributed, and we created a kind of group text from these fragments. As I say this to you now I realize that in a strange way the *Supposium* did somehow articulate what Hardt was talking about. Joan described it as a procedural thought experiment. For me, it became this question about how to have productive dialogues. How can we have productive public conversations and exchanges? How do we repurpose this idea of "I'm talking and you listen?" How does that become more about call and response? That was also a key aspect of *The Revival*: call and response and community through difference, something that has often been a key to black music as well.

RAIL: During *Supposium* you talked about Black Lives Matter. You had previously used the slogan in your installation in the Belgian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2015, but prior to this you had shown paintings in London, earlier on in the same year, that incorporated these words.

PENDLETON: Yes, my show in London was the first time that I exhibited work using that language. But the subject matter came up during *Supposium*, because that was shortly after George Zimmerman was found not guilty for murdering Trayvon Martin. I was asking the question, "What language stands its ground?" "Stand Your Ground" was the law that created the legal gray area where Zimmerman got off. He was "standing his ground." I thought: we need language that stands its ground.

RAIL: So you were reacting in real time, as it were. It's not as though two years went by after these incidents took place, and then you decided to respond through your work.

PENDLETON: I couldn't help but respond to the absurdity of the situation. It was the absurdity of it all coupled with the ongoing task I've set for myself of figuring out what Black Dada is. It is a kind of "black space" one could say. It is also a social space—it creates a social space. I think it gave me the room to respond to Black Lives Matter, even just on the level of the language. They are both very clear short statements.

RAIL: And you were looking at these two statements in relation to each other.

PENDLETON: Beyond anything else, I wanted to look at them in relation to each other—first as an artist, but then as a citizen. And in that context, as a citizen, there was another set of concerns. Jenny and I joined the protest in New York after the Zimmerman verdict. They had to close down Times Square for a short period of time. People were singing "Ella's Song" by Sweet Honey in the Rock: "We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes." Just thinking about the role of voice in general, and how Occupy Wall Street was a collective voice, but there was no individual voice that rose above all others. During the protests against the Zimmerman verdict, I was looking for a voice. There were different utterances, but you could tell that no one really knew how to speak, which fascinated me for many different reasons. Was that an evolution? Something new and important? Or was it somehow a weakness? So it was almost as though, after that, I was asking, "Does 'Black Lives Matter' function? Does this language function? What can it *do*, what does it do?" and I brought those questions along with others into the visual and conceptual space of my work.

Biswas, Allie, "In Conversation: Adam Pendleton with Allie Biswas," *The Brooklyn Rail*, September 2016, pp. cover, 63-65

RAIL: Is Black Dada shorthand for "This is Adam?"
PENDLETON: No. It's a kind of refusal.

RAIL: Regardless, people understand that you're not coming to it in this very straightforward way—
PENDLETON: —In 2008 I was invited by curator Krist Gruijthuijsen to be a part of a show he curated within Manifesta 7 called *it's a matter of fact* and I ended up writing a Black Dada manifesto. Basically it was a system for collecting sentences. So the first line of my text is the title of his exhibition *it's a matter of fact*, and then it collects. So it goes from one, two, four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two, sixty-four, et cetera, accumulating a repeating series of sentences that are also attracting new language to them as it evolves. In effect it is the theoretical underpinning of the Black Dada project, it deliberately aligns aesthetic/political distinctions, creating a chronology-based affinity between conceptual art and political actions in the '60s, for example, which had this conceptual and performative intelligence. What always fascinated me was that shortly after I wrote that, I read it publicly in a few places. But then the graphic designer/artist Will Holder also started reading the text around the world in quite different places, and I love this idea of Holder as my doppelgänger or something. You know, going around as the ambassador of Black Dada. It's so simple—the "Black" and the "Dada." But you're right, there is nothing straightforward about it.

RAIL: By taking the hashtag Black Lives Matter and inserting it into the work, and being in a position where you can present it widely, do you think that you are one of the only artists to have really gone public with it? Do you think this has given you a kind of "credibility" in the minds of certain other people, in the sense that they are presented with an artist who feels very strongly about this current moment in time and he has acted upon it? Given the expression's widespread usage, obviously through social media in particular, its popularity could perhaps even be viewed as "fashionable." That sounds inappropriate, but I think you'll understand what I'm getting at.
PENDLETON: You're the second person to use the word "fashionable." The thing is that there are stakes involved in everything that we do. This is paraphrasing the words of Rachel Blau DuPlessis: my intention as an artist is not to use the modes and methods of protest in the sense of saying, "This is wrong" and "That is right." It is, however, to draw attention to things at times, in different ways through different registers. So I wanted to bring it out of the space of actual fashion, where things are short. Occupy Wall Street, in a strange way, is like the past already, even though it's not, and even though it impacts everyone's life. The same thing with Black Lives Matter—you have it in the media and everyone's talking about it. In 2013 it came about and now, in the mainstream media, it's like, "Oh would they stop carrying on" or, "Okay, we get it" or, "They're interrupting Bernie Sanders now? Don't they know he's on *their* side?" Again, this language *has* not and *will* not leave the space of my work. It was about bringing a different kind of rhetoric and attention to the language, to the moment, to the movement.

RAIL: It was about extending the temporary space that it exists in, and creating a legacy.
PENDLETON: Let's bring Black Lives Matter into the temporality that art objects and discourse can often afford. I showed these paintings in a show at the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver in 2015 and the local art critic came around and said, "Oh, yes, these are nice paintings but this is so yesterday. Six months ago maybe this would have meant something, but it just seems so old." There is the case in point—"this is so old"—when actually these are things that as a country we have been grappling with for hundreds of years. It is neither new nor old.

RAIL: For those who appreciate the importance of not forgetting about this moment in history, you have made sure that it doesn't get forgotten about.
PENDLETON: —Which goes back to that question about how things function retroactively.

Adam Pendleton, *My Education: A Portrait of David Hilliard*, 2014. Three-channel black-and-white video, 9 minutes 19 seconds. Courtesy the artist.

RAIL: Let's talk about your show, *Becoming Imperceptible*, which was presented at the Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans this year, and has now traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver.
PENDLETON: I wonder what people will make of it when they see the exhibition because the work is very slow moving. It's open but also hermetic and a lot of the decisions and steps I make are very slow and deliberate. And not necessarily in a way that I think would be readily apparent to anyone else. So I am curious.

RAIL: The show is curated by Andrea Andersson. What conversations were you having with her?
PENDLETON: Andrea has a Ph.D. in comparative literature, and she has a background in contemporary poetry. So that's actually where the conversation started. Then we moved to how I think about ideas of representation, of politics and abstraction—how these two things relate—which is how my body of work has evolved: from language, to language and image, to a more abstracted or abstract space. So in the exhibition, we really thought about the operation of each floor.

RAIL: It's a substantial exhibition—you cover three floors.
PENDLETON: Yes. We thought critically about the operation of each floor.

The first floor is visually similar to the installation I conceived for the Belgian Pavilion in 2015. It is maximalist, a kind of system of displaying a complete overview of the work. There's a distinct visual rhythm. It's a collage in space.

RAIL: What happens on the next floor?
PENDLETON: On the second floor things begin to empty out, and you begin to see that very much in the work itself. I use one piece to create another piece to create another piece. It becomes a part as a whole or a whole as a part. But again this idea of how to represent something comes up, modes and mechanisms of representation. What is a fragment? So you have a portrait of Satomi Matsuzaki, the lead singer of Deerhoof, who I filmed for a 2009 three-channel video called *Band*. She is taken out of the space of that original, which documents Deerhoof in a recording studio working on a new song, and it now exists as a six-second loop where all you see her do is turn her head. It's just on repeat, an index of a larger work. Then the same thing happens with Baraka's poem "Black Dada Nihilismus." I represent it through a wall painting that lists almost all of the proper nouns from his text in the order that they appear. It's a kind of visual note taking.

Then you have the "System of Display" works, also on the first floor, which began by using many images, but now use very few images and again look at the question of what bears the burden of representation. Is it the language or the image? How do they function together? There are also ceramic floor pieces that I made via the influence of "clairvoyant poet" Hannah Weiner. Then, as you move up to the third floor, this idea of portraiture that began with the loop of Satomi carries over, but this time it's a video portrait of David Hilliard, who was Chief of Staff of the Black Panther Party. This portrait is related to another I made of Lorraine O'Grady and both are partially influenced by Gertrude Stein's textual self-portraits.

RAIL: What are the final works that the viewer encounters?
PENDLETON: Three large, five-foot by ten-foot silkscreens on mirror-polished stainless steel that are based on a photograph of water taken by Josef Albers. They're hung in a raw, corridor-like space along one wall. In the end, they look like abstract columns that distort the viewer's image of her- or himself. The show encompasses various historical references, from the Bauhaus to Malcolm X to the Black Panthers to Godard. The objects carry these histories and ask them to coexist in a way—to ask, what is their potential?.

RAIL: How do you make the works? I have read a lot about the role of photocopying in your practice.
PENDLETON: A lot of the things I do are very matter of fact. Let's say for the Black Dada paintings, I use an image of LeWitt's incomplete open cubes: Xeroxing it, cropping the Xerox, scanning it, enlarging it, and then laying this text over top of it. I take an object and do something to it, and then do something else to it. I would say everything is some sort of collage and has always been. This is true even in the earlier works that didn't necessarily look like a collage, because what I was doing was taking someone else's language and then I was sort of inserting myself on top of it—inserting my own rhythm and my own mode of presentation.

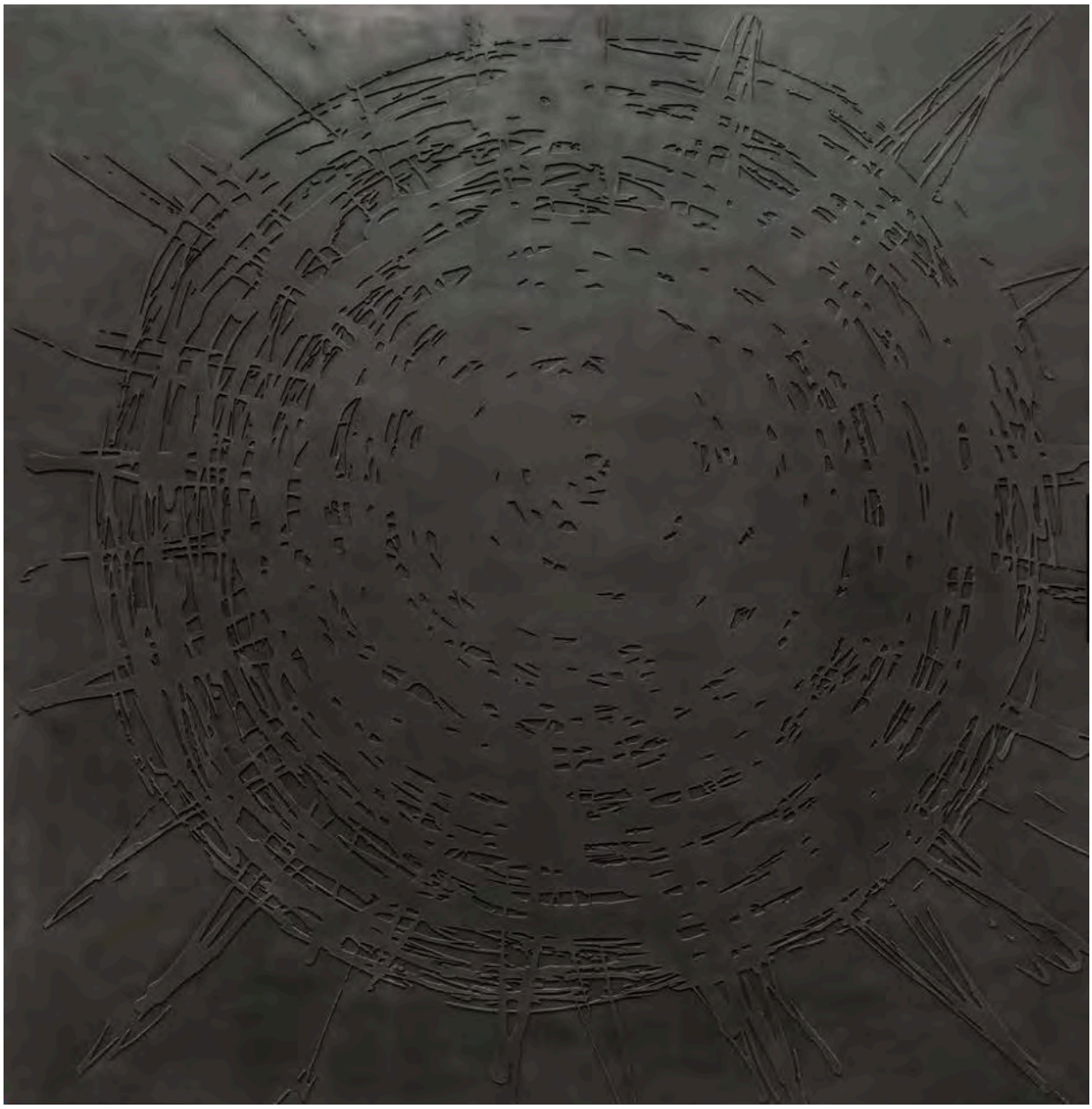
RAIL: What is appropriation for you? What is that doing within the work?
PENDLETON: To borrow or steal? It's a complicated question. I think that's why I'm very slow, because I have to create the space where a kind of transition can occur—where it can go from being an image of an incomplete open cube to a mark or a line. That's a conversation that you have with the material, slowly, over time. Now, because I've been using these images, these materials for so long, I no longer even think of my use as an act of appropriation. I think about it in a more discursive sense of just being in conversation with, or rubbing up against, something. I said once that we are appropriated as human beings, that's what we are. I mean, how can anything be anything other than appropriation—which is why the term is so loaded and also so over-determined.

Edwards, Adrienne, "Blackness in Abstraction," *ARTnews.com*, Art in America, January 5, 2015

Art in America

BLACKNESS IN ABSTRACTION

By Adrienne Edwards | January 5, 2015



Black Sun, 2013-2014, Black silicone, 120 x 120 x 1 3/4 inches. Courtesy of Pace Gallery

EMBOSSED CIRCLES OF matte black silicone form a constellation through which barbed projectiles burst, extending beyond the limits of the round form filling the 10-foot-square relief. The unwieldy circles come together through a false impression of repetition. In the oxymoronically titled *Black Sun* (2013-14), artist Adam Pendleton (b. 1984) reimagines a drawing by the late musician/poet Sun Ra, creating a work that is enveloped and consumed in a metaphor of darkness.

Blackness in abstraction, as we find in *Black Sun*, shifts analysis away from the black artist as subject and instead emphasizes blackness as material, method and mode, insisting on blackness as a multiplicity. In this sense, we can think of what it does in the world without conflating it—and those who understand blackness from within a system that deems them black, that is black people—with a singular historical narrative or monolithic subjectivity. Glenn Ligon was in the vanguard of this shift, and other artists

System of Display, T (NIGHT/Jean-Marie Straub, Not Reconciled, 1965), 2011, silkscreen ink on glass and mirror, 63 by 48 inches. Courtesy Galeria Pedro Cera, Lisbon.

of African descent, including Steve McQueen, Jennie C. Jones, Ellen Gallagher, Rashid Johnson and Samuel Levi Jones, have realized black abstract works. Before them, Barbara Chase-Riboud, Melvin Edwards and Jack Whitten did as well.

Blackness, in the fullest sense of the word, has a seemingly unlimited usefulness in the history of modern art. One need only think of Jackson Pollock and the influence of black culture on his painting through his engagement with jazz music. Within abstract painting made in the U.S., Frank Stella, Robert Rauschenberg, Mark Rothko and Ad Reinhardt have created canvases in shades of black. Perhaps these artists were marking their exhaustion with painting or indicating a turn toward a new phase in their art-making, or perhaps these works were solicitations to the viewer to pursue the illegible and the unknowable.

IN 2008 PENDLETON initiated a body of work titled “Black Dada,” starting with 8½-by-11-inch photocopies of images of works in Sol LeWitt’s sculpture series “Incomplete Open Cubes,” begun in 1974. Pendleton maneuvers transparency film (proportional to the size of the final work) along the photocopy, identifying details that resonate and tracing them with a pencil. Once cut along the marked lines, the chosen fragment becomes the new image and is scanned and transferred to Adobe Illustrator. Here, Pendleton positions it in a 96-by-76-inch frame, which he divides into two 48-by-76-inch sections, creating a diptych. Within the frame, he also places the words “Black Dada” in a sans serif font, in all capitals, deleting some of the letters. As a rule, the letters align with the edges of the frame. The final composition is silkscreened onto two canvas panels in shades of black ink. In this series, we can see how Pendleton stands both with and against historical Conceptual art. He employs systems to make works in a serial fashion, yet he manipulates Conceptualist LeWitt’s forms and mixes them with expressions of blackness, proffering a critique that insists on troubling easy cartographies of art discourse.

While Pendleton’s “Black Dada” wall works are well known and often included in museum collections, the other parts of his “Black Dada” project have been less visible. He wrote the Black Dada manifesto, meant to be performed live, in stanza format in 2008. It correlates the framework of Hugo Ball’s 1916 Dada Manifesto to the ideological and aesthetic proclivities of the 1964 poem “Black Dada Nihilism,” by LeRoi Jones, aka Amiri Baraka. Pendleton’s coupling of these two seemingly incommensurable texts reveals his penchant for the “archive,” in his case a personal library of books on literature, modern and contemporary art, experimental dance, film and philosophy. He voraciously mines these books—which include *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945-1994* (the expansive 2001 catalogue for the exhibition curated by Okwui Enwezor) and volumes from the Cinema One and Modern Film Scripts series, specifically those on Jean-Marie Straub and Jean-Luc Godard, to name only a few—for images and language that he then uses throughout his work. The imagery silkscreened onto mirrors in his ser-

ies "System of Display" (2008-), for instance, is derived this way.

Pendleton's archival tendency is particularly evident in the *Black Dada Reader*, an evolving collection of essays and reference materials the artist assembles as a pivotal part of his process. It contains the myriad conceptual threads that ideologically buttress his practice. Though plans are under way for publication later in 2015, the *Black Dada Reader* has been self-published so far, reaching only a small group. Thus the actual proposition and meaning of "Black Dada" is only partially known.

The copy I possess is apportioned into sections. The first is titled "Foundation" and begins with W.E.B. Du Bois's essay "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," from his seminal 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*. Here the activist and scholar, in considering the history of black people in the United States, poignantly advances the related concepts of "the veil" and double consciousness. For Du Bois, the veil is a metaphor for the social, political and economic factors that divide black America from white America. In my copy, Pendleton has underlined the following lines about double consciousness:

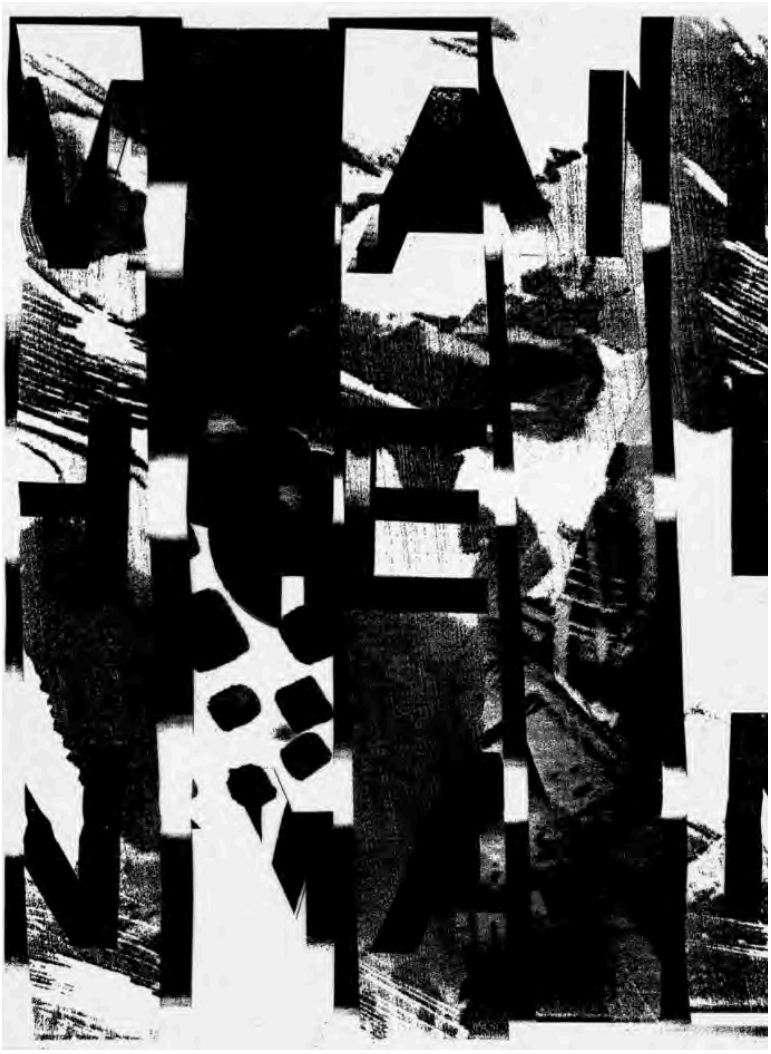
Black Dada (K/A), 2012, silkscreen ink on canvas, diptych, 96 by 76 inches overall. Courtesy Pace Gallery

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

Ball's Dada Manifesto and Jones's "Black Dada Nihilism" follow Du Bois's essay.

Featuring Du Bois's concepts of double consciousness and the veil, the *Black Dada Reader* brings a set of sociological concerns articulated over 100 years ago to the present, accentuating their profound contemporary resonance. A material connection to Du Bois's metaphor of the veil can be found in Pendleton's "Black Dada" paintings, where it is embodied in aesthetic terms. The veil is formally manifest in Pendleton's use of black hues, a demarcation of difference. It is also apparent in his selection of only a few letters in each work from the title "Black Dada," such that, on the canvas, the meaning is illegible.

Pendleton references social and historical conditions through the formal methods of abstraction, producing a point of convergence—the artwork—which requires the viewer to look elsewhere for the narratives that inform it. I am suggesting that blackness is not simply matter for the expression of an artwork. Rather, blackness is a conceptual paradigm that is inherent to Pendleton's work and infiltrates all of its dimensions. This understanding of blackness's immanence follows from the writings of scholar Nahum Dimitri Chandler, who in turn draws heavily on Du Bois. *In Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (1940), Du Bois analyzes his life through the lens of race—a lens that is problematic and fallible yet real. His notion of the "autobiography of a concept of race" is at play in Pendleton's art and, it could be said, so is the autobiography of conceptual art.



a woman on the train asks angela davis for an autograph (14017), 2014, silkscreen ink on Mylar, 77½ by 59½ inches. Courtesy Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago

Pendleton’s excavations of his “archive” are acts of abstraction; they remove from their source concerns, ideologies and sensibilities that can be traced through a genealogy of thinkers invested in the question of blackness. In Pendleton’s work, conceptual art tells its story through references to LeWitt, Adrian Piper and Ligon, as well as to Gertrude Stein and the language poets. For Pendleton, concepts have a life of their own, each a trajectory through the subjective context of lived experience. His maneuvers—presenting history and its documents through a personal lens and creating artworks based on his promiscuous interests in myriad subjects—often put the viewer in a mode of questioning. At times, this seems to be Pendleton’s very objective, echoing Du Bois’s sentiments on the concept of race as having “illogical trends and irreconcilable tendencies.”

ART HISTORIAN Lucy Lippard defined Conceptual art in part as the “dematerialization of the art object.” Pendleton’s work attests to a change in this historical definition. Rather than a dematerialization of the object, in the “Black Dada” paintings, there is an absence of the black subject, who nevertheless impels the works. This absence can be thought of as a reflection of the limitations of black representation in visual art.

Pendleton’s melding of contradictions in his work takes place within the history of such representation and the long-standing discourse around it. Most recently, art historians Kellie Jones, Kobena Mercer, Huey Copeland and Darby English have productively explored its manifestations in relation to abstraction and Conceptualism. Prior to this, black representation has been formulated by Du Bois, Baraka and Alain LeRoy Locke, in different ways, though always as an important constituent of a much larger agenda toward black racial advancement. The philosopher Locke, Du Bois’s contemporary, marshaled a group of artists, patrons, scholars and writers in the 1920s, and is best known for editing the anthology *The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance* (1925). Du Bois, an early architect of black racial advancement, believed art to be useful propaganda, famously remarking:

All art is propaganda, and ever must be, despite the wailing of the purists. I stand in utter shamelessness and say that whatever art I have for writing has been used always for propaganda for gaining the right of black folk to love and enjoy. I do not care a damn for any art that is not used for propaganda.

For Du Bois, the emphasis was on the creation of black art for black audiences, which aesthetically necessitated turning to Africa for inspiration, dramatizing black life, portraying so-called black features and characteristics and leveraging suffering for expressive purposes. A similar agenda was advocated in the Black Arts Movement, which was founded by Baraka in the 1960s and ’70s in Harlem, fueled by the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. In relation to black artists whose work is conceptually inclined, Baraka wrote:

What and Where are you in this hell created by slavery and capital (which includes colonialism and imperialism)? What has it done to you and how are you reacting or acting toward it? . . . And what exactly is it signifying? What do these works aspire to

View of My Education: A Portrait of David Hilliard, 2011-14, three-channel video, approx. 9¼ minutes. Courtesy Pace Gallery.

do? . . . It is called conceptual art, therefore we want to know, through the work itself, what is the concept we are being exposed to, but also as my old friend Morris Hines used to say, “And then, so what?”

In all instances, black representation has involved the confluence of an artist’s individual perspective or desire for personal agency with the discourse of these movements circumscribing the parameters of blackness in art. There has been a tendency toward figuration and realism in these movements, which have operated on principles of transparency, immediacy, authority and authenticity. These well-meaning efforts ultimately reinforced a reductive notion of “black art” or the idea of an essence locatable in works of art by black artists. More recently, essentializing inclinations can be found in compilations of abstract art, as in the 1980 show “Afro-American Abstraction,” curated by April Kingsley for P.S.1 in New York. She wrote in her catalogue essay that while the artists in the show have a commitment to modernist forms, the art “evokes a subtle involvement with their African cultural heritage. A majority, in fact, have visited Africa, and certain characteristics of the great African artistic tradition are visible, whether intended or not.

IN RESPONSE TO the demands placed on black artists for social content in their art, I put forward blackness in abstraction. Applicable to artwork in any medium, it is an attempt to understand how artists negotiate and exhaust the paradigm of black representation in visual art. I resist a precise definition, while making a claim for its emergent condition and profound capaciousness. There are infinite manifestations, best comprehended through specific instances.

In My Education: A Portrait of David Hilliard (2011-14), Pendleton investigates the systems in which blackness is reified through the historical particulars of Black Panther Party founding member David Hilliard. Pendleton offers the three-screen video as a kind of counterpart to his all-black wall works, as if to reactivate that which was foreclosed by his material choices. Here, the autobiographical aspects of a concept of racial blackness are straightforwardly presented. The approximately 9-minute video comprises documentary footage Pendleton and a film crew captured in 2011 as they drove with Hilliard through a series of neighborhoods in Oakland, Calif., the prime loci of the Black Panther organization. They go from empty lots, streets, houses and storefronts where the Panthers operated programs for the black working poor to the site of the Apr. 6, 1968 shoot-out in

View of My Education: A Portrait of David Hilliard, 2011-14, three-channel video, approx. 9¼ minutes. Courtesy Pace Gallery.

which Bobby Hutton, Black Panther treasurer, was fatally wounded by police (two days after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.). In the video, Hilliard, a lecturer, educator and former Black Panther chief of staff, recalls the shoot-out and the series of events that led to Hutton’s death.

Filmed in black-and-white with a meditative, introspective timbre, the video employs multiple camera angles that are montaged to foreground the conflict between Hilliard’s recollections and the official state and federal records as well as to highlight the dissonance between the various interpretations of the Black Panthers in American history. The juxtapositions serve to question the reliability of any historical example. Interspersed throughout are close-ups of architecture, such as expanses of craggy, rocklike gray plaster (a surface typical of homes in California), that act as visual pauses. At one point, an eruption of plaster appears in the midst of Hilliard’s cadenced account of the shooting. The insistence of his voice in combination with the abstracted images reminds us that even when the subject is not visible and the scene of the crime has been disinfected long ago, the subject is continuously and insistently called upon again and again.

With My Education: A Portrait of David Hilliard, Pendleton slices and sculpts imagistic captures of reality that link the moment of the then to the moment of the now. The portrait inserts a new historical record into the collective archive. It reorients our attention to film’s ability not only to observe a life or to materialize a concept but to examine larger social and cultural events in order to reconsider them entirely. Pendleton’s blackness in abstraction, in joining past and present, suspends time and space, much as Hilliard’s mulled contemplations enrapture and carry us along.

Pendleton’s traversal of mediums—specifically those addressed here—demonstrates more than a desire to create cross-disciplinary art. Rather, it illuminates the ways that the text and image sources he culls for his works draw on the historical, social and political factors that forge a subject.

Hudson, Suzanne "'As if a correct line would somehow solve the future'," *I'll Be Your*, London: Pace Gallery, 2012

"As if a correct line would somehow solve the future"
Suzanne Hudson

Black Dada: two words, the former intractably qualifying the latter. They warp as I type them, letter following letter, even in a font other than the sans serif Arial – a compromised stand-in for the more ubiquitous Helvetica – in which Adam Pendleton requires them to appear. Each word exerts significant force aside from such typographic considerations, which might be deemed irrelevant to the semantic shifts their proximity triggers. But Pendleton's formal decisions demand the kind of concerted attention that, say, fosters the recognition of Arial or the detection of different finishes of black paint. Similar aspirations for the instantiation of subjectivity on the part of the maker and viewer alike through plastic experiments were a hallmark of many modernist undertakings directed towards utopian social configurations; admittedly unfulfilled, they encourage imaginings of alternate histories, a project that Pendleton extends. If representation conjures hypotheticals as a matter of course, Pendleton materializes the space of incipient opportunity, and renders it his subject.

Though Pendleton's incorporation of Dada is not arbitrary – indeed, his interest in the avant-garde matters a great deal – it serves most accurately as a medium for the incubation of objects that assume a range of formats under the Black Dada moniker. Pendleton drafted *Black Dada* in 2008, en route to Italy to participate in Manifesta 7. He composed the tract quickly, not realizing the importance it would assume for the series of paintings of the same name on which he has been at work since that time. *Black Dada* admits its local genesis: the first line, "it's a matter of fact," echoes the section of the biennial in which Pendleton's contribution was to be shown, "It's a Matter of Fact." Pendleton's incorporation of the circumstances of production flags a contemporary predicament; likewise he means to invoke Hugo Ball's 1916 *Dada Manifesto* and his title comes from the poem "Black Dada Nihilismus," written by LeRoi Jones in 1964 before his christening as the black nationalist, Amiri Baraka. Which is to say that while Black Dada self-reflexively posits a connection to art history proper, decisive, too, is its situatedness within a civil-rights era past, the grim legacy of which inflects current conditions. As Pendleton writes in *Black Dada*: "Black Dada is a way to talk about the future while/talking about the past; it is our present moment."

To talk through Black Dada requires, for Pendleton, a coherent syntax. In this, Pendleton follows language poets, Ron Silliman in particular, in crafting variants on the new sentence. Like Silliman's great "Albany," published in 1983 but clearly bearing the traces of long years of sectarian violence and civil dissent, *Black Dada* aggregates these so-called sentences (which take the declarative and interrogative and are sometimes clauses or fragments further unmoored from narrative context) without discernable causality from line to line. Juxtapositions nonetheless create meanings, underlining the arbitrary nature of their eventuality. For Pendleton's sentences stack up rather than string together, with sections comprising the same number of

sentences as the numeral under which they are clustered – so that the first has one entry, the second two, the fourth four, and so on, all the way to 128. Rules govern articulation, as they do in the *Black Dada* paintings, even as they admit the space between word and image.

Where certain manifesto-derived art refers so totally to the strictures of the generating text that it becomes merely illustrational (e.g., certain paintings of lamp-posts or racing cars derived from Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's Futurist imagery) Pendleton's paintings obey their own compositional rules. The closest they come to prescription are passages such as the following, which neither consolidate iconography nor detail method: "The Black Dada must use irrational language./ The Black Dada must exploit the logic of identity./The Black Dada's manifesto is both form/and life." The text's frontispiece, devised by the graphic designer Vance Wellenstein, mirrors one of the first *Black Dada* paintings, *Black Dada* (*LK/DDA*), 2008: L and K turn on their sides along the left vertical seam of the page and D D A move towards the lower right corner. This approach exploits the gestalt principle of closure, whereby the mind completes an incomplete figure by reflexively supplying the missing information, Pendleton grants enough information to read BLACK DADA, though Pendleton's excision of more and more letters in his most recent paintings indicates a functional openness that attenuates legibility.

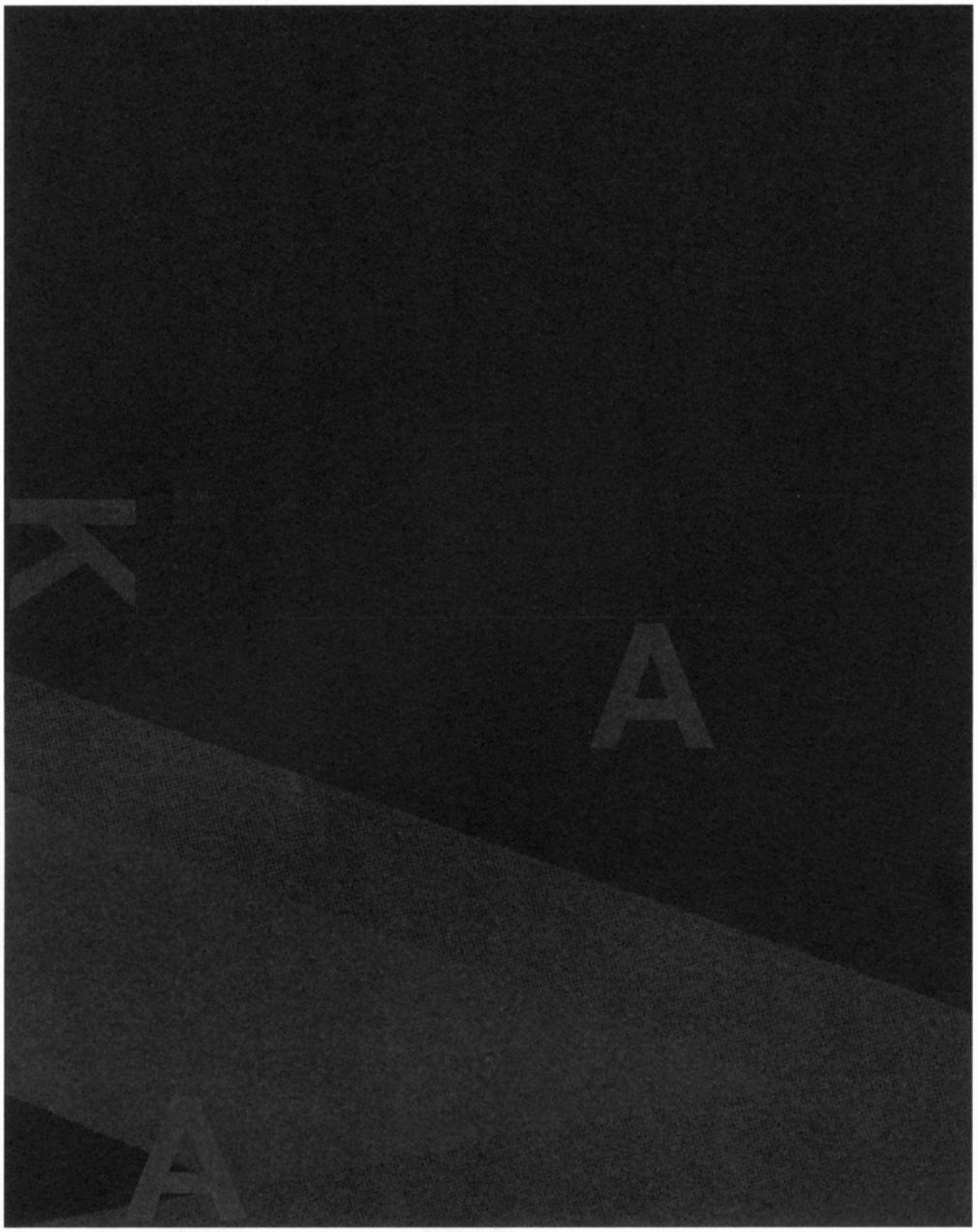
To be sure, one of the most profound differences between the page and the oversized panels is the motivation of the letters' relative scale in the second. By contrast to the arrangement described just above, the paintings build out from the words BLACK DADA, drawn in all caps, scaled to the vertical axis, with the size of DADA relative to the size of BLACK. Thus they accord with what Michael Fried once named the "deductive structure" in Frank Stella's own *Black Paintings*, which took the frame as the boundary that pragmatically organized the often concentric geometries nesting within. This plays the literal shape of the physical support against the depicted shape of its painted image in an insistent dialectic where shape becomes form that confirms its genesis as shape. Yet where Stella filled his canvases to the edges, Pendleton accommodates blank spaces. Another self-imposed rule stipulates that the letters must limn the border (they cannot float); Pendleton has introduced still other rules since commencing the project, as now a word can extend across any perimeter (not just the left vertical for BLACK and the bottom right horizontal for DADA), as in *Black Dada* (*K/A/A*), 2011.

These concerns notwithstanding, Pendleton's process remains largely unchanged: he begins each painting with an 8.5×11 photocopy – usually though not always at 100% – of a reproduction of one of Sol LeWitt's *Incomplete Open Cubes*, begun in 1974.

Hudson, Suzanne "'As if a correct line would somehow solve the future'," *I'll Be Your*, London: Pace Gallery, 2012

Frontispiece for *Black Dada* text

Hudson, Suzanne "'As if a correct line would somehow solve the future'," *I'll Be Your*, London: Pace Gallery, 2012



Black Dada (*K/A/A*), 2011
Silkscreen ink on canvas
Diptych
48 × 76 inches (121.9 × 193 cm) each panel
96 × 76 inches (243.8 × 193 cm) overall

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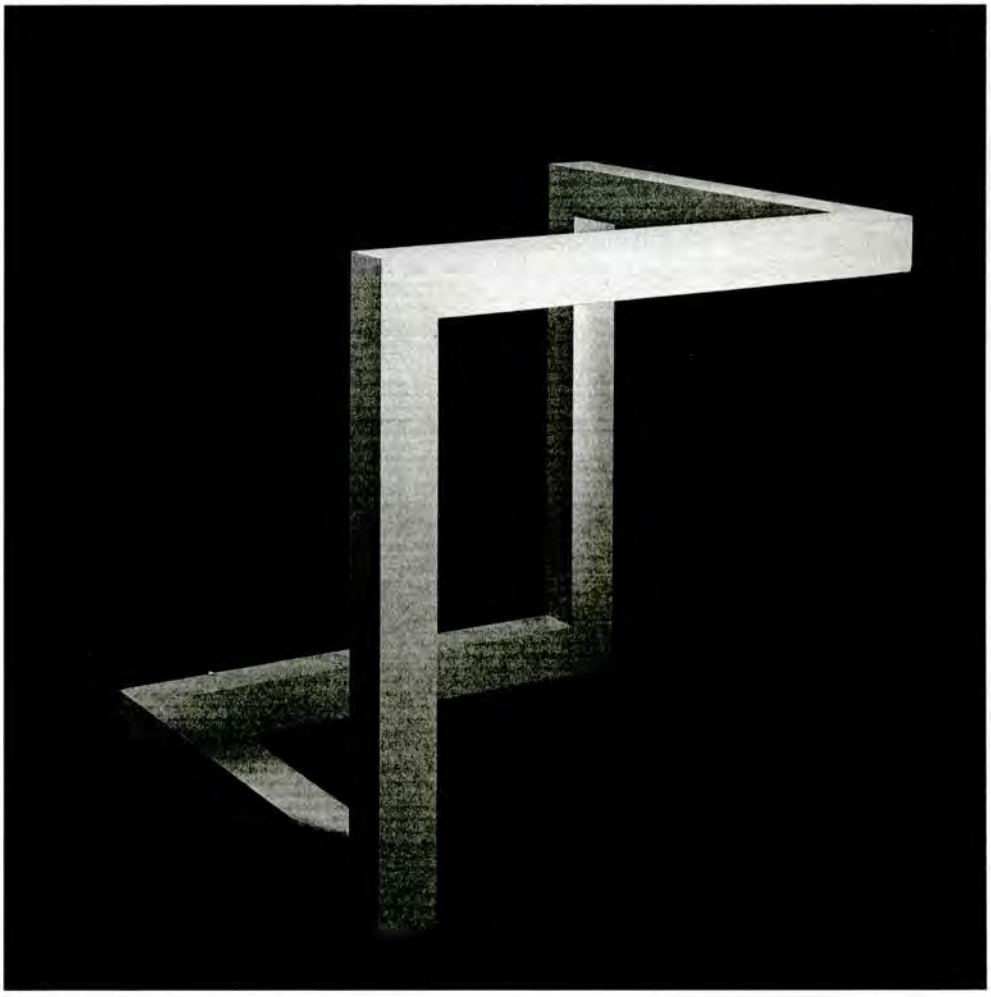

Photocopy of Sol LeWitt's *Incomplete Open Cube 6/24*, 1974,
from *Sol LeWitt*: *Incomplete Open Cubes* (Hartford: Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, 2001: 44, no. 48).

LeWitt's series of drawings, sculptures, and related media involves achieving all the permutations of the titular structure, which is to say, all of the ways to leave a cube incomplete.The analogy to Pendleton's linguistic gestalt should not go unremarked, for both ask commensurable questions about sight and cognition predicated upon absences – or the limiting of possibilities that paradoxically abets a quasi-infinity of outcomes. In practice, Pendleton moves a small piece of transparency film along the surface of the photocopy until he finds an interesting area that he isolates by tracing along the edges of the film with a pencil. He then cuts along the line, creating a new, cropped image. If successful, he scans it and imports it into Adobe Illustrator, deleting everything other than the cropped Sol LeWitt line. He fills a 96 × 76 inch frame with the edited image before splitting it into two 48×76 inch sections that support the text. Each layout entails Pendleton's assessing where the words – or more recently, sometimes just one word, with the other implied – should go and which of their letters should remain. Finally, the scan effects a silkscreen film (or positive). Both a template for future work and the means to realize it, Black Dada eschews Dada's categorical claim for negation.

The same might be argued for *System of Display*, an ongoing series of mirror and glass works that Pendleton has been working on alongside the *Black Dada* paintings since 2008. For these pieces, Pendleton sources images of modernist exhibitions and films, performance art, and the visual culture of decolonization from his library – for example, Ian Berry's photograph of a couple dancing in the street during a celebration of independence in Congo comes from Okwui Enwezor's curatorial landmark, *The Short Century*: *Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa*, *1945–1994*, 2001. Fundamentally conjectural, *System of Display* is an exercise in the mutability of things. Images, texts, reflections of the rooms in which they are installed, and the people stationed in them flag the radicalized contingency of their coming together, and the very real possibility of their subsequent disarticulation. Still, their promise might be to make good on the sentence from Silliman's "Albany" that gives this essay its title, and forge a correct line that would somehow solve the future.