

runner

Weird Kid: One of One

Ashley Cook

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Still from video One Of One © Lokye

Brian H. Newman, also known as Lokye is a Hamtramck based painter, poet and hip-hop producer who is also the founder of Granny's Chandelier, a local artist-run exhibition space. Since an early age, his practice has sustained a dynamic approach to creative production; while maintaining a relatively consistent methodology including a fast paced work flow with steady releases, his work becomes realized in many forms. His recent exhibition at Public Pool, "LOKYE", dis



Still from video One Of One © Lokye

played a series of acrylic paintings on canvas and paper. As opposed to the more traditional gallery's method of installation having concern for minimizing the amount of distractions surrounding the work, the laid-back approach to installing these many works in this small space communicates a feeling of approachability coupled with a particular sentiment for "quantity" over "quality". Most of the works were done on sheets of paper with curled up edges hung using binder clips. When discussing the installation elements of the exhibition, Lokye touched on the importance of immediacy, which would have been compromised by traditional overarching concerns with "proper" materials and installation methods. Many of the works were done with a technique that evokes painters like Jean Michel Basquiat, Willem de Kooning, Wassily Kandinsky or other abstract painters from history. When touching on this similarity, Lokye communicated that although it seems to be a direct link to Basquiat and his own work, "in reality it is just that we were inspired by the same things. New York, partying, drugs, drinking, listening to Jazz, and the life that unfolds from that lifestyle."¹

stream of consciousness, which taps into the subconscious mind to create using only the materials readily available. The paintings were done in a freestyle form that relates directly to the way he writes and makes music. This way of working, with everything mirroring, featuring and underlining everything else helps to clearly illustrate his own world, allowing for viewers or listeners to step in even for a brief moment.



Lokye at Public Pool © Ashley Cook



Lokye at Public Pool © Ashley Cook

While the aesthetics of the painting style does pull from the decades of the 80's and 90's, it is most likely because these are the years that raised him and therefore are what are immediately at the forefront of his mind while he is producing. This is usually the case when artists are working using

While speaking about his work in relation to his music, Lokye touched on the concept of "lifestyle music", describing it as a genre that talks about everyday life, usually done so in a sort of roll-off the tongue manner, without too much over-contemplation. "Of course, depending on who is writing the lyrics is what dictates the content of the songs in this sort of genre. While Babyface Ray or Currency are talking about luxurious lifestyles of the custom candy painted cars and expensive marijuana or the strip club trap houses 'hood struggles', my music tends to focus more on the artist's lifestyle with poetic approaches to describing activities that make up day to day life and a particularly close attention paid to my immediate surroundings."² The content can be niche in that it will talk about the local cafe or restaurant, maybe mention some street names or other local artists, but for Lokye, they are also brought up in a way that is as abstract as his paintings, which can be quite thought provoking.

As per the statement for the show, Lokye's use of abstraction as a main medium is everywhere; "a 90's baby inspired by graffiti on trains. Corner boys busted bags out of bondages. Lucid dreams and city lights. A mixed media artist with a focus on figurative abstraction. Surrealist philosophy. Crude line work and bold colors; the paints illustrate one reality for the world to see."³



Lokye at Public Pool © Ashley Cook

While making this body of work, Lokye was also simultaneously writing and recording the album *Weird Kid*. Later in the year, this same exhibition, which was renamed *Weird Kid*, after the album, went on view at Fire Place Gallery in West Village in New York City and included a release of the music as well.

"Originally from New York City, Brian H. Newman, a.k.a. Lokye is an abstract artist based in Detroit. He received a certificate from the National Academy School of Fine Arts in 2008 where he studied under master abstract expressionist painter Sonia Gechtoff. In 2013, he received a BFA from College for Creative Studies where he studied under Gilda Snowden and Chido Johnson, among others. While attending CCS, Brian joined an art collective at North End Studios where he began hosting music events as well as art shows. In 2016, Brian co-founded WE!RDOZ GANG Collective where he curated a series of exhibitions called Wavy Labyrinth while also focusing on recording music. He has exhibited works at Re: View Gallery, the Jam Handy, and Palatino's Jamaican Restaurant in 2017 during Art Basel Miami. Currently, Brian opened his own gallery called Granny's Chandelier in Hamtramck, MI."⁴



Lokye at Public Pool © Ashley Cook



Still from video *One Of One* © Lokye

One of One is a perfect example of Lokye's approach to making work and the interweaving that he continues to use to underscore the various facets of his practice. The video, *One of One* was shot by Jay Hendricks, edited by Lokye with the song produced by G \$wank, was filmed at Public Pool with the exhibition "Lokye" acting as the backdrop while also participating as the main focus of the video.



Lokye at Public Pool © Ashley Cook

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To access Lokye's album *Weird Kid* online, you can go to <https://open.spotify.com/album/OCCNaxfUJWEihm-sokeaUeV>

The album *Color Coated 3* can be accessed here:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy_nQHcNLzu6QS7fJ1UuL14DZfeYQOnS2x9o

Crime Pays music video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGWLvfaspI4>

Valor Sweats music video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LN3lRTNF2Cg>

WEIRD KID music video:

<https://wavyspice.bandcamp.com/album/weird-kid>

6 Month - leading single from weird kid

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VMot9B3dxo>

Also, please check out Granny's Chandelier at

<https://grannyschandelier.com/>

and Public Pool at

<https://publicpool.tumblr.com/>

1 Brian H. Newman. "Lokye" conversations surrounding exhibition between Brian H. Newman and Ashley Cook, Public Pool, Hamtramck, MI, July 2021.

2 Brian H. Newman. "Lokye" conversations surrounding exhibition between Brian H. Newman and Ashley Cook, Public Pool, Hamtramck, MI, July 2021.

3 Public Pool, June 2021

4 Public Pool, June 2021