

ARTIST STATEMENT

Noah Beckham is a non-binary, interdisciplinary, African American artist, who resides currently in Portland, Oregon. This emerging artist practices “Recycling, Reusing, and Renewing” material and documentation, as a way to create a hybrid experience that is accessible both digitally and physically. This practice is evolving into a process that allows the artist to “Deconstruct, Reconstruct, and Reintroduce” an idea. Beckham creates by painting, performance work, curating objects, digital collages, and writing. The material performs as a door to engages with the work, welcome.

ABSTRACT

“I am working with rope until it dissolves from my hands. (Rope) like a wild animal trapped; has bitten and gouged its leg free from a fixed tactility. Then it escaped into the thicket of multiple tactile experiences to survive decomposition and destruction.” This spring’s 2021 installation by Noah Beckham, Where the Rope Lays :a spectacle, consists of: rope, sculpture, paper, tape transfers, painting, drawing, and poetry. The complete works are gathered in the B10 gallery and on Instagram (@wheretheropelays). The spectacle is a visual illustration of my understanding of Hyperobject and Subcendence. The later term implies a transformation in between dimensions and perceptible experiences. Grab a hold of this rope life line or you too will fall into the force of subcendence.

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A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST COLLEGE OF ART

Noah Beckham

Where the Rope Lays: a spectacle

2021 BFA Candidate

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Line of Inquiry

I identify myself as American, Black, and Nonbinary, and I exist in an intersection of racism, heterosexism, and colonialism. Each identity has shaped my experience as an individual. I'm curious how art can perform in similar ways that humanity does and also be as multifaceted as we are. What kind of perceptible experience(s) come out of art that exists: conceptually, physically, and digitally? Through time and place, technology has become entangled with our social lives by how we are perceived, and what we desire. These intersections not only allow multiple experiences to function but are deeply connected without having to exclude any point of entry(s). In this process, I aim to investigate how I can deepen and expand our understanding of art via material identity and the intersections within.

Material/Technique/Process

I will use cord, paper cut-outs, and tape transfers, digital images to create 4 different iterations of one object. Any contradicting materials that are seen as separate along with the meanings that are accompanied with them will start to subscend¹. The application of multiple materials represents the many identities we may exist in, and also gives more possible avenues to access these transformations. I'm using the object of rope as a metaphor to tie all these iterations together and tape to articulate how sticky perspectives can be. The digital platform articulates a fragmented experience that is caused by not being able to touch or sense the work.

Context

I'm using the social media platform of Instagram because it's structured solely for images, the individual, and it is also very user friendly. In Ben Davis' *Ways of Seeing Instagram* - he mentions that "Technology has so democratized image-making that it has put the artistic power once mainly associated with aristocrats—to stylize your image and project yourself to an audience as desirable into everyone's hands."² . This platform has the potential to make someone become marginalized by my ability to curate their own spaces, and share their work with an agency that may not be provided in a gallery. One of the

¹ Johnson, Jonny. "Subscendence." Dialogues.ai. July 05, 2018. (Accessed September 13, 2020)

² Ben Davis, *Ways of seeing Instagram*, Archive, 2014, [Http://www.benadavis.com](http://www.benadavis.com), (accessed 25 September 2020)

many artists I have been researching is Mauro C. Martinez, an American Painter who uses internet culture to critique Contemporary Imagery. He uses images we see in our daily lives (Instagram) and recontextualize them through medium and techniques. His work has influenced me to wonder how we can recontextualize an idea until it becomes unrecognizable from the truth. Writer Laureen Andalib understood this relationship between reality, symbols, and society by citing Baudrillard's fourth stage of the precession of simulacra, "The fourth stage is pure simulation, in which the simulacrum has no relationship to any reality whatsoever. Here, signs merely reflect other signs, and any claim to reality on the part of images or signs is only of the order of other such claims."³. Baudrillard recognized then that modern media used today can solely be responsible for dissolving the line between "truth" and reality. The effects of this stage are subjective to the individual but are very real.

Prospective Project

For my thesis project, I will form an installation piece by bricologing four different iterations of a rope to dissolve the boundary between truth and reality. A large rope will rest suspended above your head and out of reach. Compositions of black cut-paper will be arranged along the walls in a rope-like composition that leads you to several tape transfers. If closely inspected the tape transfers I've included have poems and images, both image and text reflect the ropes digital tactility.

Conclusion

The room illustrates how one object can exist alongside multiple iterations of itself. Combining multiple modes of mark-making and material will allow new functions to start to arise. Any access to contemporary media will blur the lines between truth and reality and will abstract our understanding of such. New perceptions of material will come out of us intersecting with technology until it becomes unrecognizable from our reality. This project is where multiple material and forms can coexist without having to exclude parts of their truth to do it.

³ Andalib, Laureen. "L'art D'être · Laureen Andalib." *Lart Dtre Laureen Andalib: on "simulacra and simulations"*, Jean Baudrillard. Cornell University Blog. Ithaca, New York. 2015. <http://blogs.cornell.edu/laureenandalib/2015/10/22>

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This is for the performer who forgot their lines, and they had written the script.

Xx Noah

1. read
2. thank you all who joined today thank all who will listen and thank all who here for support this project is my testimony and love letter to you all ,imagine this rope is my outstretched hand , tightly held as we walk through a thicket of material.
3. This is where the rope lays Play video
4. It started when I was young through these organization (summer camps) i learned things lik crafting friendship bracelets and started to really fall in love with the process of creating these objects. This affair has stouch with me since.
5. Moving to portland from dayton oh to portland was a culture shock , 937 is in the top 20 list of most segregated cities so to mediate and temper my conceptual map i carried on knotting and making these bracelets from home, as a meditative practice .
6. When i pattern drafted this object in an foundation class i found that the more my body was involved with knotting the more i felt satisfied or less anxious. It felt as if i was able to process bigger felling and tensions by putting all that i stored within me into this catalyst of rope.
7. Here us see me finally visually articulation the teateher between 937 and pdx by using material sourced form these two places. This poetic was ment to extent the ropes reach and potential
8. As i was making the rope i started to tie the rope around pnca both inside the building and out . at the time the shared studio space wasn't feeln big enough to add knots a material. So to see it a far i needed a bigger space
9. Above the atrium this rope perched above dancing along the rails for weeks . it wanted to say hey before papa took it home.
10. The first climax of this object as when i started to perform and use it as a painting tool. I was looking at this object so much i wanted to see how else i would use it. So in front of many i danced and stepped on toes of my partner clumsily, i was anxious i would get paint on the floor so this was performance was very timid ,contrasting how it been looking down from above for weeks , authoritative, then to be used as an object.
11. What the hell am i gonna do with this object i said as i was stumped where to go next maybe cuz this rope was still wrapped around my foot. I had to comprehend this object in a way that wasn't knotting and holding . so it became a subject to draw , eel hollell around the same time the viewers who saw the performance stated to draw it as well.
12. A part wasn't satisfied , i still didn't know the object .so i stated to take images and documentation and collaged them while sharing and archiving

13. Then my peers started to take images of this object as well. Lucky used this rope in the articulate what she felt towards their own art. "his image represents the power of Black trans, non-binary, and queer love. it represents the channeling of ancestral beauty and veneration through my art, honoring myself, and the people that i love.", im still in shock that others are attracted to this object other than me
14. Regarding my work im not interested in involving bodies because of the tension black bodies have with rope in the subject of history and power. But since other artist are drawn towards this rope like lucky. im more willing to introduce this rope as something you wear or hold than before.
15. Eureka *READ*
16. **subcendence** is the taking of a higher-dimensional object and transforming it into a lower dimensional object. ... **Subcendence** terms the movement between the dimensional gap.
17. Read aloud
The precession of simulacra "there is no longer medium in an literal sense: it is now intangible, diffused, and diffracted in the real, and no one can no longer say that the medium is altered by it"
18. Ouroboros continuation of protection and looping of time. The still frame of the snake eating its own tail is a moment of time displaying self destruction, but also creates a halo or circle that protects what is within that circle or even is just protecting itself. One organism one rope
19. Brazilian artist " Her artistic output encompasses her knowledge of architecture, physics, and mathematic and her observations about time, to weave her worldview. Her work transits between different scales - from the object to public spaces."
20. Aspects of my practice never see the public. Since i live with my work parts of the work isnot activated out side the intimate house.Private collectors usually family and friends have access to my work more frequently than a local public does. Ive included this commissioned work because i wouldve never researched netmaking for this thesis
21. The rope reaches to hold it adjacent neighbor and as a line to lead you to the next iteration in a counter clockwise position. 22. Nets are accompanying rope as a symbol and active initiative form me to gather all these material and objects for this particular spectacle
- 22.
23. Paper offered a fresh take on knotting a line, extra steps like processing the paper and shifting how roughly i treat the cordage because it will give and tear to me willingly. It slowed me down to consider how material can articulate something mor nuanced
24. Paper appears again but has transformed into the a 2d object, to cut a subtact material to reveal the image, touched a different part of my brain. The object felt less flat when paper cut out are collaged on top of each other.
25. But since i was so uncomfortable with flat ness i wanted to lean more into what i could articulat by using light and veil to tell the image of the rope. Kara walker was definitely and inspiration i grabbed from .
26. Entering a bigger space i had to think of new tacit to draw the viewer in so using the cracks of exposed foundation to tuck in these paper cut outs and a poem
27. Then drawing/painting for me is the next lest tactile material

28. Play video
29. This cycle underneath is there as a motif and the continuous transformation of thought and tactility
30. Show painting
31. After painting and drawing is digital image
32. Paper cut outs really flowed onto digital medium for me because light illuminated its silhouette.
33. As i've been documenting i started to screenshot the frames on instagram and started to make this collage
34. After its image the object is abstracted into text. **Ergodic literature** refers to texts that require a reader to make a different or greater than normal effort. The writing had to be mediated by this hands on process tape transfers for me to feel comfortable displaying my words written.
35. This object symbolized when words are abstracted even further and the books content has diffracted from what it once was
36. Directly opposite are the books ive made and filled with content. The tension between creating and destroying , adding vs subtracting, birth and death, all live within this opposition.
37. This book was made in need to have all the content of the installation to live after the instal IS DE INSTALLED. to be contained and condensed into a container TO ARCHIVE AND TO keep
38. researching mythology text has lead my to Ocnus in Greek mythology who was condemned to Hades, spending eternity weaving a rope out of straw. To add to the torment, the rope he wove was eaten by a donkey as fast as he made it. , and this is there to key in my relationship to rope. How metaphor of sloth and obsession. This creation and destruction theme im working with. Im performing as ocnus and the ass
39. These object are there to give this myth I'm working with visual representation. All materials used in this process leads in the next iteration of a cooked rope
40. Here the performance of ocnus and the ass comes into fruition, the satisfaction of eat this rope is indescribable. Digestion is the safest form of destruction we can trust. The food we intake are process down part by part until its unrecognizable than before so the microorganisms to can finally use it a nutrient. So thats what ive done in where the rope lays i've digested this rope until i dissolved from my hands into a timeless material where it can no longer be created or destroyed.

Thank you all who have listen ill now be taking questions from my panel.