

Julia Kim Smith
True Stories
Artist's Statement & Bio

Artist's Statement

In True Stories, I address issues of racism, sexism, misrepresentation, and underrepresentation through traditional and new media. In particular, I am interested in the pervasive influence of the internet and its tools on society. I use both to inform my practice and to question what constitutes truth—and whose truth?

Photographs

With Banksy

Description: Street artist Banksy pulls off no small feat in being both the anonymous artist and the famous artist. But in his anonymity, he is like Virginia Woolf's anonymous woman—"Anonymous was a woman."—and anyone can appropriate his identity. Which is exactly what I did in my project With Banksy. I heeded Banksy's edict (and Picasso's: "The Bad Artists Imitate, The Great Artists Steal"), appropriated his hooded identity, and placed him and his work in my own scenarios. In a series of photographs that question gender and celebrity roles, "Banksy" lounges front and center while I perform daily chores. With Banksy was featured in Angry Asian Man, Animal, GQ, Hypebeast, Juxtapoz, ShortList (UK), Oasis Magazine (Saudi Arabia), among numerous other publications and blogs.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2016-2017 Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Cooperative Consciousness, Kochi, India, Curators: Kathryn Myers, Jayanthi Moorthy

2014 A.I.R. Gallery, Liminal Communities, Brooklyn, NY, Curator: Lucy Li, Independent Curator and Critic, New York, NY

2011 Platoon Kunsthalle, At Platoon With Banksy, Seoul, South Korea, Curator: Udo Lee

Videos + Prints from video

Why

Synopsis: I utilized Google's search engine's autocomplete feature to find out what people wonder about me, a woman of Asian descent, and discovered unsettling abstractions, truths, fallacies, desires, and fears about all of us.

"This knowledge engine was at play when the artist Julia Kim Smith took to Google in 2013 [2012] in order to produce the 1 min. video loop titled Why?. Before Kim Smith finished typing her question "why do asian women...?" the knowledge engine kicked-in, anticipating her possible thoughts: "like black men", "age well", "wear masks" and so on. These results are all the more disturbing because there is no human intervention in the algorithm at Google that generates these results, as there is when they censor pornographic and violent words. According to algorithms, a common denominator of people (a type of shared consciousness) are privately asking Google these questions about Asian women more than they are asking anything else. Google reads the action of both individuals and collective social and geographic groups in order to anticipate user's intentions when they type. When such algorithms are applied to a group of people, especially a minority, the presumed objectivity inherent in the search sanctifies the anticipated result as simply true. We're left with the question: does the action of the masses constitute truth?"

—Lisa Moren, Curator, Washington Project for the Arts, Experimental Media: Cyber In Securities

SELECTED SCREENINGS

2017 Feminist Art Conference, OCAD University, Toronto, Canada

2015 Fuse Art Space, Exquisite Corpse, Bradford, UK, Curator: Sarah Faraday

2014-2015 Institute for Women and Art, Rutgers University, MTV: Momentum Technology Video and Momentum: Women/Art/Technology, New Brunswick, NJ

2014 Official Selection Center For Asian American Media CAAMFest, San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland, CA

2013 DUMBO Arts Festival, Brooklyn, NY

2013 Washington Project for the Arts, Experimental Media: Cyber In Securities, Washington, DC, Curator: Lisa Moren, Professor of Visual Art, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

The Real Wi-Fi Of Baltimore

Synopsis: Featuring the genre-busting talent of James Nasty and TT the Artist, The Real Wi-Fi Of Baltimore offers a punny and nuanced view of Baltimore neighborhoods in a short film edited from iPhone screenshots of Wi-Fi network names. The Real Wi-Fi Of Baltimore poses this challenge: Are we connected?

SELECTED SCREENINGS

2017 Slamdance Film Festival, Park City, UT
2017 Cinequest Film Festival, San Jose, CA
2017 Calgary Underground Film Festival, Calgary, Canada

Cylburn Park

Synopsis: Cylburn Park is a text movie in two acts inspired by and edited from a Baltimore neighborhood's Google Group daily feed and the media's coverage of it. The texts scroll by at a quick pace as if on a teleprompter screen and include lively exchanges over ducks and racial profiling, offering different perspectives from bitchy to high-minded and deeply moving. Cylburn Park is relevant today in Baltimore and beyond as communities struggle to keep it together and keep it going.

SELECTED SCREENINGS

2015 Brooklyn Film Festival, Brooklyn, NY

Installation

Nizhny Tagil: Actually, I like it.

Description: I created the Nizhny Tagil: Actually, I like it. sticker tag for Space Place, inspired by Baltimore: Actually, I like it., my sticker tag project for Baltimore. Nizhny Tagil's post-industrial history and its artistic class remind me of my hometown Baltimore: gritty, creative, uniquely cool. Perhaps we could be sibling cities. I am excited to see artist Velimir Buharov running with it and tagging and gramming the city.

"A trending unofficial civic slogan declares 'Baltimore: Actually, I Like It,' which best captures the mix of resignation and defensiveness that comes from residing in a place long synonymous with what's wrong with American cities. This may never be a Portlandia-style urban playground, but the raggedy pleasures of Baltimore living are real and durable, and can be found no where else. That's why we're here, and why we stay, even though sometimes we all feel like tearing the place down."

—David Dudley, "Why Baltimore is fighting for its life, again," Grist

Bio

Julia Kim Smith is a multidisciplinary artist whose work has been featured by Angry Asian Man, Animal, Art F City, artnet News, GQ, Hypebeast, Hyperallergic, Juxtapoz, kottke.org, Ms., Paper Magazine, The Atlantic, The Washington Post, and international media outlets. Her films have received premieres at Slamdance Film Festival, Cinequest Film Festival, Center For Asian American Media CAAMFest, San Francisco Documentary Film Festival, Brooklyn Film Festival, and Maryland Film Festival. Smith has exhibited nationally and internationally with new media and feminist artists Renee Cox, Heather Dewey-Hagborg, Kate Durbin, Hasan Elahi, Coco Fusco, Poppy Jackson, Rupi Kaur, Sarah Maple, Haley Morris-Cafiero, Phranc, Annie Sprinkle, Diane Torr, Sue Williams, Martha Wilson, and Barbara Zucker.