Originally pitched by filmmaker Kahlil Joseph, what “news” can offer positive potential animated by a combination of black intellectualism and the traditional news format. Artforum and the Black Watch monitors, a contemporary media format, are the segments. BLKNWS offers a new way to think about fashion, television, and news.

Joseph’s double-entendre thinking is the genre of the news (news desk) segments but can be applied at other times. Joseph’s thinking is not just about the art but also about the community, the intellect, and his colleagues. “The mix is it. The mix is the thinking.”

In addition to the traditional news backdrop, Joseph uses images of the world of the 1930s (1932); the New Deal; and the 369th Infantry. Joseph explains that “A vintage photograph is symbolic of the importance of family, black history, and community.”

Cover: Soldiers of the 369th Infantry were photographed upon returning to New York and records administrative.
Originally pitched as a cable news program for a black American audience, artist and filmmaker Kahlil Joseph’s *BLKNWS* (2018–ongoing) offers a creative approach to what “news” can be by focusing on narratives that celebrate empowerment and offer positive portrayals of black people. “BLKNWS imagines a cable news network animated by a cosmopolitan, culturally omnivorous, politically engaged, art loving and intellectual black sensibility—a bit like if BET merged with CNN and then merged with *Artforum* and the *New Yorker*,” writes artnet News. Presented on two large flat-screen monitors, a continual stream of images mixes found footage with original news desk segments. *BLKNWS* is a dynamic exploration of history, sports, music, art, literature, fashion, television, film, politics, and cultural criticism through a distinctly black lens. As a continually evolving artwork, *BLKNWS* is regularly updated to stay current as events make the news cycle.

Joseph’s double-screen news presentation subverts the single-channel delivery system that is the genre’s norm. At times the screens work as one—as with the NWS Desk (news desk) segments featuring a BN (*BLKNWS*) editor or guest on each screen—but at other times the content is unconnected. Writer, critic, and curator Hilton Als explains Joseph’s thinking: “he began to ask himself what story he could tell from his perspective, and his community’s. Black life and black culture weren’t linear; they had been interrupted too many times by violence, prejudice, disaster, and compromise. And there was the flip side: the juicy originality that emerged from those bad days and funky nights. How best, then, to create on film a black aesthetic that represented the hope, the highs, and the losses of a twenty-first-century New Negro?” Cinematographer, artist, and colleague Arthur Jafa further explains Joseph’s disruptive presentation: “The mix is it. The mix is in the face of linear thinking, it is in opposition to reductive thinking.” *BLKNWS* exemplifies the complexities of the news subject.

In addition to the unique two-channel display, *BLKNWS* is presented on a photographic backdrop. Joseph selects different historic photographs of all-black groups as source images for the wallpaper. These have included the Pittsburgh Crawfords baseball team (1932); the New Orleans congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family (c. 1900); and the 369th Infantry Regiment (United States) known as the Harlem Hellfighters (1919). Joseph explains these hero images:

“A vintage photograph of a group of black people stares out at the viewer. These photos are symbolic of the importance of family, of the importance of visual documentation, of the importance of the gaze, of staring history in the eyes. It is also a reminder of our American superstructure to undermine, erase, ignore and dismantle the black family, black history, black enterprise and, more generally, black assembly.”

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Cover: Soldiers of the 369th Infantry Regiment, known as the Harlem Hellfighters, were photographed upon return from World War I, 1919. Detail, National Archives and Records Administration. Courtesy Kahlil Joseph.
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And delivery system NWS Desk screen—but Hilton Als explains his perspective had been promise. And bad days and represented the cinematographer, representation: to reductive

and a photographic groups as source baseball team (c. 1900); and fighters (1919).

These photos documentation, a reminder of the black assemblage.”

A New Exhibit Curated by Hilton Als Celebrates the Life of James Baldwin

“As a galvanizing humanitarian force, Baldwin is now being dramatized in kind of oracle,” says journalist Hilton Als, who curated a new exhibition of depictions of Baldwin.
Featured in the MATRIX presentation, the Harlem Hellfighters (formerly the 15th New York National Guard Regiment) famously served on the frontlines during World War I. Serving 191 days and suffering approximately 1,500 casualties, the Hellfighters served longer and experienced more losses than any other American unit. Through the larger-than-life-size group portrait, these historic heroes communicate power and humility. Joseph also colorized the photograph in a dazzling blue violet, creating visual contrast with the often black-and-white offerings of BLKNWS.

BLKNWS’ content is refreshed in real time through a hard-wired internet connection to the artist’s studio. This unique technology allows the broadcast to expand over the course of its presentation at every venue. BLKNWS is customized with material that is particularly relevant to each venue’s community. From history to popular culture to current events, BLKNWS’ various subjects are entertaining, informational, and educational. Black-and-white historical clips of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and novelist James B. White, contemporary figures Tiffany Williams, and writer and guests: actress Ifa Priestess Trifonowava and guests: actress Sadiya Hartman.

As previously noted, the recent presentation of BLKNWS is more focused on private residences and barbershops in numerous calls for...
novelist James Baldwin are presented in cycles that also include color footage with contemporary figures like congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, athlete Serena Williams, and writer Saidiya Hartman. YouTube videos, Instagram stories, and actual news clips accompany newly produced NWS Desk segments with a range of BN editors and guests: actress Amanda Stenberg, comedian Alzo Slade, artist Henry Taylor, and Ifa Priestess Trifari Williams. And it is notable that the slick and authoritative BLKNWS logo maintains a prominent presence in the creative/commercial enterprise.

As previously noted, BLKNWS was conceived as a cable news program. It was always intended for a broader audience. BLKNWS has found a place in the art world with recent presentations in art galleries, biennials, and museums, but Joseph's sites for BLKNWS are more diverse than these arts institutions. The artist has placed the work in private residences and social gathering spots that include markets, hotel lobbies, and barbershops. The genre-defying BLKNWS belongs in all these worlds amid numerous calls for BLKNWS to become an actual network, which seems likely.
Art Papers reported that “Kahlil Joseph is a filmmaker who’s poised to profoundly disturb the boundaries between art forms, and disorder the depiction of race on film. His works erode lingering distinctions between music video, art-house film, and new-media art. A common experience in front of one of his films seems to be that viewers don’t care what they think they are watching—they just want to see it again.”11 BLKNWS captivates the viewer in its ability to both embrace and transcend the news. As broadcast news programs continually and questionably expand what qualifies as newsworthy stories, Kahlil Joseph’s BLKNWS brings an enlightening alternative with relevant, intelligent, and affirmative content geared to a black audience but significant and inspiring to all.

Patricia Hickson
The Emily Hall Tremaine Curator of Contemporary Art
**KAHLIL JOSEPH**

**SELECTED SOLO AND TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exhibition</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exhibition</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>May You Live in Interesting Times, The 58th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, Corderie dell’Arsenale and Giardini Central Pavilion, Venice, IT</td>
<td>The 58th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, Corderie dell’Arsenale and Giardini Central Pavilion, Venice, IT</td>
<td>The Infinite Mix, Hayward Gallery at Southbank Centre, London, UK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SELECTED PUBLIC SCREENINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exhibition</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Open Window, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Open Window, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>The Reflektor Tapes, Marfa Film Festival, Marfa, TX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Holding Blackness in Suspension: The Films of Kahlil Joseph, Troy Moore Library, Atlanta, GA</td>
<td>Holding Blackness in Suspension: The Films of Kahlil Joseph, Troy Moore Library, Atlanta, GA</td>
<td>m.A.A.d., A Short Film, Sundance NEXT Festival, Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**AWARDS, GRANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Stanford Program for the Future of the Center for the Arts</td>
<td>The Stanford Program for the Future of the Center for the Arts, Palo Alto, CA</td>
<td>VIA Art Fund Recipient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Artist in Residence at the Arts, San Francisco</td>
<td>Artist in Residence at the Arts, San Francisco</td>
<td>The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PUBLIC COLLECTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bonnefantenmuseum</td>
<td>Maastricht, NL</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Museum of Contemporary Art</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
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</table>

**WORK IN THE EXHIBITION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhibition</th>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLKN W S</td>
<td>Dual-channel video, color, sound</td>
<td>2018–ongoing</td>
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From a talk at the ‘Conversations with Curators’ series at MoMA PS1, said: “I don’t want to see it again.”

To the artist, Kahlil Joseph, their work is profoundly significant and deeply rooted in race and film. His films and installations are meant to be that moment of profound significance.”

---

"The Infinite Mix" by Kahlil Joseph

Dual-channel video, color, sound

Running time: variable

Courtesy of the artist.
Born 1981, Berkeley, California
Lives and works in Los Angeles, California

AWARDS, GRANTS, AND RESIDENCIES

2019  Stanford Presidential Residency on the Future of the Arts, hosted by The Cantor Center for the Arts and Institute for Diversity in the Arts, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA
2018  Artist in Residence, Headlands Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, NL
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WORK IN THE EXHIBITION

Kahlil Joseph
BLKNWS, 2018-ongoing
Dual-channel video, color, sound
Running time: variable
Courtesy of the artist

ARTIST PROGRAMES

Screening and Conversation
Saturday, January 18
5pm Reception
6pm Screening
7pm Conversation
Free

A conversation between artist Kahlil Joseph and curator Helen Mooney of a selection of Joseph’s commissions featuring Flying Lotus, Kendrick Lamar, and more.

CURATOR TALK

Patricia Hickson
The Emily Hall Tremaine Contemporary Art
Friday, January 24, noon
Hilles Video Gallery
Free with museum admission

Toronto International Film Festival, Toronto, CAN
Bardavon Film Festival, New York, NY
Sundance NEXT A

ART AND CONVERSATION

RockStar Film Festival, Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, PA
Sundance NEXT A, Salt Lake City, UT

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BLKNWS, 2018-ongoing
Dual-channel video, color, sound
Running time: variable
Courtesy of the artist

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4 Kahlil Joseph quoted in ema
5 The Harlem Hellfighters gained iconic status.
6 Art venues include the Centre Biennale in Venice, Italy.
7 Public satellite locations for Diversity in the Arts at Stanford
8 See Goldstein, artnet.
9 Art Papers quoted in Kahlil Joseph

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ARTIST PROGRAM
Screening and Conversation with Kahlil Joseph
Saturday, January 18 | Aetna Theater
5pm Reception
6pm Screening
7pm Conversation
Free

A conversation between MATRIX artist Kahlil Joseph and curator Helen Molesworth will follow a screening of a selection of Joseph’s short films and video commissions featuring music by artists including Flying Lotus, Kendrick Lamar, and Alice Smith.

CURATOR TALK
Patricia Hickson
The Emily Hall Tremaine Curator of Contemporary Art
Friday, January 24, noon
Hilles Video Gallery
Free with museum admission