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Illustration by 555 International

BLACKBOOK (REMIX)

Peyton Scott Russell

2022

15'x20'x20'

Aluminum, MDF Board, Light, Aerosol & Latex Paint



BLACKBOOK (Remix)

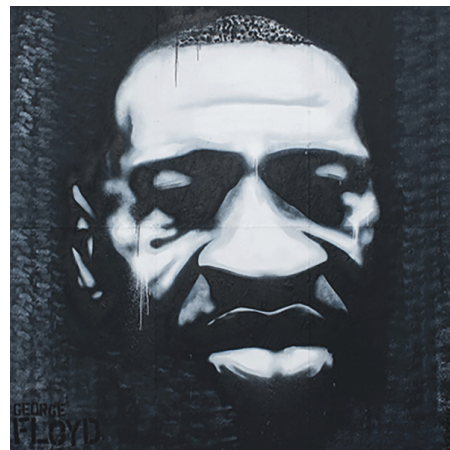
Peyton Scott Russell

Artist Bio

Minneapolis-based artist, Peyton Scott Russell, has a B.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and for over three decades has been a professional artist and arts instructor. The 1984 film, *Style Wars*, introduced Peyton to graffiti art and had a profound effect on him. From that point forward, he has devoted his time and energy to graffiti art. Currently, through assistance from a Bush Foundation Fellowship (2012-2014), Peyton is focused on his organization, SPRAYFiNGER®,

which is dedicated to teaching, studying, and practicing Graffiti: Graffiti Education & The Art of Creative Lettering™. His mission, in addition to his personal artistic practice, is to increase awareness of graffiti as a teachable fine art by working with schools, teachers, and artists on curriculum design, outlines, and lesson plans designed to deepen the understanding of graffiti. Through his personal artwork and SPRAYFiNGER®, Peyton has engaged with individuals of all ages throughout Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Kansas, New York City (The POINT CDC), and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Icon of a Revolution #1 is one of Peyton's most recent pieces for which he has received significant recognition. For this piece (created the week following George Floyd's murder), Peyton decided to use an image that would have high impact. He wanted to go after the dark and sad emotions of being dehumanized. Mr. Floyd's face is the icon used to represent a strong Black American face and the experiences that are repeated generation after generation. Peyton's hope is that we will see real change, understanding, and a restructuring of a system that results in equality and equity for all as the true ideal of this country.



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BLACKBOOK, Franconia 2011

BLACKBOOK is a sculpture I created originally at Franconia Sculpture Park in 2011 (Minnesota). It is a form that represents an artist's sketchbook (black cover). The Graffiti Community uses these books to gather fellow artists' styles, tags, autographs, and lettering concepts. I built a larger-than-life "sketchbook/black book" with twelve, 4'x8' OSB plywood panels as the pages, like a poster rack with movable pages. Graffiti writers, graffiti artists, and street artists were invited to paint on the pages. Over the years, I have coordinated several repainting sessions of the pages.



GRAPHOLOGYHENGE, Josephine 2018

is still movable like the original, yet because of the 360-degree orientation, each page has the potential to become a centerfold at 4'x16'. This gives each artist a larger painting surface, if desired. Remix will hold a minimum of 8 artists, and up to 16 artists, and is intended to highlight artists in any area where the sculpture is exhibited. The "pages" are engineered to be easily removable and replaceable.

My plan for Remix is to highlight artists in the areas where the sculpture may be exhibited. Through a rotation of changing artists, themes, concepts, and events. I am interested in inviting other artists to share their voices, visions, and opinions - resulting in a huge range of diverse artists expressing anything from interesting Graffiti-style lettering to profound political issues (e.g., thought-provoking ideas, aggressive activism) to something simply beautiful and expressive. I want each artist to share a story about whatever they feel is necessary for the public to see and understand. As the BLACKBOOK (Remix) travels around the country artists from all over will get a chance to exhibit and express themselves in an ever-changing sculpture of rotating art.

BlackBook (Remix): Race Study

Peyton Scott Russell

In BLACKBOOK (Remix), I am exploring the fallacy of Race, this social construct we as human beings buy into in that we are divided and considered separate species based on skin tones.

I'm focusing solely on mixed-culture (mixed-race) couples of black African American and white European-American because my parents were a mixed-culture couple (Black father, white mother). I have always valued both sides of who I am, and yet I am seen primarily as a Black man – especially in America. For me to think of myself as solely African American neglects my mother, who is half my blood and the woman who raised me. I have struggled my entire life, being frustrated and angry at the societal construct that judges and ranks the level of respect an individual deserves based on sight. As a mixed person (Black and white), I'm proof we exist as one species – humans – and should not be categorized by the color of our skin.

My work will lead to a deeper exploration of compounds of color, culture, ethnic structure, and nationalities that are disrupted, redefined and shaped by the children of mixed-culture couples. I'll also examine the race-class selection identification found on job applications, medical records, school records, any kind of identification, census records, etc. For now, in BLACKBOOK (Remix), I am starting with the study of an on-site observation of mixed-culture, mixed-ethnicity, mixed-nationality, "mixed-race" couples and asking people to be conscious of their thoughts, feelings, judgments, and ideas when seeing a mixed couple. For me, I simply see my mother and father. I then wonder if the individuals are experiencing conditions like what my parents experienced. That is, being hated, shunned, disowned by family, always having to correct people, fight, be refused service, combat confusion and concern, and overwhelmingly be rejected by whites – and in rare moments by Black people as well. This is my life, origin, and experience. I'm opening the door to disrupt and highlight the ignorant idea and concept of Race.

When you look at these faces, what comes up for you? What are your honest, authentic, personal feelings deep inside? What are your thoughts, considerations, challenges, concerns, and/or biases? Keep this with you and be with your own thoughts or share them with others.



Totem
GRAPHOLOGYHENGE



Peyton Scott Russell
Race Study
 (Stash & Jeanna)
 2022

I met my wife Jeanna Penn when she walked into my ICU Art Gallery in Mid-City Los Angeles in 2002. Jeanna is black and I am white. She was driving by and noticed a graffiti art painting by Augustine Kofie that I had displayed in the window. I was immediately attracted to her and I

pointed out that my parents lived in Washington DC where she was from originally. I asked her to sign up on our mailing list for events. I was hoping to get her phone number, but I later saw I only got her email. I emailed her to invite her to a live painting event at the Venice Art Walls on the beach, but she declined. I later won free tickets on KCRW to a Sneaker Pimps concert. She accepted. Open bar at the event. We hit it off and we have been together ever since. She said she was interested because I had my cute dog Pax with me when we met. I had and still have long blonde dreads, so I think that was a signal that I appreciate and have respect for Black culture. I feel that may have been part of the attraction for my wife. My wife and I run our mural business together and live in Oakland with our 8-year-old son Stash Jr.

We moved to Oakland from LA about 12 years ago. I think Jeanna was hoping to be in a city with an intellectual community of Black people that was less segregated or siloed as what we had found in Los Angeles. Having grown up in San Francisco, I was happy to move to the Bay Area. We wanted to be close to my parents who lived in the Bay Area. We were fortunate to be able to buy a house a few years after the housing crisis of 2008 in North Oakland. The Longfellow neighborhood was historically Black and very ethnically diverse when we moved in.

As far as any challenges due to being a mixed-race couple, we have to say that we found the opposite. North Oakland and Berkeley specifically seem to be a sort of center for mixed race couples and families. There are lots and lots of White/Black couples as well as other mixed couples of other ethnicities, so we have found friends and community that have been very accepting of us. This feels good. I think the Bay Area and the East Bay specifically went through a more difficult period for mixed-race couples a few generations prior to ours, and it is now very normal and accepted here. In this way we feel very lucky. It does seem that our groups of friends tend to be people that are ethnically mixed somewhere in their recent family histories, so I think there is something about being around other people with this shared experience that has made our experience comfortable and typical.



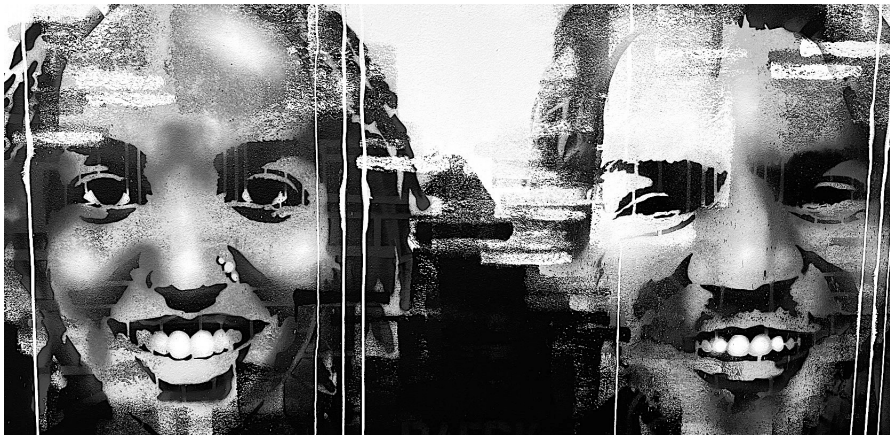
Peyton Scott Russell
Race Study
 (Callie & Lulu)
 2022

Our Backgrounds: Lulu is originally from Accra Ghana in West Africa and Callie was born in Minnesota. We haven't really had conflict in terms of culture in our relationship in fact, both of us fairly open to learning about new cultures.

Relationship Background: We met at a party in college at the U of MN - Twin Cities. We have been together for over 9 years. We moved in together after only knowing each other for three months, we just knew it would work. We just love each other and love spending time together.

Struggles as a Couple: Strangers often do not believe we are together. For example, there have been multiple occasions where a drunk woman would approach Callie and say that Lulu was following her around all night, not thinking that we could possibly be together. On another occasion, our group of friends rented a boat in Mexico and the boat drivers thought Callie was with the only white man in the group. They did not seem to understand when we explained that we were together. We sometimes get dirty looks from strangers out in public. People sometimes express disapproval when we talk about marriage, saying that the child would be “mixed race,” as if that were a bad idea.

Profound Moment: Not sure what to put here. We have very deep connection in partnership and friendship we have built over 9 years of intimately knowing each other’s habits and ways of approaching life. What has likely kept us going for so [long] are the alignment of goals certain, career paths, willingness to cooperate, and common or complementary perspectives about life that keep me grounded for example. We feel like these things are not unique but probably key traits in successful relationships.



Peyton Scott Russell
Race Study
(Esmé & Trey)
2022

How We Met: The two of us met the summer going into our sophomore year of college in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I had met Trey’s roommate in late June, and her and I quickly became best friends. In early July, she introduced the two of us. Shortly after, I found myself

staying at their apartment every night. On the Fourth of July, it was our first time hanging out alone and we immediately clicked. We talked from 8 pm to 5 in the morning and have been together nearly every day since. July 16th was our one-year anniversary.

Challenges With Your Relationship In Public, With Friends, With Family: In public we often get stares, but there have been multiple times when people have stopped us to say how beautiful of a couple we are. Our families were more than accepting of our relationship and even make efforts to learn about our cultures; however, there have been times when our differences raise awkward moments during family gatherings. Friends do not give us challenges because of how diverse we all are.

Profound Moments That Really Stand Out To You: Other than when we are just enjoying each other’s company, some of the best moments in our relationships have been times when we are problem-solving. If we ever come to a disagreement about race, gender, or sexuality, we always take the time to hear out what the other person feels before saying our own opinion.

Our Attraction: We were attracted to each other on every level. I have never felt so connected with someone I had only known for a couple of days. From our humor to our love language and everything in between the two of us are soulmates. There is a level of comfort between us that makes it feel as if we have been together for decades.

Personal Thoughts You Want to Share: Even though the two of us are different in nearly every single way, we truly believe there is not a single love greater than ours.



Peyton Scott Russell

Race Study

(Jeff & Liz)

2022

How We Met: It seems like just yesterday we were passing each other by in the hallways of Washburn High School. We were both strong student athletes who grew up in the inner city, and yet we came from two extremely different backgrounds. Even though Washburn was a tight community, we

never really crossed paths until our junior and senior years in 2011. We officially met in our school parking lot after a soccer game, and our souls have been tied ever since. That night, we connected through our passion for sports and our drive to push ourselves and those around us to their greatest potential. As the days went on, the conversations flowed and our feelings grew deeper as we peeled back each others layers and truly got to know one another. We would have never expected it then, but here we are 11 years later. We created a firm foundation on friendship that blossomed into a beautiful love before we even knew it. Our faith in God and our strong values and shared visions have kept us grounded through all the ups and downs this world has thrown our way. We have been blessed to find each other in this life.

What Attracted Us To Each Other: The first thing that drew me in to Liz was her red hair and freckles. After our first conversation her personality grabbed my attention, and as I got to know her, I slowly started to fall in love with the idea of being with someone that was so different than myself. Her perspective has helped shape my view of the world we live in today; that there is more to life than what I was exposed to growing up. I love the fact that she has always challenged me to think outside of my comfort zone. Liz inspires me to push myself to the next level. She has always challenged me to open my mind to new people, ideas, food, and adventures. As we've grown together, she has taught me that unconditional love has no color or race, that if someone loves you, be willing to open yourself up and love them back. There isn't a person in the world that has shown me the amount of love and care that Liz has. She has opened me up to a whole new world, and for that I will always be grateful.

When I met Jeff, I was instantly captured by his light brown eyes and strong features, but it was what was under the surface that I couldn't get enough of. That night we met, there was this undeniable level of comfort we had with one another. I got this overwhelming sense of safety and security when I was with him, and that was something I had never felt before. Jeff has always made me feel heard - he genuinely cares about my opinions and wants to listen to what I have to say. There is never a dull moment with him, he makes sure to put a smile on my face every single day no matter how he's feeling. Jeff wants everyone around him to win. He has supported my goals and dreams no matter the sacrifices he's had to make. He has given me a new perspective, opened my eyes to things I never even once paused to think about, and has helped me become more aware in this world. Jeff pushes me to be a better person every day, and I feel blessed be able to share this union with him.

Challenges We've Faced: There isn't a day that goes by that we aren't hit with at least one look of question or judgment when we are out together. Whether it's a turned head as we step into a restaurant, a side eye as we enter a grocery store, or a forced smile as we pass someone around the lake. This is something we experience every day and we have truly grown used to. We try to view it as curiosity, but sometimes we just get sick of feeling like we have to be 'on' all the time, as if we have to 'prove' ourselves to the world. It's as though our two experiences become just slightly blurred together, we get a small taste of how the world treats us individually - the racial profiling, micro aggressions, white privilege and flat out discrimination. This can be confusing and we are still learning how to navigate different aspects of our interracial relationship. Even though we feel this way in public, our families have been the most difficult to get to support us and welcome our relationship. We both grew up hearing racial slurs and things like "if she can't use your comb, don't bring her home" - things that would

naturally deter us from being in a relationship with someone outside of our own race. Our families influences have divided us at times and caused some huge challenges within our own relationship. The balance of loving this person for who they are mixed with the pressures to please your family and make them proud is a scary and dangerous thing. We both imagined a big blended happy family, but boy were those expectations knocked to the ground. We are still earning our families approvals, and praying for their blessings and full support one day. Faith and hope have kept us pushing. We have had to fight their thoughts and judgements and opinions, but if we chose to listen to family and society, we would have missed out on a love that most people wish to come by in their lifetime, and that makes it all worth it in the end.

Random Thoughts/Conversations While Reflecting

- We talk about having kids but what will that look like for us? Society will label our kids as black, when they should be seen for both black and white. How will this affect how our children choose to identify?
- Love people for who they are, don't let anyone or anything get in the way of that.
- God's will doesn't have rules on what we look like or where we come from, so why do we?
- When all you know is 'your people', a like-minded group, you have such a tiny perspective of this world.
- If anything, we should strive to seek relationships with people from different backgrounds and cultures. We should use our curiosity to learn and to grow and to hear new perspectives.
- There is so much we don't know in this world. Growth is uncomfortable, but it is the only thing that can bring us together and help us understand one another. So embrace the uncomfortable.



Reggie LeFlore

Reggie LeFlore is a visual artist who creates to praise individual and collective stories through human portraiture.

His subject matter centers around “everyday people”, crafting portraits with vibrant colors and contemporary elements that aim to capture the energy and spirit of his subjects’ stories.

LeFlore’s inspirations are drawn from the concepts and philosophies of Street Art culture and Illustration - using aerosol, acrylic paint and various graphic design techniques to construct pieces in varying styles, scales and surfaces. He uses visual arts to amplify both his surrounding environments and the narratives contained within them.

LeFlore’s visual arts style and identity grew from the wonder and excitement he felt from first seeing murals and illustrations as a child. These works of art influenced him to learn various graphic design and illustrative techniques commonly seen in the comic books, animations and pop culture elements of the 90s and early 2000s. As LeFlore’s peers and the adults in his life worked to sup-

port his newly found creative endeavors, he became inspired by their stories and journeys, which brought forth the narrative aspect of his work.

As he grew as an artist, LeFlore became more grounded in his understanding of art’s purpose within society. After observing the impact of studio projects, murals and public art over the past few decades, he felt that it was time to embrace the responsibilities and privileges he harbored as a visual artist. Through recent projects, LeFlore has gained an understanding of what it means to truly create for communities and of our human experiences, which has been strengthened through collaborative efforts, personal experience, space and opportunity, and his overarching love for the arts.

Artwork Statement

The purpose of these artworks is to celebrate two living Black creatives alongside a very simple yet blatant statement about the sanctity of Black lives, and how they matter well before and beyond the tragedies we continue to face in this country. Over the past few years, I’ve received numerous comments about how my work reflects the essence of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Philando Castile, etc., despite being intentional about NOT creating art that focuses on Black trauma, pain or memorialization of our lives after we’re gone. Instead of guessing or assuming, I implore you to listen and pay better attention to the stories that us Black folks and I aim to tell, especially as it pertains to our journey as a Black creatives in the United States.





Katrina Knutson

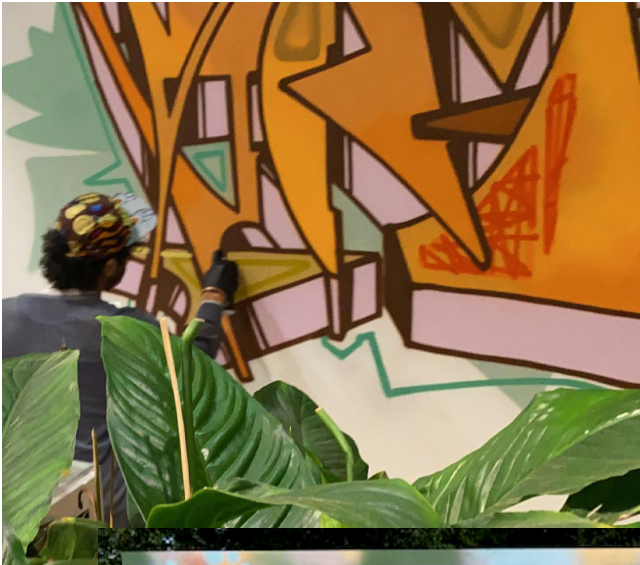
Katrina Knutson was born in South Minneapolis and raised on working class ethics, progressive politics, and hip-hop culture. Since then, she has worked, painted and lived across North America, studying art and looking for inspiration under bridges, on the streets, and in galleries. But no matter how far she travels, Minneapolis will always be home. Katrina designs and teaches visual art workshops and classes across the twin cities and in greater Minnesota at galleries, art centers, libraries, and schools. She is an active community muralist, you can see her work on walls all down Franklin and Lake Street and other corridors in Minneapolis and St Paul.

The connections between justice, collaboration, creating, building, teaching, learning and sharing is central to the way Katrina lives her life and what she hopes to accomplish in her work.

Statement

The brutal murder of George Floyd by police officers in Minneapolis police was the catalyst for the uprising in Minneapolis that rippled around the world. Glaring inequality and police violence are one of the many cracks in the rotten foundation of this country. I spent the summer of 2020 on marches, at protests, building connections with my neighbors and painting messages of hope and resistance. My sketch books from the last 2 years are filled with drawings recording moments in time, rambling between hope and horror and uplifting rebellion and building a world where everyone can be more free.





SHOCK

Creating non-sanctioned public art and writing graffiti for over 20 years, SHOCK seeks to keep expanding the art form through their work. Using the medium of the graffiti piece to transmit ideas, deliver messages, and brighten up urban landscapes with color and style.

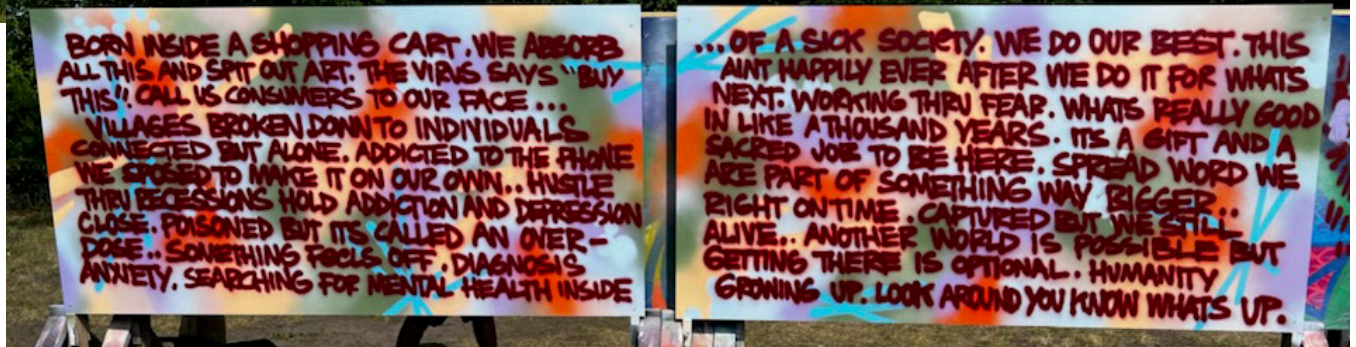
Artist Statement

My statement is the poem written on my painting.

contact:

@shock____ism

(instagram)



Tom Jay

Tom Jay is a Latino artist originally from Guatemala and is a Mayan descendant. He is a former Minneapolis College of Art and Design student creating murals, illustrations and specializing in aerosol paint. Along with large private commission murals, Tom has been a part of a number of projects touching on topics such as social justice, preserving nature, teaching art and community collaboration.

Artist Statement

Tom Jay is a large scale painter and muralist. Having a background in graffiti he predominantly works in spray paint. By using graphic and realistic elements in his work he elevates his lettering to be accessible and engaging to a wide variety of audiences.



Biafra CBS

Biafra hadn't planned on being an artist. He thought he was going to be a teacher. He started cutting stencils as a way to decorate his skateboard in 2003. Cutting stencils quickly turned into an obsession, suddenly the stencils were on stickers and walls and that transitioned into an interest in graffiti and screen printing. He switched majors from education to art and received a B.F.A. with an emphasis in printmaking from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. He has been lucky enough to take what he has learned and obsessed about for all these years and turn that into a job. His work is text heavy and hard lines. He uses comic book characters because he thinks they are instantly relatable to every generation and represent an idealistic time.

The text surrounding the characters gives clues as to what the character represents. The bold lines and bright colors associated with graffiti and street art still stick with him. He uses his murals as an extension of his fine art. He can do a print and a mural of the same character and each application allows him to explore the character and themes in a different way. The scale of a mural can deliver a feeling that the intimacy of a print can't and he loves exploring that experience.



About the piece:

Shame and Revelation

The woman in this piece is a character that I painted on 36th and Chicago after the murder of George Floyd. Her expression is one of shame and also revelation. The shame of watching countless black men die at the hands of police in the Twin Cities. The shame seeing the videos and knowing all of it was avoidable and the shame of loving where you live but knowing that not everyone has the same experience you do.

The revelation in the expression comes from the people out marching in the streets around the world chanting George Floyd's name and letting everyone know that we will not tolerate militant policing any longer. While there is obviously still a lot of work to be done, seeing people from every background taking a stand together gave me hope for the future.





PEYTON SCOTT RUSSELL

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