

# TOTAL

## JIBADE-KHALIL HUFFMAN

October 28 – December 16, 2020

Magenta Plains is pleased to present poet and artist Jibade-Khalil Huffman's first solo exhibition at the gallery. *Total Running Time* features a site-specific installation of video projections, photographic light boxes and photo collages printed on layered transparencies and paper, continuing an employment of several recurring strategies to address slippage in memory and language particular to race and visibility.

Quoting the common audiovisual term “total running time”—a quantifying expression of maximum elapsed time in minutes and seconds—the exhibition considers duration and the idea of pushing various kinds of performance to the limit. Huffman scrutinizes ideas of exceptionalism and “athletic prowess” in his inkjet print *TRT* (all works 2020), which depicts professional tennis players Venus and Serena Williams embracing despite a looming hand, or stands in for scrutiny of the sort that is often imposed on prominent Black athletes and celebrities. For Huffman, the futility of a temporal artwork's completeness and the unspoken expectations of performance—of self, race, and image—relate directly to the day-to-day performance of life as an artist.

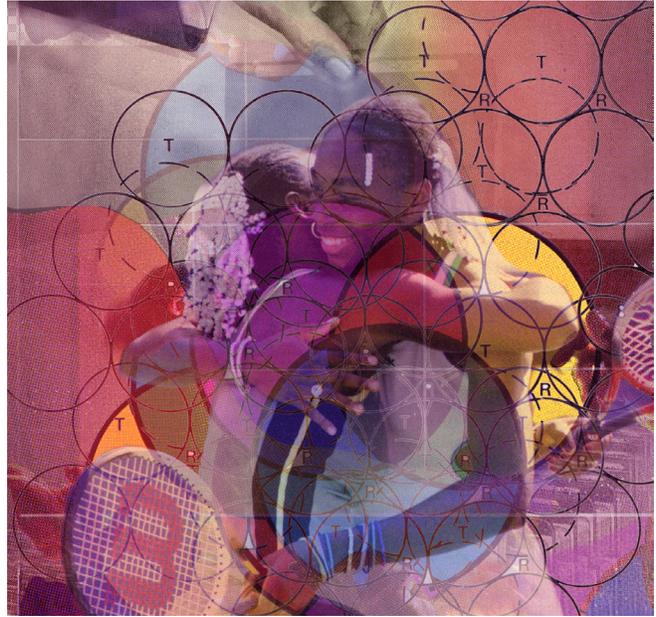
Huffman derives much of his practice from the intersection of writing, poetry, found media and common speech, often cutting, sampling and shifting bits of video and excerpts of text into new formats. The idea of erasure—of certain voices, people, and ideas—as subject matter and as technique is central to his practice, in building up and removing layers of material in his videos and two dimensional collages. While almost completely eliding language as a response to various traumas within this current body of work, Huffman continues to source his subject matter from an endless array of TV Guides, abstracted maps, classic television stills, icons of technology, charts, diagrams, staircases, tunnels, markers, indices, arrows, annotations, advertisements, often leaving only the stray and fleeting fragments of a phrase left to parse.

Returning to his earlier use of cartoons and comic books, Huffman presents Tom & Jerry in *Untitled (Telephone)* alongside fabricated halftone dots and “paint by numbers” prompts and riffs on the speech bubble as another sort of abstraction in *Untitled (Hover)*, wherein boy scouts from a McDonald's comic go about their skill challenges such as pitching tents and learning magic tricks. In *Untitled (Explosion)*, diagrams from physics textbooks intermingle with a kaboom of advertisements from a 1960s business magazine—a gesture that here, becomes akin to acts of various kinds of destruction.

Foregrounding the materiality of digital media and its degradation over time, Huffman's approach dissolves explicit meaning in order to reconstitute it as objects in perpetual flux. Through projection and repetition, his work evokes the untranslatable, ruminating on the liminal qualities of singular experiences through the flattening of symbolic and semiotic hierarchies.

RUNNING

# TIME



Jibade-Khalil Huffman,  
*TRT*, 2020  
 Archival inkjet print,  
 36.70h x 38.60w in.

Jibade-Khalil Huffman (b. 1981, Detroit, MI) has held past exhibitions at Ballroom Marfa, Marfa, TX; MOCA Cleveland, Cleveland, OH; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; MOCA Tucson, Tucson, AZ; MOCA Detroit, Detroit, MI; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, Portland, OR; The Jewish Museum, New York, NY; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA; and The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Kitchen, and Swiss Institute, New York, NY. Educated at Bard College (BA), Brown University (MFA, Literary Arts), and USC (MFA, Studio Art), his awards include the Grolier Poetry Prize, the Jerome Foundation Travel Grant and fellowships from the Lighthouse Works, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and the Millay Colony for the Arts. Huffman is the author of *Sleeper Hold* (2015), *James Brown Is Dead and Other Poems* (2011), and *19 Names for Our Band* (2008). Huffman was a 2015-16 Artist in Residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem and lives and works between Winston-Salem, NC and Los Angeles, CA. His current solo exhibition, *Now That I Can Dance*, at Tufts University Art Gallery in Medford, MA is on view until March 2021. Huffman currently lives and works in Winston-Salem, NC.

