

DEVEZIN, JER'LISA

Viewed through an assertive female gaze, what changes, if anything, about how black women's bodies are perceived and projected upon? Cast metal, clay, and plaster; materials referencing solidarity, longevity, and stability, are used by Jer'Lisa Devezin in the rendering of the of the ass as a sort of fractal mass, as singular sculpture, and for the sculpting of matching sets attached to torsos with alternate genitals. Devezin describes the work as "loud and bold, light and heavy, hard and soft, light and dark, fat and skinny," referential elements in both the video and audio documentation of the artist's practice.

The choice of the ass as a representative of the black female body, of Devezin's body, is based

on the ass as an overly fetishized icon. The varied definitions of "icon", something to be venerated, a representative symbol, a rendering of a deity, could all be applied to this singular body part, one intricately tied to the artists' formative years, described as a time ruled by technology, reality television, mainstream hip-hop, and politics.

Through exploring how these forces have worked together to shape and contribute to the stereotyping of black female sexuality as "loud, filthy and ghetto" in the lens of the male gaze, a gaze that classifies black women themselves as "hypersexualized, dehumanized, marginalized, and objectified". Devezin seeks to reshape representation through exploring current perception of the black

female body through documented history, filtered through 21st century perceptions.

The ass is chosen as a representation of the whole, not only because of its status as a fetishized icon, but also in tangent with a sort of reduction often attributed to the male gaze one doubled in the black female experience via a white male-specific gaze. In the very act of making and showing the art, some of which is specific to Devezin's experience as a

black female and queer woman who has described a sort of limbo—created by perceptions of masculinity, femininity, and an inclination not to choose to live entirely in either—questions, as well as insights on the depth of the experience of living in a form affected by the projections of others, arise in the handling of the art, as well as in the handling of the artist by both white men and women in the process of creation.

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