



# JIBADE-KHALIL HUFFMAN

# MAGENTA PLAINS

Jibade-Khalil Huffman is an artist and writer whose video and photo works use found, archival material and contemporary ephemera to address slippage in memory and language, particular to race and visibility. Lyrical strophes of text and densely- composed imagery produce objects of perpetual flux, indexed by accumulating layers which challenge normative symbolic and semiotic hierarchies. Through projection and repetition, Huffman's work evokes the untranslatable, ruminating on the liminal qualities of singular experiences through narrative and graphic rhythms. Huffman's exhibitions include the Hammer Museum's *Made in L.A.* (2014); MOCA Los Angeles (2017); Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (2015); The Jewish Museum, New York (2016); LAX ART (2016), The Studio Museum in Harlem (2016); Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (2016); Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2017); Swiss Institute (2017); KMAC Museum, Louisville (2018); Ballroom Marfa (2018); The Kitchen, NYC (2018) and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland (2019). His past performances include P.S.1/MoMA (2010), Southern Exposure (2011), MOCA Los Angeles (2014), ICA, Philadelphia (2017), Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland (2019) and Frieze Projects (2019). From 2015-2016, he was Artist in Residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem. Huffman received an MFA in Literary Arts from Brown University, an MFA in Studio Art from USC, and a BFA from Bard College. Huffman is also the author of three books of poems: *Sleeper Hold* (Fence, 2015), *James Brown is Dead* (Future Plan and Program, 2011), and *19 Names For Our Band* (Fence, 2008).

Born in 1981, Detroit, MI  
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*Frieze*

December 2020

**frieze****Jibade-Khalil Huffman Thinks a Picture Speaks a Thousand Words**

Diverging from filmic poetry, at Magenta Plains, New York, the artist presents a new body of work without his usual smattering of textual imagery



The 20th-century film scholar P. Adams Sitney noted, in an introduction to the second edition of his landmark volume *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde 1943–1978* (1979), that moving pictures made and distributed outside of commercial film production were once called ‘film poems’. The term seems appropriate to describe Jibade-Khalil Huffman’s artistic practice, given the several books of poetry he’s published over the past dozen years and his penchant for incorporating text into his films. Both his arresting 2018 installation at The Kitchen in New York (*Tempo*) and a recent presentation of his incredible feature-length video *ZERO* (2020) at the Swiss Institute contiguously employed subtitles, music and omniscient voice-overs to expand upon a surfeit of oblique commercial and DIY imagery from the digital sphere.



Jibade-Khalil Huffman, *Untitled (Explosion)*, 2020, inkjet on transparencies, looping video, 153 x 68.9 x 3.8 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Magenta Plains, New York

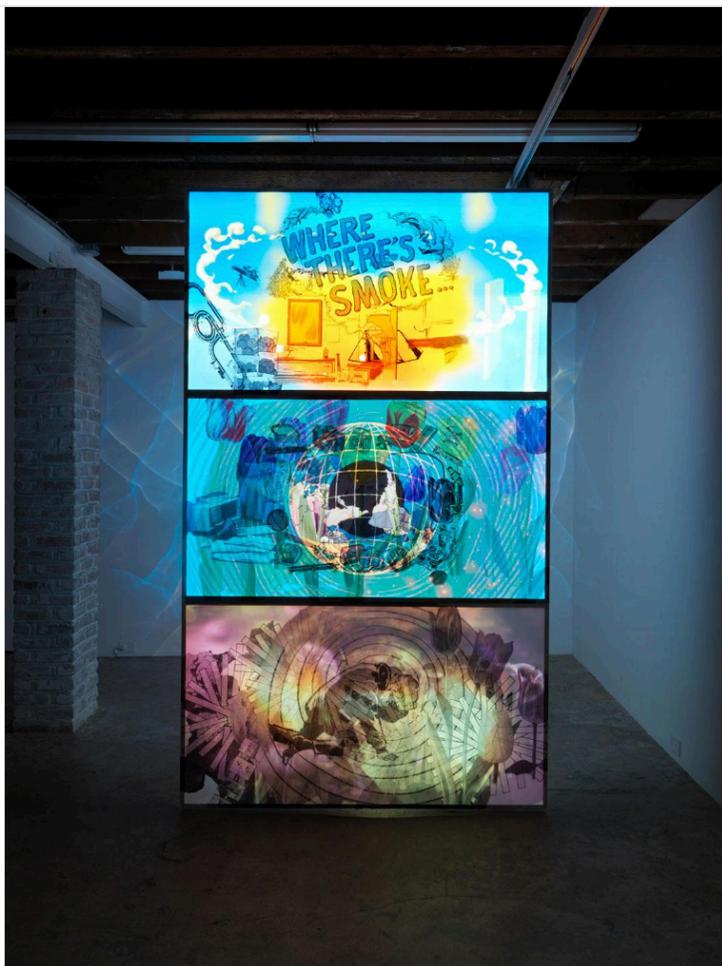
Writing is fully inextricable from contemporary art and part of Huffman's brilliance lies in collating drifts of digital media and blasting through their banality with targeted shots from his own literature. It was disappointing, then, to find he had abandoned this approach for 'Total Running Time', his first solo exhibition at Magenta Plains: an installation of video projections, photographic light boxes and photo collages. Pieces such as *Untitled (Explosion)* (all works 2020) are undeniably visually appealing: abstract patterns projected onto an inkjet print already exploding with markings and images further rebound on a facing wall in a beautiful display of light and colour. But the piece's appeal is muted for viewers who have seen Huffman's odd, shattering phrasings scroll across similar surfaces in earlier works.

In one such moment from *ZERO*, for instance, footage of cars flipping on a highway segues into swirling diagrams while the subtitles lament all that fentanyl-laced cocaine going around: 'which is a shame for a number of reasons not the least of which is because cocaine is a nectar in the pattern of my anxiety'. A calmly verbose, even humdrum tone paired with totally grandiose or otherwise unprovable claims is a recurring tactic in Huffman's practice.



Jibade-Khalil Huffman, *A Void*, 2020, transparency in lightbox with flatscreen monitor, looping video 74.1 × 117.5 × 14.3 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Magenta Plains, New York

By comparison, the works in ‘Total Running Time’ appear more at ease in their situation. In *A Void*, a flatscreen television and lightbox composite displays a looped video in which neon rings spiral outwards from the work’s central image of a cluster of schema and action figures, while audio clips feature a muffled debate about whether the moon is a planet or a star. The narratives in Huffman’s work often occupy the realm of shaggy-dog stories: building on and on until it becomes clear that the tale is meant not to cohere but to gracefully unravel. That ever-circling momentum is absent from the works in ‘Total Running Time’, however: what of the splitting of the difference between the planets and the stars? The question is left hanging.



Jibade-Khalil Huffman, *Where There's Smoke*, 2020, inkjet on Duratran transparencies, three-channel video installation, 1257.8 x 152.4 x 3.81 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Magenta Plains, New York

Downstairs sits *Where There's Smoke*: a large-scale, three-channel video installation projected onto transparent inkjet prints that offers quietly engaging shimmering and shifting patterns. Here, the artist appears to be exploring the essential nature of cinema, or what filmmaker Jack Smith defined in *Film Culture* (Winter 1962–63) as 'the primitive allure of movies [as] a thing of light and shadows'. The result, however, resembles something closer to the ambient viewing experience of a psychedelic light show or a television left switched-on in the background. I'll await Huffman's next turn.

*artnet news*

November 2020

**artnet**®news**Events and Parties****Editors' Picks: 19 Events for Your Art Calendar  
This Week, From a Talk With Ruth Asawa's**

Jibade-Khalil Huffman, *TRT* (2020). Courtesy of the artist and Magenta Plains, New York.

**18. “Jibade-Khalil Huffman: Total Running Time” at Magenta Plains, New York**

In his first solo exhibition with Magenta Plains, multidisciplinary artist and poet Jibade-Khalil Huffman visualizes personal, professional, and cultural identities as deliberately (if not always voluntarily) edited performances. The show features a range of works created by sampling and remixing imagery that stretches across the cultural consciousness, from tennis titans Venus and Serena Williams, to cartoon nemeses Tom and Jerry, to boy scouts competing in the pages of a vintage McDonald's comic. Through masterful excerpts and erasures of these disparate source materials, Huffman reinforces that athletics, artistic practice, race, self-concept, and perception are all constructs. The question is, who gets to finalize the design, and why?

**Location:** Magenta Plains, 94 Allen Street, New York

**Price:** Free

*Mousse Magazine*

Spring 2020

## Mousse Magazine

# That Feeling When: Jibade-Khalil Huffman



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Jibade-Khalil Huffman, *The Circle* (still), 2020  
Courtesy: the artist and Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles

by Lumi Tan

To situate oneself within Jibade-Khalil Huffman's installations is to recognize what new languages we share. Formally trained in both poetry and visual art, the artist prioritizes our contemporary fluency of montage, sensorial distraction, and the particular lifespan of memes. While his expansive videos, performances, poems, and photographs are densely layered with images, sounds, and text, his intentions do not rely on in-jokes or exclusionary references. Rather, the works speak to the ceaseless endeavor of locating oneself in the sprawling cultural world built around us, a frame of enforced sentiment and constructed humor. Huffman's work exposes the limits of self-identification and representation, instead finding potency in the transitional spaces of his visual, aural, and linguistic materials, where meaning is constantly recalibrated.

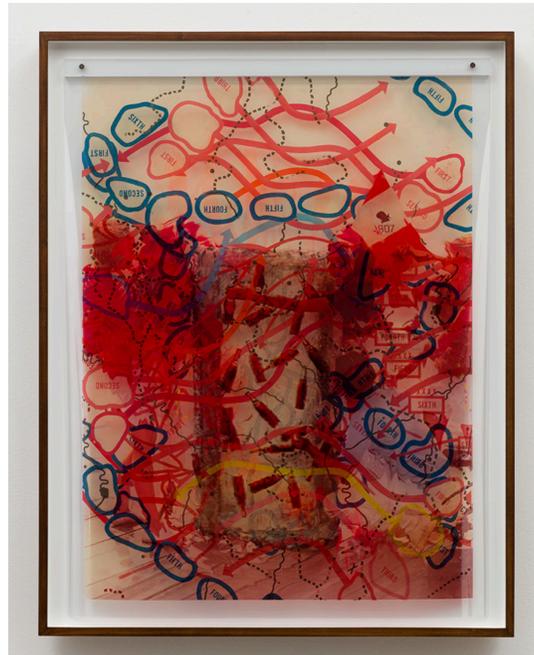
*Artillery (excerpt)*

March 2020

# artillery

## Jibade-Khalil Huffman

by Leanna Robinson | Mar 3, 2020



Jibade-Khalil Huffman, Map, 2019, courtesy  
Anat Ebgi Gallery

The first work one sees upon entering Jibade-Khalil Huffman's solo exhibition at Anat Ebgi is a monochromatic print of the ocean—the hazy sky fading endlessly into the sea like a Rothko color field painting. The print offers a moment of reprieve, the calm before the storm, before thrusting forward into the multi-sensory explosion of colors and forms in *You Don't Have to Say You Love Me*.

The common threads through Huffman's work are unflinching sincerity, vulnerability and a slight sense of cynical humor. The prints and videos read like visual poetry of someone's diary—messy and complicated, abstract yet cohesive. Huffman is an artist whose work is actively saying something and is most clearly commenting on the black experience in the United States. There's a sense of urgency and chaos, with the video works displaying scenes of explosions, car accidents, the daily mishaps of modern life. Murphy's rule seems to hover over the snapshots of reality that Huffman offers—everything that could go wrong will, and it seems, already has.

*Hyperallergic*

February 2020

**HYPERALLERGIC****Hollywood Myths and Latinx Art Histories at LA's Frieze Projects**

"The city is global, and we wanted to bring in the Americas," says Rita Gonzalez, one of the curators of Frieze Projects, staged in the studios' New York City-themed backlot.

LOS ANGELES — This week, the second iteration of [Frieze Los Angeles](#) will open at the famed Paramount Studios in Hollywood. However, outside the main tent, filled with some 70 exhibitors from around the world, a more focused, and less overtly commercial, presentation will be on view at the studio's New York City-themed backlot.

Frieze Projects is curated by Pilar Tompkins Rivas, the director of the Vincent Price Art Museum, and Rita Gonzalez, a curator and department head of contemporary art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). The installations will feature solo projects by 16 artists who explore themes of representation, history, fantasy, and place.

"We didn't think of Paramount Studios as a neutral backdrop. We were really interested in mirroring debates and divisiveness in media discourse — Time's Up, #MeToo, Oscar's So White — all of these things are percolating up in the media landscape. It's an intense moment politically. We wanted to bring in other dimensions to our selection," Gonzalez told *Hyperallergic*.

Gonzalez says they took a global approach, looking at Latinx and Latino art histories, and how those are manifested in Los Angeles and refracted through a Hollywood lens. "We can't be so LA-centric. The city is global, and we wanted to bring in the Americas," she said. "Pilar talks about the palimpsestic nature of LA. It's a Mexican city, and there are motifs, even at Paramount Studios, of a Spanish California fantasy, fantasies they've created and perpetuated."



KCET

February 2020



## Frieze Los Angeles Excavates the City's Multilayered Stories



Jibade-Khalil Huffman centers the power of Black women in his billboard-like, outdoor sculpture, “Mayday” (2018), which showcases Grace Jones in “A View to Kill” without the James Bond thriller’s namesake; artist and activist Patrisse Cullors will invite participants to engage in a collective electric slide, empowering people of color to take up space and move in community through her performance, originally performed as “Fuck White Supremacy, Let’s Get Free” (2019); Lorna Simpson explores action and rest through the movement of Black ballet dancers, spray-painted gold, in her two-channel video, “Momentum” (2011).

FLAUNT

January 2020

F L A U N T

## JIBADE-KHALIL HUFFMAN | IF IDENTITY'S KALEIDOSCOPIC, LET'S LOOP IT

—  
BY MARCEL ALCALÁ



JIBADE-KHALIL HUFFMAN, INSTALLATION VIEW, *THE WAY YOU MAKE ME FEEL*, 2018. BALLROOM MARFA, MARFA, TX. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND ANAT EBGI.

Artist Jibade-Khalil Huffman is in his studio in Philadelphia. He answers my call in a cool collected voice—almost soothing. Huffman is busy finishing up one of his video and vinyl works for *You Don't Have To Say You Love Me*, his upcoming solo exhibition at Anat Ebgi, a gallery straddling the border of West Adams and Culver City. At his essence, Huffman is a collector of digital and tangible objects, giving birth to different representation of collage in video, photography, and installation. “Obsessive collecting impulse,” is how he describes the condition, where wall vinyls, lightboxes, and films are subjected to a cacophony of stories intertwined and always clashing. For Huffman, when images are stacked upon one another, they become recontextualized, and when text is put in front of an image, new meaning is found. In Huffman’s work, it’s not only the layering which matters, but also how these images re-represent notions of the Black male body experience. Whether in popular film, or current social media consciousness, Huffman deploys these collected images that constantly change. He creates experiences of Black love for women in his life, whether in his family or media at large. In 2019, at Frieze LA’s debut edition, Huffman imbued a sense of honor and brotherhood—almost holy trinity-like—in his piece, “Confessional Poetry,” a text and music-based performance centered around hip hop, masculinity, and Black Ego. Such are the notions present when seeing his works, particularly his newer ones.

The past two years have been major stepping stones in Huffman’s career, with two major shows at The Kitchen in New York and at Ballroom Marfa in Texas—both incredible institutions known for their extensive programming of POC performance artists and thinkers; earlier this year, artist Lex Brown performed her one-woman show, *Focacciatown*, at The Kitchen during her exhibition, *Animal Static* (in a lot of ways, Brown and Huffman deal with similar approaches to subject matter in production and experiential installation); at Ballroom Marfa in 2017, Rafa Esparza’s *Tierra. Sangre. Oro.* explored adobe brick-building as a process-centered site for personal, cultural, ecological, and political investigation. Esparza’s bricks became building-blocks to create walls displaying works by other Latinx artists.

*artnet news*

December 2019

**artnet**® news

## 6 Emerging Artists to Seek Out During Art Basel Miami Beach This Week

You may not have seen their work yet, but you'll be seeing it everywhere soon.

**Artnet News**, December 4, 2018

### Jibade-Khalil Huffman



Jibade-Khalil Huffman. Image courtesy of Locust Projects.

When 37-year-old Jibade-Khalil Huffman's solo exhibition "' MEANS 'I LOVE YOU' IN ITALICS" opens at Locust Projects on December 4, it will complete an institutional triple crown. The Detroit-born, New York-based multi-disciplinary artist also has concurrent solo exhibitions on view at storied nonprofits the Kitchen ("Tempo," through December 15) and Ballroom Marfa ("The Way You Make Me Feel," through February 18, 2019). In all three, he views race, identity, and visibility through the cracks in our communications and recollections.

Though he is also a maker of sculpture, Huffman's core media are photo-based works and video, with a special attention to music and sound, and their meaning in the larger world. There is perhaps no more compelling capsule of his interests than the new video he will premier in conjunction with his Locust Projects exhibition: an impressionistic journey through Miami's world-renowned club culture, screened on the bed of a truck circling the Design District, continuously injecting the city's diverse history and nocturnal energy into the languid opulence of its most luxe retail corridor.

— *Tim Schneider*

*The New York Times*

November 2018

**The New York Times**

## What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

Jibade-Khalil Huffman's video installation; Lorraine O'Grady's collage poems revisited; and a last-chance look at Nona Faustine's photographs.

### Jibade-Khalil Huffman

Through Dec. 15 at the Kitchen, 512 West 19th Street, Manhattan; 212-255-5793, [thekitchen.org](http://thekitchen.org).

Jibade-Khalil Huffman started off as a poet and he uses images in his video installations as a sort of grammar, composing phrases, sentences and paragraphs with found or filmed footage. Rather than being watched as a single video or viewed on one or two screens, "Black Twitter in the Age of Chaos," the 45-minute work that dominates Mr. Huffman's show, "Tempo," at the Kitchen, is dispersed over nine screens mounted on the wall or placed on the gallery floor. Sampled, spliced or composed sound comes at you from above rather than from any one source.

This sense of disruption and disorientation suits the overriding subject here, which relates to black bodies and their historic — and continued — vulnerability in the United States. Richard Pryor, in a sampled snippet, talks about a shooting; young black actors enact silent vignettes in cars and on the streets of Los Angeles; the 1970s sitcom actress Esther Rolle performs an anguished solo in a kitchen, wearing a maid's uniform (a repeated role for which she was best known). Little actual violence occurs in "Black Twitter in the Age of Chaos," but when a young black man who seems to be a doppelgänger or alter ego of the artist stands on a darkened street with police lights flashing ... you get the idea.

Elsewhere there is music and joy and ownership. "Black Music Is American Music" says a T-shirt worn by def.sound, one of the musicians who composed the audio for the piece, filmed in a Los Angeles studio. Images of the singer Taylor Swift and a rap commercial for the cereal Fruity Pebbles, as well as various memes, attest to both the popularity and appropriation of black culture and its appearance in unlikely contexts. "Tempo" gently and somewhat abstractly points out the struggle and oppression that have driven and accompanied black music, comedy and performance, even prompting them to flourish, but at a heavy cost.

MARTHA SCHWENDENER



Installation view of "Jibade-Khalil Huffman: Tempo" at the Kitchen. Jason Mandella, via The Kitchen

*Daily Serving*

Februaury 2017

February 13, 2017 Written by [Hyunjee Nicole Kim](#)Jibade-Khalil Huffman: *Kush Is My Cologne* at Anat Ebgi

[Jibade-Khalil Huffman](#)'s solo exhibition at Anat Ebgi, *Kush Is My Cologne*, lifts its title from a track on Gucci Mane's 2009 major label debut, *The State vs. Radric Davis*. The allusion is one of many in Huffman's exhibition that indicate his fixation with the popular nodes that drive contemporary cultural production, particularly, the profundity and cultural insistence of hip-hop in a world that often refuses to acknowledge the omnipresence of racism and anti-Blackness.



Jibade-Khalil Huffman. *By The Author of Another Country and Nobody Knows My Name*, 2017; transparencies in double light box; 35 x 31 x 6 1/8 in. Courtesy of Anat Ebgi. Photo: Michael Underwood.

Resting in the far right corner of the main high-ceilinged gallery, Huffman's film *TFW* (2017), with its hushed audio and manically edited visuals, draws the senses to the piece as a central locus. I park myself in front of the monitor, furiously scribbling all the references I can catch to peel apart the numerous audio and visual layers embedded into the film. *TFW* culls from popular culture, drawing its title from internet slang for "that feel when," a meme that speaks to relationality and sociality. I glimpse snippets of Diana Ross attempting to grab the steering wheel of a car, Tommy Lee Jones playing teacher with superimposed lasers shooting from his tired eyes, a classroom of giggling Japanese students. Several animated motion-picture graphics of characters, which I assume are Huffman's creations, are also inserted in various poses between photographic stills, grainy cellphone camera footage of a car driving down a road, a video of a young boy tenderly embracing a Spiderman piñata, and scenes from '80s and '90s sitcoms. Sometimes the found footage is further manipulated, doubled, and transferred like ghosts. A Malcolm X interview is layered over the track of a consistently beating drum. Lines from Jay-Z's "Young, Black, and Gifted" play: "I'm America's worst nightmare / I'm young, black, and holding my nuts like, yeah / ... / I grew up thinking life ain't fair / ... / There's a different set of rules we abide by here."

A little over midway through the loop, I wonder why I am so preoccupied with the task of tracing every reference, preventing me from contemplating the work as a single entity. I cool down, put my pen in my pocket, and let the video slowly expand. Huffman has stated, "I like working with media that already exist and exploding them with poetry."<sup>[1]</sup> *TFW* utilizes the transformative capabilities of the appropriative sample, the repetition, the remix—postmodern ruptures that hip-hop has long championed and proliferated. Huffman, who is a published poet in the traditional sense, is preoccupied with this elastic reorganization of form and the utilization of language as material, which create meaning across disciplines.

*The New York Times*

September 2016

**The New York Times**

## What to See in New York Galleries This Week

### 'Tenses'

#### 'Artists in Residence 2015-16'

*Studio Museum in Harlem*

*144 West 125th Street*

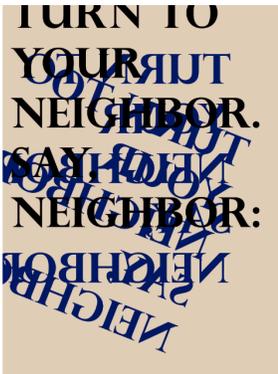
*Through Oct. 30*

Police violence has brought the image of the black body back into art with the symbolic force it had in the identity-conscious 1990s.

[The exhibition of work](#) by the Studio Museum's three 2015-16 artists in residence, organized by Amanda Hunt, could be read as a set of subtle variations on that presence, moving from realism to abstraction.

Bodies are ghostly in a multimedia installation by [Jibade-Khalil Huffman](#). They're seen in occasional figures flickering in a video, and implied in a sculpture made of car windows that seem to have been shattered at points of impact, and in the overlapping, self-canceling words "your neighbor" in a silk-screen painting. Where the human presence is clear and direct is in sound: a constant undercurrent of diarylike, poetrylike words. It's as if an invisible body were all voice, fragmented but steadily and pointedly articulate.

HOLLAND COTTER



**Jibade-Khalil Huffman's** "Call and Response," part of the "Tenses" exhibition of the Studio Museum of Harlem.  
Courtesy of the artist; Adam Reich/Studio Museum in Harlem