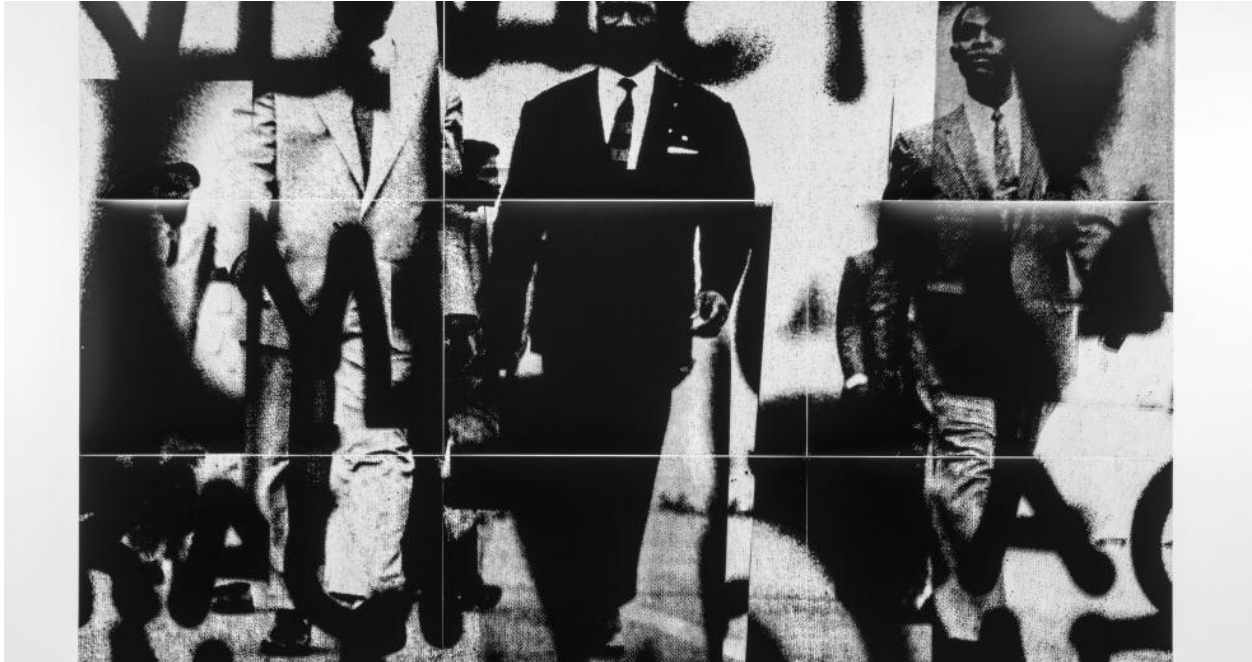


# SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

idea stream  
February 2, 2017

## Adam Pendleton's 'Black Dada' at MOCA

—By Dave DeOreo



Adam Pendleton, *Untitled (1958)*, 2016, silkscreen ink on Mylar, 9 Parts, overall: 87 × 124 1/2 inches, each: 29 × 41 1/2 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Pace Gallery.

Adam Pendleton, a rising star in the world of contemporary art from New York City, has his largest, solo-museum exhibit on view now at MOCA Cleveland. As an African American, Pendleton creates a new visual language with his abstract work which he calls Black Dada.

"I describe Black Dada as a way to talk about the future while talking about the past and that means it's essentially a conversation with our present moment and it's a confluence of what has come before us and what is about to come," Pendleton said.

MOCA senior curator Andria Hickey believes Pendleton has made something new by pairing the word "black" with the term "Dada," taken from the avant-garde art movement of the early 20th-century.

"In all of his work there's a relationship between a history of the avant-garde and a history of socio-political events and real lived experiences," Hickey said.

2021 S WABASH AVE  
CHICAGO IL 60616  
+1 (312) 226 2223

# SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

Recently Pendleton has focused on issues surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement and the almost-surreal violence captured on the cell phones of bystanders.

"You quite literally see the language 'Black Lives Matter' and I think one can take from that what one will. Of course that is speaking and giving space to what I would argue is one of the most important social and political movements or moments in the 21st century thus far, particularly in America. So that is something that I contend with, that is language that I've brought to the space of my work," Pendleton said.

Pendleton comments on the 21st century African-American experience with his abstract art.

"He's very much asking: 'What is this idea of blackness?' Hickey said. "We see graffiti and text that says 'Black Lives Matter' that's been cut, pasted, photo-copied and is layered with these complex artworks that are about issues of abstraction and art history. And I think there's references to a dialogue that's emerging about a relationship between whiteness and blackness and this fake understanding of humanity."

He does this through a lack of color, or rather a lack of primary colors.

"There is color in the work. There's black, white and gray (laughs). It doesn't seem necessary to me and if and when it does seem necessary I will utilize those colors," Pendleton said.

Some of Pendleton's work in this show are large-scale collages of found photos and written words in an abstract black and white. Hickey thinks they ask questions about society today.

"How does that connect to the abstractness of violence in our contemporary experience? How does that connect to the surreal experience of things that seem impossible to be really happening?" Hickey asked.

The images challenge the viewer to consider current realities in black and white, and how they relate to the color of our skin.

"I am asking for you to take your time to think about it. There's a rigor required on my part but also on the part of the viewer," Pendleton said.

Now it's afforded Pendleton the chance at his largest, solo-museum exhibition on a national stage.

2021 S WABASH AVE  
CHICAGO IL 60616  
+1 (312) 226 2223