



JODY PAULSEN

The Armory Show

07 . 03 . 19

10 . 03 . 19



Booth: F16

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Surreal collaged portraits float atop backdrops of lush green plants and colourfully patterned fabrics. Slogans mix with pop-culture phrases, journal entries, and brand logos, all loudly declaring chaotic and clashing messages referencing the speed and intensity of contemporary visual life - and more than that, the experience of being intertwined in its web, as a living, loving (and perhaps, occasionally weeping) soul. Jody Paulsen's felt still lifes of over-abundance, dramatically captioned luxurious scenes, text explosions, and stunningly composed internet-esque semi-fictions are montages of visual stimulation and sincere conceptual rigour. Their strategic use of recognisable images, clever design tactics, and an especially bright palette, lends the works a wide visual access point through which we can read into sensitive explorations of love, sadness and perpetually out-of-reach utopias in the era of the Kardashians, Tinder, and confusing status updates. Sharing a palette with Kid's YouTube, the mesmerising potential of *good* copyright, and on occasion, the new-historicist sentiment of black queer twitter, Paulsen's felt collages are both visually and thematically - *ridiculously* - seductive.

Paulsen's large-scale works are produced through a laborious process of delicate cutting out and layering of tiny pieces of felt into complex compositions. Marked through an intense attention to background patterning and miniscule detail, the final pieces display a surgical precision whilst maintaining the look-and-feel of the handmade object. For Paulsen, this handmade aesthetic is crucial, and as an art-making methodology, it creates an interesting dialogue with the pictured *content* in the works. What is produced conceptually through artistic, analogue-style labour against the backdrop of contemporary capitalism's primarily digital, and easily disposable or replaceable

image-culture? In some ways, the collages are a kind of freezing act, where Paulsen obsessively organises and *tames* a chaos of internet images, trends, quotes, and logos that would otherwise refuse to be still, to be archived or singled-out.

Within the exponentially growing virtual data heap of the contemporary world, Paulsen works as a curator, selecting, editing, and marrying bits of information together in attempts to mark out his own passage through time and social navigations of the world. This is more visually obvious in earlier works, where Paulsen's use of text seemed to drive the practice as a whole. In *Come as You Are* of 2014, titled of course, after Nirvana's famous track, we see strategic reclamations of homophobic slurs, layered with gimmicky protest symbolism, as well as allusions to the politics of post-94 South Africa and its onslaught of populist democratic language. Similarly, in *The Real Housewives of Disney*, Paulsen collages together the more villainous, and routinely extra-queer characters of the infamous production company. The 'queer-coding' of so-called baddies, as a subliminal anti-queer strategy in children's films and literature is incredibly common, but Paulsen lets us explore the dark brilliance of these elaborately excessive housewife-queens and pretty princes with both a critical gaze at cultural production's role in the creation of 'others', and simultaneously, a celebratory nod to our *actual* favourite characters¹.

These earlier works seem to show small snapshots from alternative universes, fit to bursting with loaded slogans, ambiguous song titles, slightly political phrases, and queer villainous geniuses... Over time, Paulsen's overflowing poster-esque works have streamlined visually

¹ I would regret failing to note that contemporary culture has determined that there has never been a better time to be known as a 'baddie'.

into more singular, iconic compositions, whilst managing to sustain their sensory stimulation, intellectual chaos, and most poignantly, the fun, devious humour defining the artist's production. Interventions in western art historical narratives - extravagant flower still lifes, and Picasso re-workings - have recently provided the artist with a new stream of imagery, itself already rife with contextual specificity, political meaning, and the strange post-modern feature of perpetual reproduction of the modern.

In this moment, for the 2019 edition of the Armory Show, Paulsen's practice expands on his current interest in portraiture, beauty, friendship and the contemporary portrayal of social life. His largest work *Find Your Gaggle* is an enormous landscape-format image of a group (well - a gaggle) of gay men wearing a number of very bright and stylishly patterned outfits. They represent just one of a number of mainstreamed fantasies that the world seems to endlessly produce for queer people: *the gaggle of gays*, best friends and apparent ultimate manifestation of any gay man's social life. The mens' patterned clothing is completely immersed in the textures of its materiality - it almost draws attention to its own existence as an image, the men themselves becoming a 'look-and-feel', much in keeping with what is expected from queer identity in contemporary life. The work is particularly interesting in this moment, where to be queer - more so, *to be queer and black* - is seen more as an exploitable and wholly performative aesthetic choice than as an involuntary practice of daily existence and sociality ².

This interest in notions of portrayal versus tangible reality seeps into another of Paulsen's new portraits, which takes as its conceptual

framework a moment from a 2012 interview between Oprah and Kim Kardashian. The work - a composite portrait of a woman who might be referred to as 'racially ambiguous' - could be said to be a musing on beauty and social perceptions of the beautiful, referencing a short instance in which Kim could not bring herself to say that she was beautiful, when asked by Oprah if she thought she was. She said instead, "I hate to talk about myself like that. I'm so critical...", but adding soon after that she does at least "feel pretty". Within such a moment, contemporary life's current construction of feminine beauty, often defined by the likes of the Kardashian sisters, caves in on itself and is marked with an inevitable failure to connect representation to lived reality, or public validation to the internal validation of self. This poetic historicisation of what is essentially a non-history is emblematic of Paulsen's working approach, which loves to swim in very nuanced, decidedly human moments found amongst a plethora of available datajunk, and composed forever into contemplative - and wondrously intense - images.

Marked always by a tension between chaos and composition, Jody Paulsen's playful work manages somehow to be joyous, loving and hilarious, whilst sustaining a simultaneous sad and philosophical overtone. Through his disarmingly elaborate aesthetic, Paulsen charms the viewer into looking - *gazing* - at these epic tapestry-mural-images, that slowly unfold, and tell stories of gentle heartbreak, forgotten pop-mementos, small and big crushes, and revisionist histories of *everything*.

²It is of course crucial to note that this criticism of queer aesthetic exploitation refers to very particular geographies where, firstly, being queer is legal, and secondly, has escaped taboo, and moved into something more akin to 'what's hot'. While spaces like this provide (in some cases) increased safety for the community, they are often responsible for perpetuating a perception of LGBTQI+ people as unable to exist beyond an apparently edgy image, aesthetic or trope, reproducing the colonial dynamic, which seeks always to produce and benefit from the existence of an 'other'.



Jody Paulsen
I do feel pretty
2019
Felt Collage
270 x 240 cm



Jody Paulsen
Imaginary Boyfriend
2019
Felt Collage
265 x 245 cm



Jody Paulsen
Career Woman
2018
Felt Collage
196 x 142 cm



Jody Paulsen
Thinking About Boys
2019
Felt Collage
223 x 171 cm



Jody Paulsen
Something About Jamaica
2018
Felt Collage
121 x 104 cm



Jody Paulsen
Holding out for a Hero
2018
Felt Collage
191 x 134 cm

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Jody Paulsen's creative work epitomises contemporary art practice, delivering a sustained dialogue, saturated with contrasting patterns and vivacious colours that exhibit his unique style. Often appropriating ostentatious iconography from popular culture, such as packaging, branding, patterns and slogans, Paulsen's eye-popping creative output sequesters, multiplies and reassembles the conventions of consumer-society, offering viewers a glimpse of a far more individualised, and fluid identity.

Jody Paulsen was born in 1987 in Cape Town, South Africa, where he continues to live and work. He specialised in Print Media at the University of Cape Town's Michaelis School of Fine Art, and on graduating in 2009, was awarded the Katrine Harries Print Cabinet Award. In 2012 Paulsen received the Jules Kramer Departmental Scholarship Award, going on to complete his Masters Degree with his solo exhibition *What You Want, Whenever You Want It* in 2013. Paulsen opened his first solo exhibition, titled *Pushing Thirty*, at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town, followed by a solo presentation, hosted by SMAC Gallery, at Untitled Art Miami Beach in Miami, USA both in 2017. Most recently, Paulsen exhibited as part of a group exhibition, *Passion Fruit*, at Temporary Storage Gallery in New York City, USA; and will be presenting with SMAC Gallery at The Armory Show in New York, March 2019.

Notable group exhibitions include: *UPSTART/STARTUP* at SMAC Gallery in Johannesburg in 2016, as well as *Young, Gifted and Black*, curated by Hank Willis Thomas in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2015. Other notable exhibitions include: *After the*

Thrill is Gone: Fashion, Politics and Culture in Contemporary South African Art, a travelling exhibition curated by Andrew Hennlich, starting at Richmond Centre for Visual Arts, Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, USA, and ending in 2018; *All Things Being Equal* at Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA) in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2017; *Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary Design*, curated by Amelie Klein and Okwui Enwezor, a travelling exhibition starting at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, USA, in 2016; *Anyway, The Wind Blows* at BRUNDYN+ in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2014; *The Night Show* at Goodman Gallery in 2011 in Cape Town, South Africa; and the *Sasol New Signatures Award* in Pretoria, South Africa in 2010. He exhibited at MiArt in 2014, Milan, Italy and START Art Fair in 2014 in London, UK.

Paulsen has collaborated with fashion designer Adriaan Kuiters presenting numerous collections at the Mercedes-Benz Cape Town Fashion Week, as part of the Generation Africa fashion show at Pitti Uomo in Florence, Italy, in 2016. Paulsen continues to expand and present new collections, internationally and locally, with Kuiters.

Paulsen's work forms part of numerous significant public and private collections, including Zeitz MOCAA in Cape Town, South Africa; Matthais and Gervanne Leridon Collection in Paris, France; Sovereign Art Foundation, in Hong Kong, Singapore, UK, Guernsey, South Africa; The Royal Portfolio Collection, in Cape Town, South Africa and the 21c Museums Hotel in Louisville, USA.



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JODY PAULSEN

CURRICULUM VITAE

JODY PAULSEN

C.V

JODY PAULSEN

BIOGRAPHY

Born 1987, Cape Town, South Africa.
Lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa.

EDUCATION

2013 Master of Fine Art Degree (MA), Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town (UCT), Cape Town, South Africa.

2009 Bachelor of Fine Art Degree (BA), Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town (UCT), Cape Town, South Africa.

AWARDS & RESIDENCIES

2016 ImpACT Award for Design, The Arts & Culture Trust, Johannesburg, South Africa.

2015 Emerging Designer of the Year, South African Fashion Council, Cape Town, South Africa.

2014 Sovereign Art Award, Cape Town Art Fair, Cape Town, South Africa.
InAWE Artist Residence Programme, InAweStays, Cape Town, South Africa.

2012 Jules Kramer Departmental Scholarship Award, University of Cape Town (UCT), Cape Town, South Africa.

2009 Katherine Harries Print Cabinet Award, University of Cape Town (UCT), Cape Town, South Africa.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

2019 [upcoming] The Armory Show (SMAC Gallery), Piers 92 & 94, New York City, USA.

2018 Water Me, SMAC Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

2017 Untitled Art Miami Beach, (SMAC Gallery), Miami, USA.
Pushing Thirty, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

2013 What You Want, Whenever You Want It, Michaelis Galleries, University of Cape Town (UCT), Cape Town, South Africa.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

2019 Filling in the Gaps, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa, 2019

Investec Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), Cape Town, South Africa.

2018 Wish You Were Here, SMAC Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary Design, curated by Amelie Klein & Okwui Enwezor, [Travelling Exhibition], Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, USA; Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, USA.

After the Thrill is Gone: Fashion, Culture and Politics in Contemporary South African Art, curated by Andrew Hennlich [Travelling Exhibition], Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, USA.

Passion Fruit, curated by Brooklyn Fire Proof Gallery, Temporary Storage Gallery, New York City, USA.

Investec Cape Town Art Fair, (SMAC Gallery), Cape Town International Convention Centre CTICC), Cape Town, South Africa.

2017 After the Thrill is Gone: Fashion, Culture and Politics in Contemporary South African Art, curated by Andrew Hennlich [Travelling Exhibition], College of Wooster Art Museum (CWAM), Wooster; Richmond Centre for Visual Arts, Kalamazoo, Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, USA.

X: Part III, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

X: Part II, SMAC Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), Cape Town, South Africa.

All Things Being Equal, Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA), Cape Town, South Africa.

Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary Design, curated by Amelie Klein & Okwui Enwezor, [Travelling Exhibition], High Museum of Art, Atlanta, USA.

2016 FNB Joburg Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

UPSTART/STARTUP, SMAC Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Cape Town Art Fair (SMAC Gallery), Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), Cape Town, South Africa.

Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary Design, curated by Amelie Klein & Okwui Enwezor, [Travelling Exhibition], Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, Spain; Kunsthal Rotterdam, Netherlands.

- 2015** *Young, Gifted and Black*, curated by Hank Willis Thomas, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
FNB Joburg Art Fair, (BRUNDYN+), Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.
Fashion as Art, The Pavilion, Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA), Cape Town, South Africa.
Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary Design, curated by Amelie Klein & Okwui Enwezor, [Travelling Exhibition], Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany; Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain.
First Donations, The Pavilion, Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art African (MOCAA), Cape Town, South Africa.
Do You Have Barbaric Tastes, curated by Nicola De Ribou & Le Commissaires Anonymes, 4TH Edition of POPPOSITIONS, Canal Warf, Brussels, Belgium.
Forming Impressions: The Ghost in the Machine, Association for Visual Art (AVA) Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2014** *Zigzags, Skulls and Bananas – Oh and Max*, W | E Projects, Cape Town, South Africa.
Anyway, The Wind Blows, BRUNDYN+, Cape Town, South Africa.
FNB Joburg Art Fair, (BRUNDYN+) Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.
This is Happening Now, Gayfield Creative Spaces, Edinburgh, UK.
START Art Fair, (BRUNDYN+, Saatchi Gallery), London, UK.
MiArt Fair, (BRUNDYN+), Fiera Milano City, Milan, Italy.
Infecting the City, Public Arts Festival, Africa Centre, Cape Town, South Africa.
Cape Town Art Fair, (BRUNDYN+), The Pavilion - V&A Waterfront, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2013** *Ceci n'est pas une Summer Show*, BRUNDYN+, Cape Town, South Africa.
In Good Company, Universtiy of Cape Town Irma Stern Museum, Cape Town, South Africa.
Bazaar, curated by Matty Roodt & Matthew Alexander King, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2012** *Mistakes*, curated by Chris Van Eeden, Kerry Chaloner & Matthew King, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2011** *The Night Show*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2010** *Sasol New Signatures Award: Top 100 Finalists*, Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, South Africa.

Swallow My Pride, Blank Projects, Cape Town, South Africa.

- 2009** *Greatest Hits*, Association for Visual Arts (AVA) Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2008** *Print '08 Myth, Memory and Archive*, Bell Roberts Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

FASHION COLLECTIONS & COLLABORATIONS

- 2017** Adriaan Kuiters + Jody Paulsen (A/W 2018 Spring Collection, Woolworths Style by SA), South African Menswear Fashion Week, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 2016** Adriaan Kuiters + Jody Paulsen (A/W 2016 Collection), South African Menswear Fashion Week, Cape Town, South Africa.
Adriaan Kuiters + Jody Paulsen (A/W 2016 menswear Collection), Pitti Uomo, Florence, Italy.
- 2015** Adrian Kuiters + Jody Paulsen (S/S 2016 Collection, Vogue Italia: Who is on next), Vogue fashion Dubai Experience, Dubai Mall, Dubai, UAE.
Adriaan Kuiters + Jody Paulsen, (S/S 2016 Collection), New York Fashion Week, New York City, USA.
Adriaan Kuiters + Jody Paulsen, (S/S 2016 Collection), Mercedes Benz Fashion Week, Africa Fashion International, Cape Town, South Africa.
Adriaan Kuiters + Jody Paulsen, (A/W 2015 AK+JP Collection), Cape Town, South Africa.
Adriaan Kuiters + Jody Paulsen, (International Fashion Showcase), London Fashion Week, London, UK.
Adriaan Kuiters + Jody Paulsen (S/S 2015 Collection), Design Indaba Fashion Show, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2014** Adriaan Kuiters + Jody Paulsen (A/W 2014), Edinburgh Fashion Festival, Edinburgh, UK.
Adriaan Kuiters + Jody Paulsen (A/W 2014 AK+JP Collection), Mercedes Benz Fashion Week, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 2013** Adriaan Kuiters + Jody Paulsen (S/S 2014 AK+JP Collection), Mercedes Benz Fashion Week, Cape Town, South Africa.
Adriaan Kuiters, (Artist's Print Collaboration, Julia Rosa Clark, Georgina Gratrix, Jody Paulsen), Cape Town, South Africa.

SELECTED PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

- Joja, A.M. 2019. *Psychology of colour, texture*. Mail & Guardian [online]. Available at: <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-01-18-00-psychology-of-colour-texture>. 18 Jan 2019. [Accessed 18.01.19].
- Indrisek, S. 2017. *10 Emerging Artists to Discover at Untitled*, Miami Beach. Arsty

[online]. Available at: <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-10-emerging-artists-discover-untitled-miami-beach>. [Accessed 18.01.19].

O'Toole, S. 2017. Artforum - *Critics' Pick*. Artforum [online]. Available at: <https://www.artforum.com/picks/smac-art-gallery-cape-town-66551>. [Accessed 31.08.2017].

Thesen Law, M. 2017. *Late Stage Capitalism Luxe*. Adjective [online]. Available at: <http://www.adjective.online/2017/03/23/late-stage-capitalism-luxe-m-thesen-law/>. [Accessed 31.08.2017].

Pollak, L. 2017. *A Sisyphean Push: Jody Paulsen's 'Pushing Thirty'*. ArtThrob [online]. Available at: <https://artthrob.co.za/2017/02/21/a-sisyphean-push-jody-paulsens-pushing-thirty/>. [Accessed 31.08.2017].

COLLECTIONS

Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

Matthais and Gervanne Leridon Collection, Paris, France.

Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA), Cape Town, South Africa.

Sovereign Art Foundation, Hong Kong, Singapore, UK, Guernsey, South Africa.

Hollard Collection, Johannesburg, South Africa.

The Royal Portfolio Collection, Cape Town, South Africa.

Nando's Collection, London /UK.

21 c Museums Hotel, Louisville, USA.

Gerald Hatinger Fine Arts Collection, Vienna, Austria.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact SMAC Gallery for more information regarding the availability of the works included in this portfolio, or for any other queries.

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