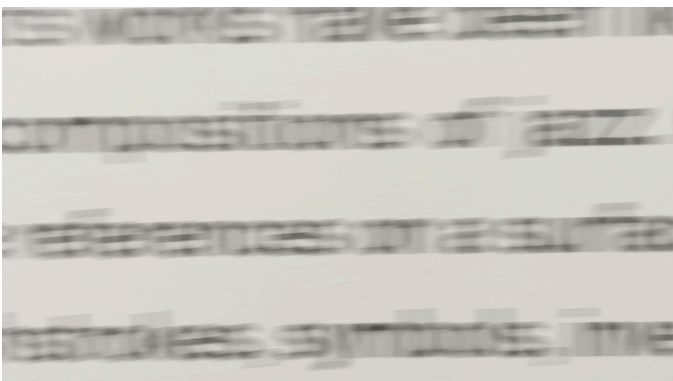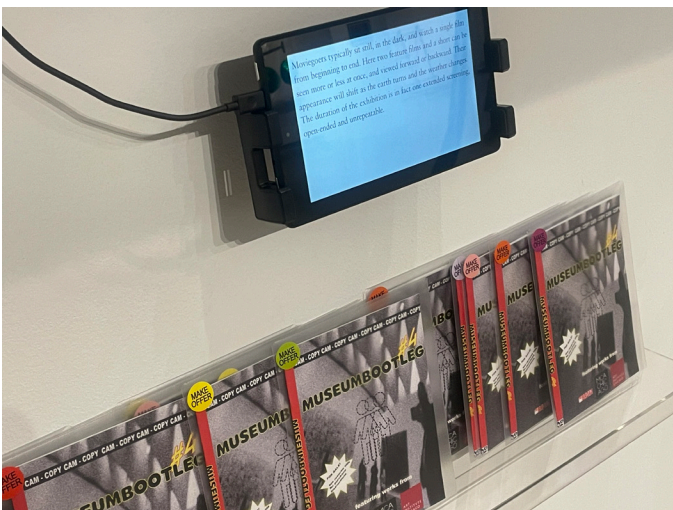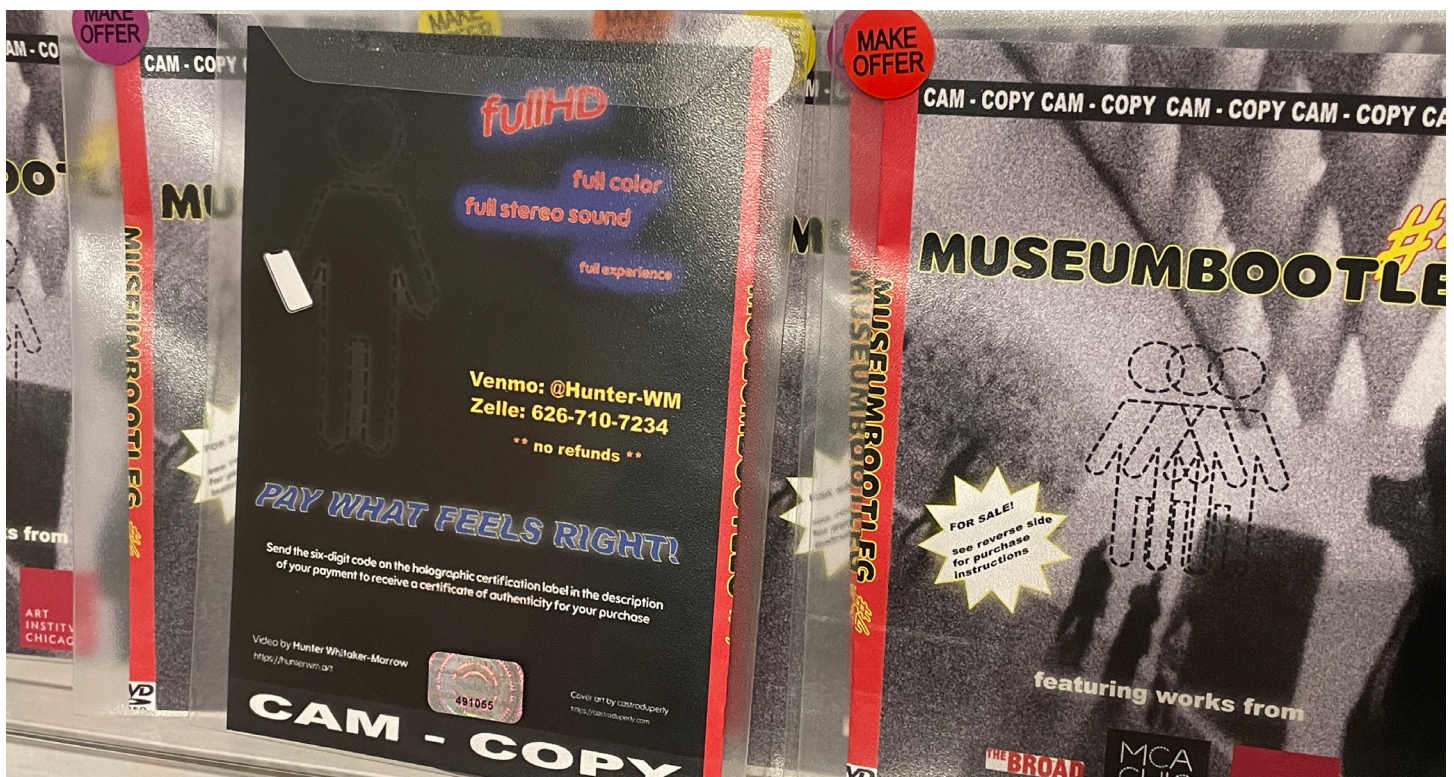# museum bootleg #4 (2024)

Eight-channel video arrangement, 11m54s short film, physical DVD object for purchase (print media, plastic sleeves, DVD)

museum bootleg #4 is a DVD video art piece which puts on display Whitaker-Morrow's engagement with a selection of artworks from collections including pieces housed at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, and The Broad in Los Angeles. All works are filmed on an iPhone in situ during public gallery hours making use of the quotidian, guerilla video-capture device that is the smartphone.

While on its surface the video seems to offer a cinematically observational freedom to view the galleries, Whitaker-Morrow creates an inescapable sense of someone else being behind the camera as he appears refracted and reflected in both the gestures of the camera and the surfaces he records. In this way, audible and visible calculated imperfections in the composition serve as Steyerlian "poor image" artifacts which point to instabilities related to the identity of the artist and the role of personal video creation in the contemporary moment.

museum bootleg #4 engages traditions of illicit video making (the creation of theatrical bootlegs most directly) as well as the ethos of video creation championed by media artists in the 1970s which saw video as having vast potential for personal expression and cultural commentary through experimentation at the level of the individual creator. In the most basic sense, the video shows the process of literally navigating the museum through the eyes, gestures, and milieu of the filmmaker. As the camera is operated by a Black artist, the image's very existence is an echo of the bodily experience of being Black in a space that has historically and conceptually been fraught with exclusivity.

The just-under twelve minute standalone film (which also operates as an element of the installation composition) is burned to physical DVDs and sold by the artist as a function of the exhibition; the commercialization of his personal experiences serving as a form of performative action which also implicates commerce by defining the relationship between viewer and viewed. Using an outmoded mechanism of distribution, the public sale also memorializes this amateur form of video creation and dissemination while also re-tangibilizing (or de-alienating in Marxist terms) the distribution of video art made invisible in the age of the internet.
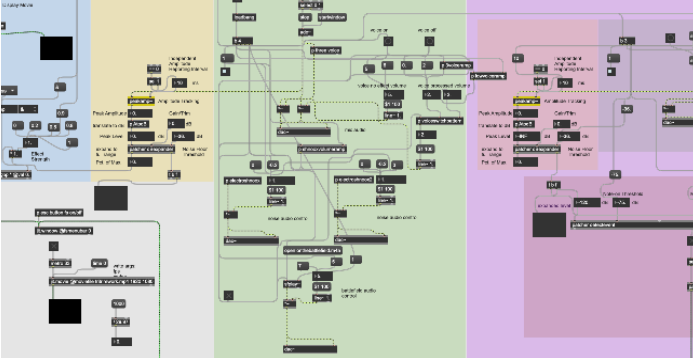
Moreover, the multi-screen arrangement serves to enhance these thematics by breaking apart editing form in its display of selected moments from Whitaker-Morrow's iterative performance of documentation. Granting each looping clip a greater agency as a plane of video, the spatialized videos collide and invite viewers to experience an infinite potential of significance and reflection as the asynchronous videos collide and loop in real time. As a final gesture, when this work is displayed in an installation environment, it develops an additional echo of de-alienation by including footage of its display.

The Emissary: [prayer 1] (2024)

Audiovisual performance: Live A/V processing in custom Max/MSP/Jitter software patch, projection, oration

The Emissary is a multi-part audio visual performance. Continuing legacies of Afrofuturist thought, Whitaker-Morrow employs reworked television footage, archival sound from his grandparents' church services, quotations from various sci-ence-fiction writers and sociological theorists, and his own field recordings in conjunction with his own writing, live oration, and sonic as well as physical performance. Threading these elements together in real-time utilizing a variety of softwares, Whitaker-Morrow conjures the occurrence of a Black-anarchist sci-fi rally and Afrofuturist sermon engendering an affective call to enact revolution in the present.

In [prayer 1], the first finished section of the larger "The Emissary" project, edited imagery from Star Trek: Deep Space 9 is pulled from the abyss of the black projection surface using a software system developed by Whitaker-Morrow in Max/MSP/Jitter. Fleeting moments of cinematic legibility are tied directly to the voice and breath of Whitaker-Morrow as a performer as the intensity of his voice drives the clarity of the imagery. At the same time, the video provides the main source of illumi-nation for Whitaker-Morrow as he speaks, his body in essence brought into visible existence through breath.
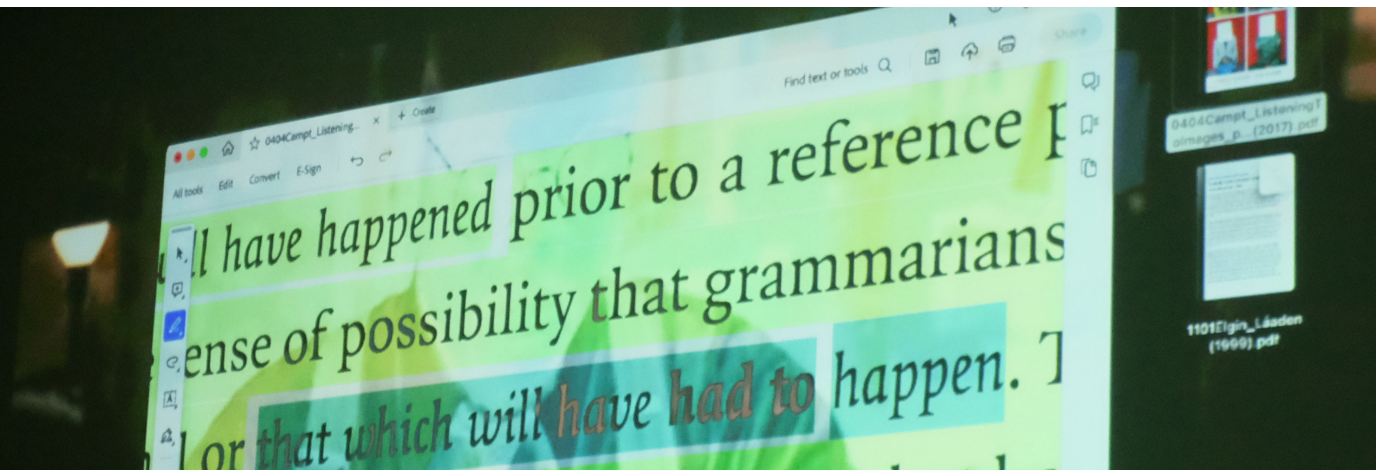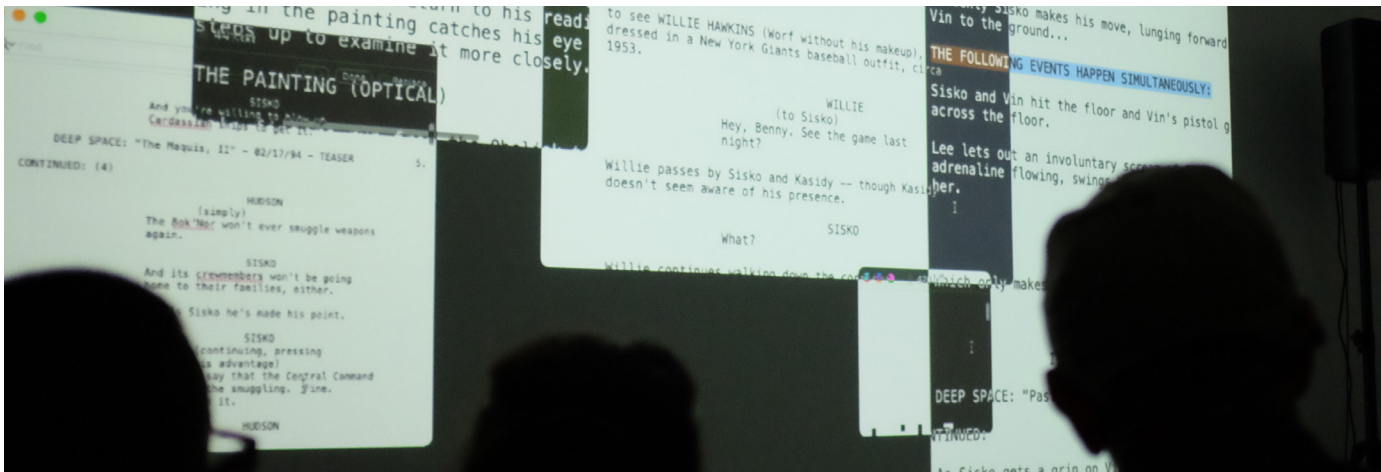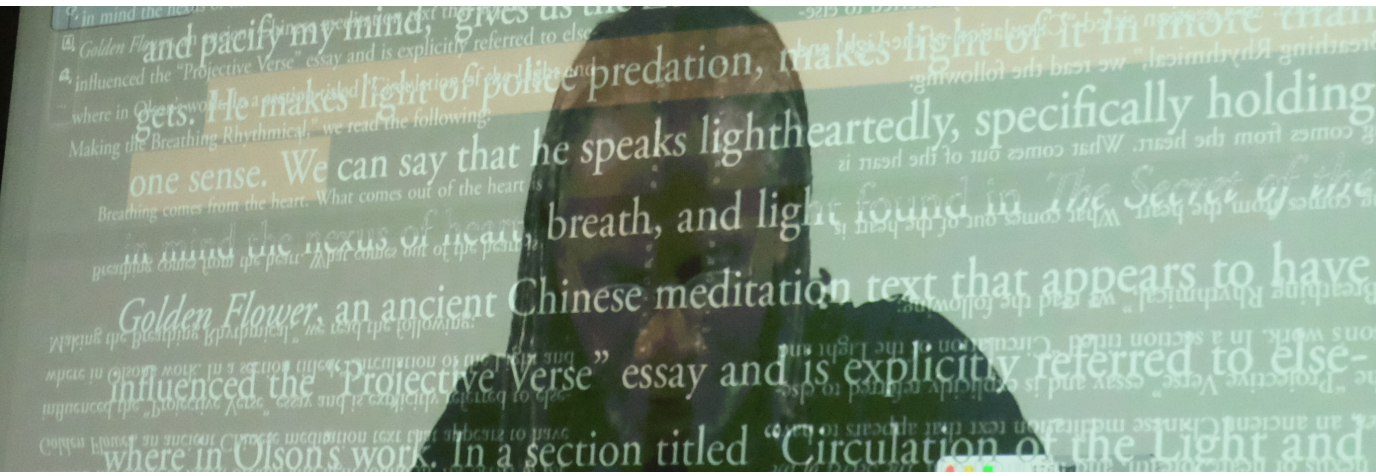
The poetic oration Whitaker-Morrow delivers incorporates quotations from Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed, Gil Scott-Heron's "'B' Movie (Intro, Poem, Song)", and other esoteric sources alongside his own writing. In addition, his speech utilizes a grammatical tense known as the future real conditional ("that which will have had to happen") which theorists such as Tina Campt have championed as a methodology for speaking from the present through to the future. All the while his address is complicated by distortion, ramping noise instruments, and the riotous blasts of fireworks recorded in Harlem, NY in 2020, all of which threaten to overpower the voice entirely.

Hunter Whitaker-Morrow

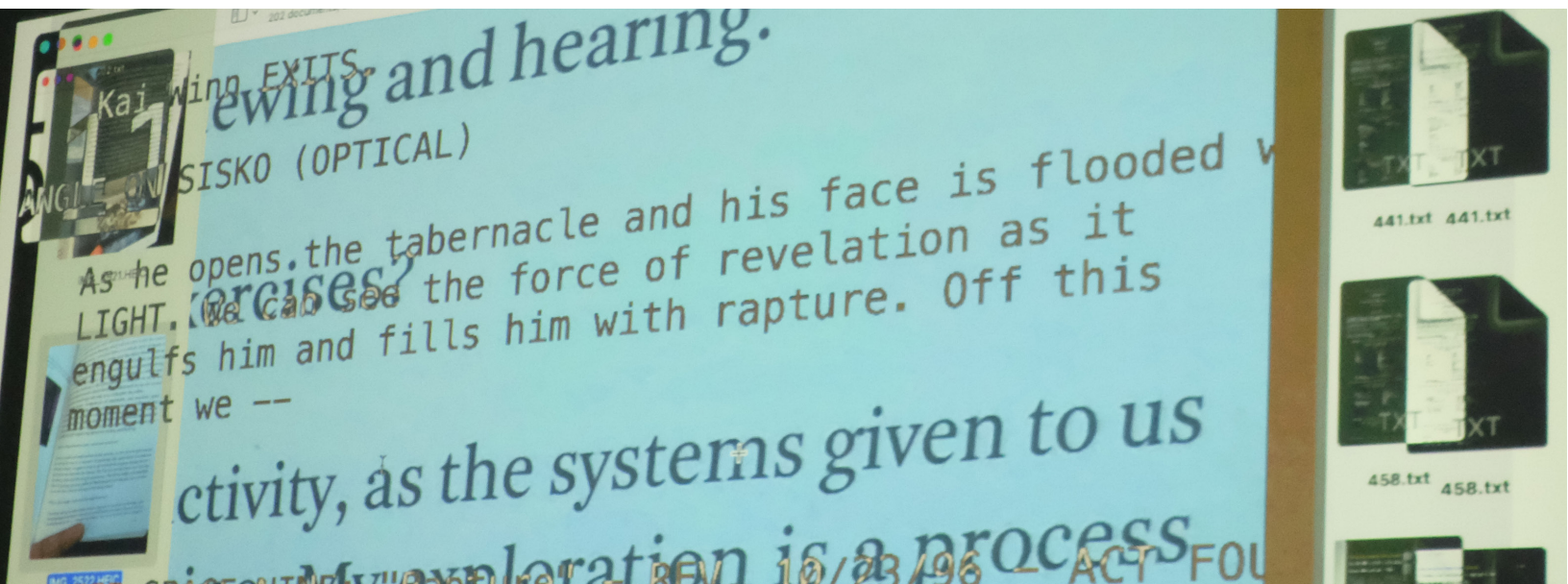work samples: The Emissary: [prayer 1]

The Emissary: ///matins (2024)

Audiovisual performance: Live A/V processing in Resolume and Ableton, projection, oration

The Emissary is a multi-part audio visual performance. Continuing legacies of Afrofuturist thought, Whitaker-Morrow employs reworked television footage, archival sound from his grandparents' church services, quotations from various science-fiction writers and sociological theorists, and his own field recordings in conjunction with his own writing, live oration, and sonic as well as physical performance. Threading these elements together in real-time utilizing a variety of softwares, Whitaker-Morrow conjures the occurrence of a Black-anarchist sci-fi rally and Afrofuturist sermon engendering an affective call to enact revolution in the present.

In ///matins, Whitaker-Morrow imagines a morning address to his Afrofuturist congregation which takes a form reminis-cent of a desktop performance managed through Resolume Arena and Ableton. Collaging a number of text heavy elements including PDF files of central linguistic and theoretical texts, manipulated photos of physical science-fiction books, and Star Trek: Deep Space 9 script files, Whitaker-Morrow centers the project within the context of his extensive research. In congruence with the increasingly abstracted text-based visuals, Whitaker-Morrow performs a welcoming oration initially offering viewers into a call and response before delving into an Afrofuturist homily. An additional soundscape is created in real-time as he navigates a number of samples including choir compositions, excerpts from a prayer given in his grand-parents' church, and his own field recordings. As a final element, the piece is punctuated by video edited clips of Star Trek: DS9 as well as a segment of Nathaniel Mackey's reading of his piece "Breath & Precarity" on the connection of breath and Black experience.
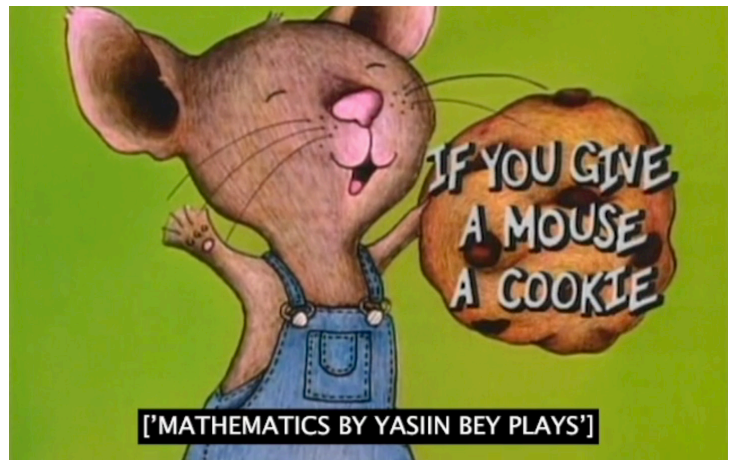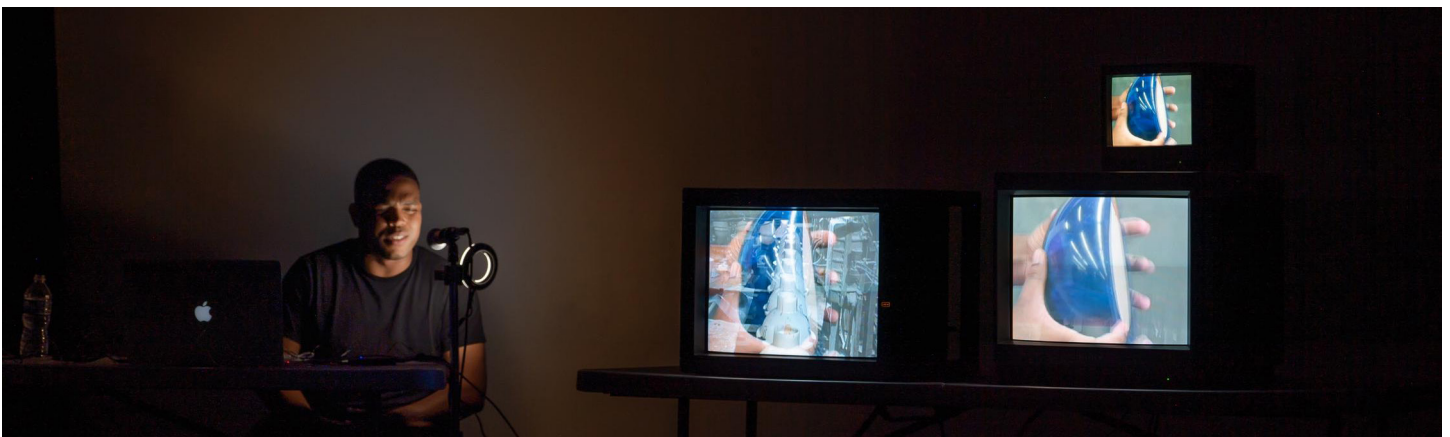
///matins serves as the first section of the larger The Emissary project and has been performed immediately followed by the performance of Whitaker-Morrow's piece [prayer 1].

Liberty Chain (2023)

Three-channel installation/audio-visual performance/single-channel short film: CRT TVs, live Resolume video manipulation, oration

Liberty Chain is a collage video piece that has been realized as a performance, three-channel video installation, and sin-gle-channel film. Using the memory of watching educational media in primary school as a departure point, Whitaker-Mor-row creates a conversation around his faimilial experiences of Blackness which links to the to the increasingly inequitable education system of weaponization of schooling in the United States.

Employing edited video from a single episode of the evducational program Reading Rainbow hosted by Levar Burton which ran from the mid 80s until the 2000s, the video comprises a meta narrative on the cyclical nature of racialized violence towards Black Americans in the United States. A detournement of the episode's focus on chain reactions, the piece utilizes the footage and discussion around bowling and dominoes extant in the source material as a means of creating expansive social metaphors (the individual as a part of a larger system) and a meta metaphor of editing structure (the individual shot as a part of a larger system of understanding created through montage). Additionally, Whitaker-Morrow imparts his own voiceover and compicates the imagery through structuralist editing and the incorporation of tangential subtitles.

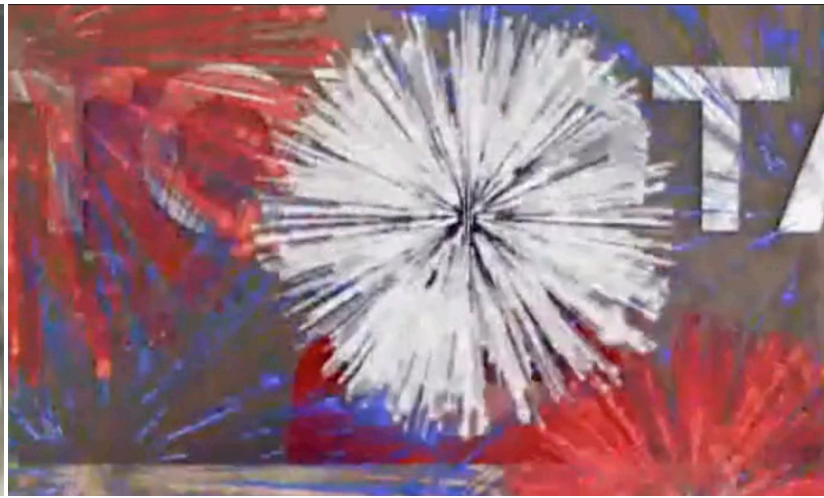Hunter Whitaker-Morrow

work samples: Liberty Chain

Whole New Game (2022)

Two-channel video installation: flatscreen television monitors, edited broadcasts of the 2020 NBA Finals
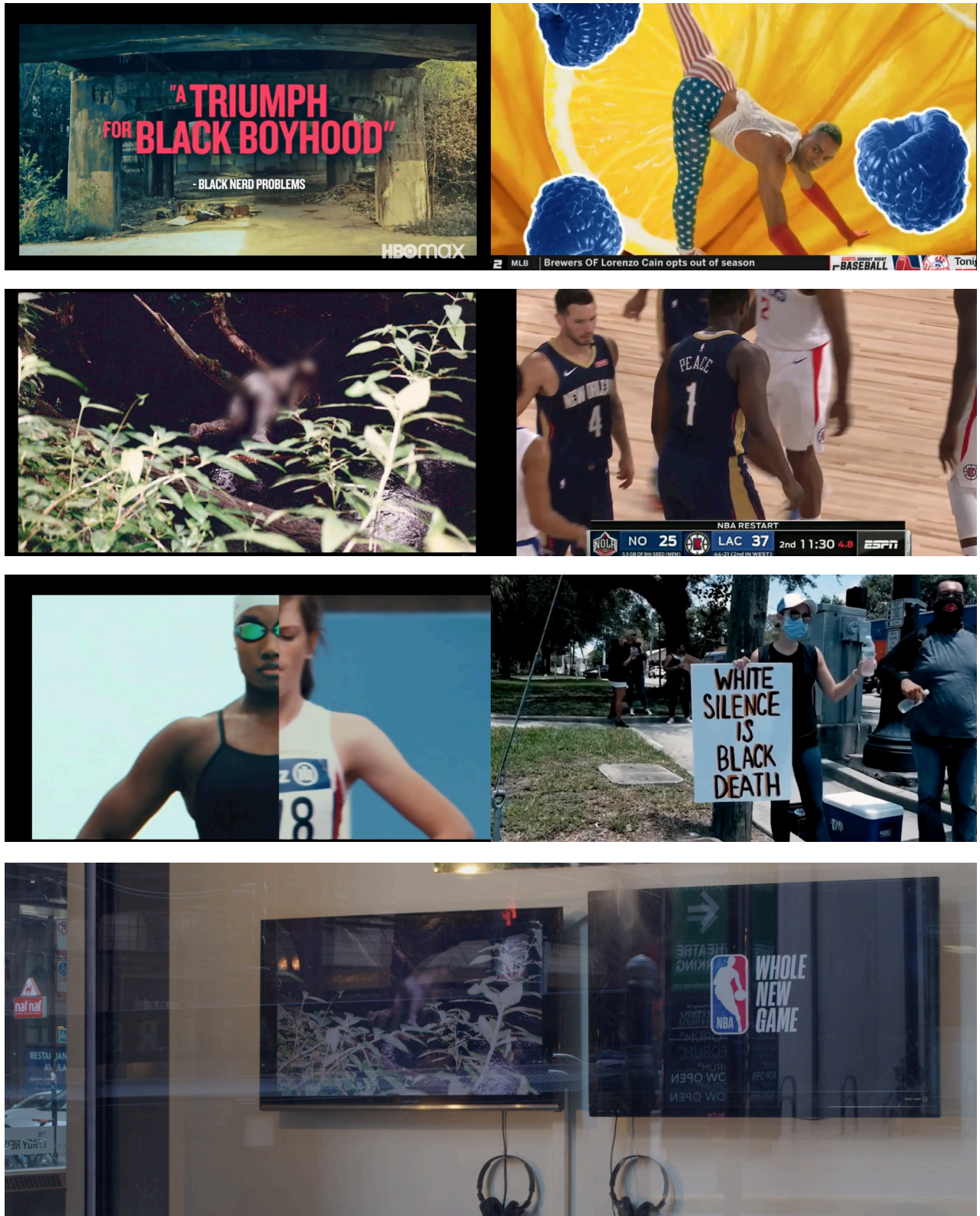
Hunter Whitaker-Morrow

work samples: Whole New Game

Whole New Game was born of 2020. As a Black person living in Harlem during the pandemic, Whitaker-Morrow sought connection and found a semblance of it watching the 2020 NBA Finals. The liveness of sports broadcasts and the success of the Lakers franchise that year provided a welcome link to family and culture in his hometown of Los Angeles, California.

With cries for change growing and public protests gathering steam in spite of the global pandemic and state–sanctioned repression, social justice messaging on TV became more prevalent. The NBA's engagement reached its zenith with a players' boycott over the police shooting of Jacob Blake. In Whole New Game, Whitaker-Morrow approaches these displays with discernment, questioning the import of these moments as televised events. Driven to unpack their political efficacy and emotional impact, he recorded over twenty full-length broadcasts before beginning the process of re-editing them into two distinct videos which place the spectacle of these televised events within the context of the historical uprisings which occurred concomitantly.

The left screen of Whole New Game reflexively represents Whitaker-Morrow's perspective as a viewer, keying in on affective moments. The right screen shows a randomization of shots featuring Black bodies, crudely blending them with dissolves. Alone, it asks viewers to consider what the industry call for "on-screen representation" means. Looping asynchronously, the left screen upholds a linear narrative while the right screen invites a dilution of message entirely. Together the two screens can be said to be representative of the act of linear television viewership with its barrage of numbing pleasantness and ephemeral liveness as a chronicle of a uniquely Black experience with television.