

Q&A: Khristopher Parker-Ryan

ACR: From what I read on your website, you got into photography when you were still young. What were you photographing back then? Has that helped you with inspiration for your current work?

KP: Yeah, I'd say right after high school finding what my next moves very confusing. Photography just landed in my lap as something I wanted to pursue without knowing the path. I'd go out just making an image of the area I was used to and asking friends to tag along this exploration to photograph them too.

ACR: If I'm not mistaken, you transfer to MassArt. The first courses you took were as a cross-registered student (lighting course with Steve). What made you transfer to MassArt and leave behind your med school education?

KP: I was first at Salem State in fear of tuition and financing; I went to community college with hopes of an Advertising/Marketing Career. I ended up taking some photo classes there at Bunker Hill Community College, but honestly, not even the professor took the class fully seriously. No-fault of his own the students there I felt at the time didn't expect much. But I would ask more detailed questions and research what exposure triangle was and so on. He'd push me to look into MassArt if this was something I was considering taking more seriously. I ended up running into a MassArt senior one day on a shoot at this place. I researched and after our conversation made it a point to get to MassArt after getting an associates in business. I ended up transferring before I got that degree, but I think it was worth it.

ACR: How has your business school education influenced you as a person and artist?

KP: It helps me understand how being an Artist is different from being a businessman when it comes to the kind of connection of the craft. I learned so much about how the world works from more of a business mindset and selling or marketing an image/brand. I think is useful because, as an artist, you are your brand. That's where the overlap happens for me, the art world may operate in a different way I'm still understanding, but there is most definitely a business aspect of it. So there are times where wanting my work to sell creeps in my mind and will affect what I might choose to capture, but being at MassArt has challenged that way of thinking.

ACR: Do you believe that your interaction with people affects how you photograph others and yourself? If yes, why/how?

KP: I most definitely think so, when you spend time with someone however long you're going to pick up aspects of them. Their interest, some of their mannerisms, gestures, and how comfortable a person is or isn't during interactions. I personally pay attention to people on impulse, I can't help thinking about myself and how what I say or do will affect them and vice versa. Whether or not that's a good thing can be up for debate, but I think we, for the most part, are always noticing things about one another,



and I find that attention shows up in the works. Whether through my own curiosity or simply because that's what my eyes pay attention to. I feel a sense of responsibility to them and myself for what my images will say about people and what I'm seeing.

ACR: What are you thinking when photographing others? Is it more about them or how you want to portray them?

KP: I'm going to sound a bit selfish but mostly what I see at first. I think I'm drawn to them for observational reasons(like from what I see when I'm looking at them). But it's important to me that these people feel power over their own images. I personally already think that person is great for many reasons that I'm still unpacking, but my aim everytime is to make an eloquent image of them. And everytime sing to the viewers emotionally.

ACR: If you had to pick film or digital as your preferred method of making photographs despite the cost, which one and why?

KP: Honestly, I'm still an amateur when it comes to film, but I feel more connected to it. Digital is great but the process is different. I feel like a sculpture with a film camera; I'm checking/thinking about light more methodically. I'm more aware of each image I'm making choices each step carefully. Then I have no idea if I nailed it not physically, but I have that feeling that's close to a spiritual feeling lol. Like yeah, I felt good on that shot, and I pray that it develops. Then printing or developing the dark-room, like the whole process, is about the craft.

ACR: What artists are you constantly looking into for inspiration/mentorship?

KP: To be honest, I don't do an excellent job of looking at fine art photographers. I'd like to say, Ramell Ross, Roy Dercarava, Hank Willis Thomas, Latoya Ruby Frazier, Jen Davis among other names that I try to look at.

ACR: What new artists are you into and inspired you?

KP: For starters my peers all doing amazing things, But also an artist like Maciah Carter, Jonas Lindstroem, Loss-apardo (painter/animation).

ACR: I'm continually looking at other art forms for inspiration. What other art mediums you research for inspiration?

KP: Film a hundred percent, illustration, music, and a lot of 3D Art (installations of sorts).

ACR: What is your ultimate goal? What do you aspire to do with your photography?

KP: Hmm, this a good question, I think my goals for my work would lead to inspiring other artists who were in the place I was and where I'm at even now. I want to tell stories; I want the work to resonate with people on an emotional level. I want to do work that makes people think about others and want to connect them/their story. I want to be an influential person to the world that speaks to people through photography.



ACR: How has your photographic knowledge evolved throughout your time at MassArt?

KP: It's grown tremendously; I have been exposed to so much by the professors but also other students. Being in an environment surrounded by artists has helped me seek more knowledge but also understand it too. From being challenged/advised to look at others by professors to watching my peers' process has been key to my learning. I can't forget getting feedback, even though there were times i didn't really get the most feedback it was still important to be in the environment that gave us that opportunity.



Interview by:
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