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Biography and Filmography

My films and artwork are about responding to daily materials, conditions, tasks and gestures of people of African descent. These materials, systems, tasks and gestures are repositioned through a variety of mediums such as photography, film, sculpture, artist books and paintings. The results usually have a formal reference to art history and resemble objects or images seen in working class African American culture. This strategy invites the work to be interpreted by a variety of communities.

I have completed three feature films and over fifty short 16mm, 35mm and digital films about the working class culture of Black Americans and other people of African descent. My films focus on the gestures and tasks caused by certain conditions. The conditions are formal relationships, social-economic circumstances or weather, and in many instances, all three. The films consist of the relentlessness of every day life, as well as its beauty—and have a naturalistic, almost documentary-like texture.

Recently I have been responding to the performance of peoples of African descent in old film footage as if it were theater. Either by reenacting the films or just using the footage, I am attempting to create an archive of these performances.

My artwork and films have been exhibited at the Pompidou Centre, Paris, France; Museum of Modern Art in New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York; the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Studio Museum in Harlem; the Armand Hammer Museum in Los Angeles; Whitechapel Gallery in London; Wurttenbergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany; The Worm in Rotterdam, The Netherlands; the Spaces Gallery in Cleveland; the American Academy of Rome in Italy and in China and Germany.

My films have been shown at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah; Rotterdam International Film Festival in 2003, 2005, 2006 and 2007; Berlin International Film Festival European Film Market, Berlin, Germany; Cinematexas, Austin, Texas; Ann Arbor Film Festival; LA Film Festival; New York Underground Film Festival (Best Doc 2005 for *Spicebush*); Oberhausen in Oberhausen, Germany; Festival International Du Documentaire De Marseille, Marseille, France, Mostra Internazionale Del Nuovo Cinema, Pesaro, Italy; Filmfest München, Munich, Germany; the Pacific Film Archives in Berkeley, California; Media City Film Festival in Windsor, Ontario; Black Maria Film Festival (2004 Best Film); Athens International Film Festival; Shorts International in New York; RedCat in Los Angeles, California (solo screening); Cinema Project, Portland, Oregon; Courtisane Film, Video and New Media Festival, in Ghent, Belgium; Light Industry in Brooklyn, New York; San Francisco International Film Festival in San Francisco, California; IndieLisboa 2007, Lisbon, Portugal; Milano Film Festival in Milan, Italy; European Media Art Festival in Onsbueck, Germany; the Siskel Theater in Chicago (solo screening); the Virginia Film Festival in Charlottesville, Virginia; University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida; VIVO Media Arts Centre, in Vancouver, British Columbia; Flex Film Festival in Gainesville, Florida; and South by Southwest Film Festival in Austin Texas (Best Experimental Award for *Thermostat*). I am the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a NEA Fellowship, two NEH Fellowships, two Ohio Arts Council Fellowships, an American Academy Rome Prize, residencies at Yaddo and MacDowell Colony and numerous university fellowships.

Films

Company Line (2009) is a film about one of the first predominately Black neighborhoods in Mansfield Ohio. The title, *Company Line*, refers to the name historically used by residents to describe their neighborhood, located on the north side of town close to the old steel mill. The Company Line began during the post-war migration of Blacks from the south to the north in the late forties. The neighborhood was purchased in the early seventies and its residents were scattered throughout Mansfield. City employees and former residents of the Company Line narrate the film. (30:00, black and white, color)

753 McPherson Street (2009) is the address of a very old, passionate and sometime lucrative business. (2:00, black and white)

Watchworks (2009) is a film about one of the first predominately Black neighborhoods in Mansfield Ohio. The neighborhood consists of watch factory employees, domestics, a soap maker and someone fluent in German. (3:00, black and white, color)

The Camps (2009) is about one of the first predominately Black neighborhoods in Mansfield Ohio. The neighborhood consists of steel mill employees. (3:00, black and white, color)

Empire (2009) shows the many faces of the African American employees at Empire Steel in Mansfield, Ohio during the 1940s. (14:00, black and white, color)

Telethon (2009) is about two talented acts waiting to perform in Sammy Davis Jr.'s ill-fated 1973 telethon for highway safety. (16mm, 5:00, color and black/white)

Around Oak Grove (2009) includes an old truck, its driver and rolled hay. (16mm, 2:40, black/white)

Honorable Mention (2009) exhibits much deserved appreciation. (16mm, 2:10, color and black/white)

Lead (2009) is a story of an early 20th Century Robin Hood. (16mm, 3:00, black and white)

The Citizens (2009) includes Mohammad Ali talking about life, Althea Gibson returning home as a champion, Fidel Castro playing baseball and three gentlemen being escorted into court all under the watchful eye of the media. (16mm, 5:45, color and black/white)

The Simple Antennae (2009) is about early evening in late summer. (16mm, 1:00, black and white)

The Golden Age of Fish (2008) is an experimental feature film that interweaves various fragmentary narratives concerning Cleveland, Ohio's landscape from its prehistoric past to late twentieth century visual representation. Though a series of motifs, an African American woman geologist is the catalyst that narrates Cleveland's past. The collage of scripted scenes, shot in a variety of formats, and old news 16mm film footage create traces of a narrative structure. The title, ***The Golden Age of Fish***, references the geologist's specimens, Devonian age Cleveland Shale. The Devonian period (417 to 354 million years ago) is when many new kinds of fish appeared. (60:00, color and black/white)

Second and Lee (2008) is a cautionary tale about when not to run. (16mm, 3:00, black and white)

Undefeated (2008) is about mobility and immobility, or just trying to stay warm. (16mm, 1:30, black and white)

Ninety-Three (2008) is a wonderful age to celebrate. (16mm, 3:00, black and white)

Home (2008) is about disappointment in northern Ohio. (super-8, 1:30, black and white)

Playing Dead (2008) is a film about lying still to stay alive. (16mm, 1:30, color)

Key to the Cities (2008) has two mayors honoring the “Candy Man” in two different ways. (16mm, 1:45, black and white)

Ring (2008) attempts to exhibit the “sweet science” in an elegant way. (16mm, 1:30, black and white)

Wolf Ticket (2008) gives us a glimpse of his talents and fragileness. (16mm, 1:16, black and white)

The Wilbur (2008) apartment building is overtaken with grief. (16mm, 1:30, color)

Ike (2008) is about a person showing their special gift - if pushed. (16mm, 2:30, black and white)

140 Over 90 (2008) is about health and bargains. (super-8, 2:11, color and black/white)

Broad Day (2008) is about observing unseen events on a sun-lit afternoon. (16mm, 1:00, color and black/white)

O.T. (2008) is based on events on a faithful day in 1962 Mansfield, Ohio. (16mm, 1:30, color)

Emergency Needs (2007) is a 16mm film about the mayor, Carl Stokes, of Cleveland, Ohio USA dealing with the July 1968 uprising. (16mm, 7:00, color)

North (2007) is about trying to find one’s way. (HD, 1:30 minutes, color)

The Reverend E. Randall T. Osborn, First Cousin (2007) is about the art of the cut-away. (16mm, 3:30 minutes, black and white)

According to... (2007) with a rich source of found footage and shot film, is a short film about several versions of tragic events in southern rural Black American. (16mm, 8:30, black and white)

Something Else (2007) is a film about the found footage as subject matter and Miss Black Roanoke, Virginia 1971 expressing her thoughts about the upcoming Miss Black Virginia 1971 Pageant. (16mm, 2:00, color)

Nectar (2007) is a film about the dangers and seductive beauty of light narrated by the Pandorus Sphinx moth. The Pandorus Sphinx moth is a regional moth of Central Virginia with a streamlined form and complex wing pattern. In collaboration with William Wylie. (HD video, 2:30, black and white)

The Principles (2007) is a film about three actresses’ real and artificial desires to elevate their careers. (16mm, 2:00, color)

Next to You (2007) is a film with found footage somewhat about the late Edward James Kendrick of the Temptations. (16mm, 1:00, color)

The Picnic (2007) is a film with found footage about a couple enjoying a beautiful day, food, sex, a blanket, long walks and a firearm. (16mm, 2:30, black and white)

The Virginia Line-Up (2007) is a film with found footage somewhat about the nightlife in Virginia. (16mm, 40 seconds, color)

\$37.37 aka Munchen, Raphaela is a film about a young woman's future plans in Munich, Germany. (16mm and mini DV, 3:40, color and black and white)

Cinnamon (2006) presents a glimpse into the world of African American drag racing. It is an experimental feature film about the consistent routine of a bank teller and a mechanic as they prepare for the sport of drag racing. Once the routine is disrupted, the result of the race comes into doubt. The bank teller is a driver who tries to stay focused before races. The mechanic's routine is to constantly examine the driver's behavior. He has to adjust the racecar to the driver's skill and ability. Also the mechanic adjusts the racecar for the weather conditions. The film portrays their relationship as similar to that of a composer and a musician, in which the mechanic is the composer and the driver interprets the music. *Cinnamon* hosts several different formal style as well as different materials. The techniques and styles employed will alternate between the conventionally scripted scenes and documentary footage. The scripted scenes have a naturalistic feel. (16mm, HD, 70:00, color, black and white)

Spicebush (2005) is an experimental feature film that interweaves various fragmentary narratives concerning education, landscapes, gaining and losing a job, and the passage of time. The technique and style employed alternates between the documentary, the symbolic, and more conventionally scripted scenes. Filming individuals engaged in their careers conveys the documentary aspect. At a symbolic level, the fossil is a leitmotif suggesting past and present. The title of the film refers to the state butterfly of Mississippi, Spicebush Swallowtail. In the film, Mississippi is a place of origin. The Spicebush Swallowtail represents renewal or starting over. Throughout the film, a little girl appears in different guises and settings, functioning indirectly in the role of the chorus. The scripted scenes, shot in a documentary style, collaged with the other scenes begin to create the traces of a narrative structure. (16mm, mini DV, 70:00, color, black and white)

Twenty Minutes (2005) is about understanding materials and Leonardo Di Vinci. (HD, 3:00, color)

Memoir (2005) is a story about an older gentleman telling his story though Caravaggio's 1606 painting of *St. Jerome*. (16mm, mini DV, 3:07, color)

Two-Week Vacation (2005) is a film about not enough time and not enough money. (16mm, 1:16, color, black and white)

Blind Huber (2005) is a film interpretation of a poem by Nick Flynn loosely based on the life of Francois Huber, the blind eighteenth-century beekeeper, who sat before a series of hives for fifty years unlocking an unknown world. (16mm, 2:00, color black and white)

Fifeville (2005) is a film about a neighborhood in Charlottesville, Virginia. *Fifeville* focuses on the details, gestures, and material life of the citizens of Fifeville as they communicate their understandings of the neighborhood's changing landscape. Although *Fifeville*, is set in Charlottesville yet it could be Any Black Community Experiencing Gentrification, USA. In collaboration with Dr. Corey D.B. Walker (16mm, 15:00, black and white)

From Pompei to Xenia (2003) is a 16mm film about love and loss surrounded by two historical disasters. (16mm, 4:40, color)

Chemistry (2003) is a 16mm film about the composition of one of the elements for integration of busing. (16mm, still photographs, 3:30, color and black and white)

Aquarius (2003) is a 16mm film about coping. (16mm, 1:30, color)

Pictures From Dorothy (2003) is a 35mm film relating to the Wizard of Oz. (16mm, mini DV, 5:30, color, black and white)

Sportello Quattro (2002) is a film about immigration, work and community among people of color in contemporary Roma, Italy. (mini DV, 6:00, color)

Vanessa (2002) is about loss and Michelangelo. (shot on 16mm and mini DV to 35mm film, 3:12, color, black and white)

Un Euro Venti Due (2002) is a film about family and communication. (Mini DV, still photographs, 5:00, color)

Fumble (2002) is a film interpretation of a poem by Vincent Katz. (mini DV, 4:00, black and white)

Special Man (2002) is a film interpretation of a poem by Mark Halliday. (mini DV, 17:00, black and white)

72 (2002) is a film about a teenage taxicab driver multitasking to keep his job. (16mm, 3:30, black and white)

A Week in the Hole (2001) is a 35mm color film about a factory employee's adjusting to materials, time space and personal during his first day of work. (mini DV, 6:00, color)

Pick Six (2001) is a film about a particular source of luck. (mini DV, 1:30, black and white)

The Daily Number (2001) is a 35mm film about particular sources as lucky. (16mm, mini DV, 1:30, color and black and white)

Room Temperature (2001) is a film about maintenance, chores and winter. (mini DV, 2:00, black and white)

Avenues (2000) is a 35mm about a teenage taxicab driver. (16mm, 5:00, black and white)

Thermostat (2000) is a 35mm film about migration, landscape and elevation. (16mm, mini DV, 3:00, color)

Second Shift (1999) is about a correctional officer's daily routine of gaining access into a correctional facility. (16mm, 4:00, black and white)

Merger (1999) is about a disgruntled bank teller's system before the mornings commute. (16mm, 2:00, color)

Imported (1999) is about three methods of ridding collard and kale greens of a pesky insect. (16mm, 4:30, black and white)

Six Positions (1998) is about task of a funeral home director. (16mm, 8:00, black and white)

Eleven Eighty-Two (1997) is about a correctional officer describing his past and present employment. (16mm, 5:00, black and white)