

DERRICK ADAMIS

PATRICK KELLY,
THE JOURNEY

JAN. 14 – JULY 19, 2020





Derrick Adams, *Day Wear, Evening Wear*, 2017, clothing patterns, acrylic, and fabric.

Derrick Adams creates art that contributes to a more factually accurate and inclusive visual culture. While an elementary school teacher, Adams noticed how imagery influenced his students' ideas of identity and self-empowerment. This observation led to a diverse body of work that uncovers and illuminates concealed histories and perspectives.

Adams discovered Patrick Kelly in 1980s fashion magazines. African American and raised in Mississippi during the Jim Crow era, Kelly became an acclaimed Parisian designer, creating elegant, unpretentious fashions that reflected his character and experiences of Southern culture.

“
For me,
it was about
trying to connect ...
artist to artist ...

”

Before Adams created works based on Kelly, he thoroughly researched the fashion designer, relying largely on primary sources. His responses to Kelly's work take the form of mood board collages that form conceptual, abstract visualizations, using fabric swatches and commercially produced home sewing patterns based on Kelly's designs.



Derrick Adams, *Work Hard, Play Hard*, 2017, clothing patterns, acrylic, and fabric.

“
I’m really trying
to represent a sense of
movement of the body
or the garment.

”

Kelly’s designs echoed his joyful personality through bold colors and strong, body-conscious lines. His exuberance extended to his unconventional fashion shows, events where models danced, played guitars, and interacted with each other on crowded runways.

Adams explains his series as a conversation with fashion in motion. Look for examples of how this was achieved, beginning with the cover image, *Runway No. 1*. How does Adams describe fashion models moving down a runway? Start your analysis by looking for hints of angled arms swinging from curving figures. Then, search for further evidence.

Next, examine *Work Hard, Play Hard*, above. How does Adams make use of balance, rhythm, unity, and variety to create illusions of motion and depth?

Apply your discoveries to an investigation of other works in the exhibition. Share and discuss your findings. What similarities and differences do you find among Adams’ works?

When Adams was in college, a professor described how artists possess the power to direct and focus audience attention.

How would you make use of this ability? What do you want people to see or understand? Using images, words, or a combination of both, follow Derrick Adams' example and share an awareness that you want to bring to others.

“
You have the ability
to make people
see things the way
you want them
to see things ...
What do you want
people to see?
” 4



Derrick Adams, *Semi Formal*, 2017, clothing patterns, acrylic, and fabric.

All works courtesy of the artist, Luxembourg & Dayan, New York/London, and Salon 94, New York.

¹ Uszerowicz, M. (Interviewer), and Adams, D. (Interviewee). (2018, January 5). *Transforming the View: Derrick Adams Interviewed by Monica Uszerowicz*. Retrieved from bombmagazine.org/articles/transforming-the-view-derrick-adams-interviewed.

² Ringle, H. (Interviewer) and Adams, D. (Interviewee). [PDF document, publication of The Studio Museum in Harlem]. (2017, August 23). *Derrick Adams: Patrick Kelly, The Journey, Exhibition Guide*. Retrieved from issuu.com/studiomuseum/docs/sth2154_inharlem_derrickadams_broch.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Donoghue, K. (Interviewer), and Adams, D. (Interviewee). (2018, January 22). *Derrick Adams is Focusing on a Positive Vision for the Future*. Retrieved from whitewall.art/art/derrick-adams-focus-positive-vision-future.



Installation view, *Patrick Kelly, The Journey*, SCAD Museum of Art, 2020.

About the Artist and the Exhibition

Derrick Adams' *Patrick Kelly, The Journey* explores the vibrant personality and work of influential African-American fashion designer Patrick Kelly (1954-1990). Kelly was the first American to be admitted to the *Chambre Syndicale du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode*, the eminent French governing body of the women's ready-to-wear fashion industry. Adams immersed himself in the Kelly archive at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York, where he discovered a trove of correspondence, sketches, swatches, photographs, and other memorabilia, including a book proposal about Kelly's life written by his friend, the esteemed poet Maya

Angelou. Adams' works reference Kelly's legacy as a formalist who infused social context and humor into his creations. The exhibition presents Adams' abstract collages and sculptural works that incorporate Kelly's vintage clothing patterns, iconic fabrics, bold and colorful geometric forms, and embellishments.

The exhibition is curated by Alexandra Sachs, executive director of SCAD FASH and Atlanta exhibitions. It is presented as part of SCAD deFINE ART 2020, the university's annual program of commissions, exhibitions, lectures, and performances, held Feb. 18-20 in Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia.

About SCAD and SCAD Museum of Art

Offering more degree programs and specializations than any other art and design university, SCAD is uniquely qualified to prepare talented students for creative professions. SCAD FASH Museum of Fashion + Film is an integral part of the SCAD educational experience, fortified by the university's strong global presence and worldwide connections to renowned contemporary fashion designers, filmmakers, and creative professionals. Situated within SCAD Atlanta, SCAD FASH welcomes visitors of all ages to dynamic exhibitions and captivating films.

SCAD FASH educational materials engage K-12 audiences in activities that enhance understanding of art and design — investigations that reveal relevant personal, historical, and cultural connections while promoting cross-disciplinary links necessary for today's innovative careers.

For more information, visit scad.edu and scadfash.org.

SCAD: The University for Creative Careers

The Savannah College of Art and Design is a private, nonprofit, accredited university, offering more than 100 academic degree programs in more than 40 majors across its locations in Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia; Hong Kong; Lacoste, France; and online via SCAD eLearning.

For more information, visit scad.edu.

Cover image: **Derrick Adams**, *Runway No. 1*, 2017, clothing patterns, acrylic, and fabric. Courtesy of the artist, Luxembourg & Dayan, New York/London, and Salon 94, New York.



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