UCLA
American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title
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Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5c0458rv

Journal
American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 43(4)

ISSN
0161-6463

Author
Caro, Mario A.

Publication Date
2019-09-01

DOI
10.17953/aicrj.43.4.caro

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DOI 10.17953/aicrj.43.4.caro

What Shall We Do with the Bodies? Reconsidering the Archive in the Aftermath of Fraud

Mario A. Caro

If Jimmie Durham was a white man who's told countless lies about his identities, it would fundamentally change how his career should be viewed.

—*Paul Chaat Smith*

A longtime friend of Jimmie Durham, Paul Chaat Smith spoke in defense of Durham's claim to being Cherokee on August 31, 2017 at the Walker Art Center. [1] His talk, "Jimmie Durham, Native Identity, and Americans, the Forthcoming Smithsonian Exhibition," was part of the Walker's programming for *Jimmie Durham: At the Center of the World*, the artist's comprehensive retrospective exhibition, which started its tour at the Hammer Museum earlier that year. The show celebrated the long and stellar career of an artist whose body of work has taken, for the most part, the premise of his Cherokee identity as central to its meaning. It is from this perspective that Durham has often employed trickster strategies to critique the Native stereotypes often played out within art institutions, as well as the colonization of Native peoples in general. An example of Durham's wisecracking approach is a defense he formulated when the Indian Arts and Crafts Act passed in 1990, the federal law that makes it illegal to market art as Native art unless it is legitimately produced by a Native artist. In response to early criticisms of his claim to a Native identity under the act, Durham released this wily statement:

Mario A. Caro (Colombian Mestizo), lecturer in the MIT's Art, Culture, and Technology Program, is a researcher, curator, and critic of contemporary art, having published widely on the history, theory, and criticism of contemporary Indigenous arts. His work within the academy complements his endeavors within various communities to promote global cultural exchanges.

> I am not an American Indian, nor have I ever seen or sworn allegiance to India. I am not a Native "American," nor do I feel that America has any right to either name me or un-name me. I have previously stated that I should be considered a mixed-blood: that is, I claim to be a male, but in fact only one of my parents was male.[2]

Durham playfully eluded his lack of standing with the Cherokee by questioning the whole notion of identity itself, a strategy very much in line with contemporary discourses that questioned essentialist approaches to identity in favor of an individual's choice to self-identify. At the time, this was an urgent approach theorized by those whose identity, particularly in terms of gender, did not align with normative categories. Today the critical questioning of concepts of identity is still necessary. Indeed, when Durham's exhibition opened at the Hammer in January of 2017, art critic Aruna D'Souza's initial response addressed how his body of work focuses on identity. She noted that Durham's art "was funny, self-deprecating, ironic, anti-essentialist when it came to the artist's own identity and the romantic stereotypes forced upon him by the art world, and it was deeply critical."[3] Durham, after all, was the contemporary Native artist many of us had been waiting for—witty, intellectual, and very savvy about identity, as well as the enigmatic world of contemporary art.

However, only a couple of months after her initial reaction to an artist's work that she confessed she had known "only vaguely, having seen it in dribs and drabs, one piece at a time in group shows," D'Souza wrote another article, titled "Mourning Jimmie Durham," which radically reconsiders her first response to the retrospective.[4] A brilliant reexamination of her original attraction to the exhibition, her second essay takes into account the increasing number of articles that had since been published insisting that Durham be outed for his ethnic fraud once and for all.[5] Using psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's five stages of grief, she comes to a full understanding of how Durham's fraud has been maintained all these years, sustained by a desire for just the right type of contemporary Native artist, one who comfortably fits the expectations of a white viewer. Concluding that "to take seriously the notion of Cherokee sovereignty means to honor the Cherokee's right to define tribal membership," D'Souza ends with several poignant questions: "To what extent has Durham's success been predicated on his talent as a trickster, and to what extent has it depended on what artists, critics, art institutions, and art audiences value? Are our critical assumptions leading to a situation where the only good Indian (artist) is a fake Indian (artist)?"[6]

The aesthetics of Durham's work gain their appeal by actively engaging contemporary art discourses, as well as the market. When he began to make art in the 1980s, the work employed a grungy aesthetic, which fit well with notions of Native peoples' use of bricolage, and also coincided with an approach to recycling found materials that was popular then. His use of found materials also played on a nostalgic approach to assemblage. His rough constructions also mimicked a type of outside art, the kind of naiveté that fit the primitivist Native stereotype he worked to undermine. And he has kept this close alignment with art world discourses ever since. However, what provokes opposition to Durham's work is not its formal qualities, but its assumed conceptual underpinnings. For the most part, the criticality of his work relies on his claims—no

matter how coy—to his identity as Cherokee. Yet Cherokee identity is a national category that is legislated and, therefore, cannot be individually claimed. To think that one could arbitrarily choose to be Cherokee would be like deciding one day, willy-nilly, that one would like to be, say, French: national affiliation is not an individual choice.

The kind of anticipation for an artist like Durham—one who could powerfully and strategically deconstruct Native stereotypes—has been at play all along. It was clearly outlined by Lucy Lippard in an essay titled "Jimmie Durham—Postmodern 'Savage'" published in 1993 in *Art in America*. For Lippard, Durham was, and still is an "artist, writer, poet, performer and treaty activist, he sees the world through the eyes of Coyote—the trickster, the Native American embodiment of all that is base and godlike in humans. His art peels away the decorative wrappings that disguise the American Indian in the United State's [*sic*] colonial present."[7] Lippard believed Durham to be the embodiment of an idealized Native renegade, one able to cleverly outsmart the white man—the postmodern "savage" the art world has been waiting for all along.[8] This figure still holds such great appeal that the magazine decided to republish Lippard's essay in 2017 "on the occasion of the traveling retrospective." They also republished Nancy Marie Mithlo's original response to Lippard, in which she succinctly identifies the problem with this artist's renegade pose:

> Durham's career description provides all the stereotypical boxes for the non-Indian consumer to check and therefore comprehend: artists born into a clan (check), participation in Native American church (check), AIM involvement (check), journey to the woods to find a name (check), appropriate animal guardian relationship (check), Santa Fe art based as insincere (check), tie-in with traditional norms—i.e. Cherokees makes good writers (check), artist gives gifts in the Indian way (check).

As Mithlo tersely observes, "your readers should be aware that this artist's fame stems from your ignorance. He knows your language, which boxes you need to check, which names to drop, and what injustices to cry." [9]

More recently, Smith's defense of his friend Durham at the Walker Art Center thoughtfully considers the various possibilities of what he called a "controversy." Working through various possibilities as to how, over time, Durham may have come to claim a Cherokee identity, the most obvious, simple explanation—and for him the most credible—is that Durham really is Cherokee. He ponders what it would take for someone to carry out such a sustained masquerade and ridicules the possibility that Durham has been pretending to be Native all along:

> It would mean that for decade after decade I've personally been the victim of a carefully orchestrated ethnic fraud, one that took place on Sioux reservations, right here in Minneapolis, New York, Venice, San Francisco, Geneva, Berlin, and other places every decade from the 1970s to the present. It would mean all those casual stories about Arkansas, the family anecdotes, the pictures he showed me, his adventures in Houston and Austin, everything he said about his early life were lies.[10]

And, yet, this is exactly what ethnic fraud requires—a sustained, ever-vigilant, and never-ending duplicity.

Thinking the Aftermath

Leaving behind Smith's concern about the dynamic of the public discussion on Durham's identity, I turn to a consideration of the logical aftermath of such a fraud for scholars, art critics, collectors, and viewers of his work. What are we to do with this vast archive of writings, documentation, and Durham's work itself? How to reconsider these bodies of work? While a reassessment of Durham's retrospective, such as D'Souza's, which reassesses the work on display in light of the falsehood of his identity claims is welcomed, a more comprehensive and sustained reappraisal is required, one that rigorously reconsiders the many junctures between Durham's identity and his complete oeuvre. Now that the fraud has been acknowledged, not only the work but also the various discourses it has engendered will need to be reconsidered. Since the traveling retrospective highlighted Durham's deception, much has been said and written about how it was enabled by inaction—by the failure, and at times outright refusal, to correct the record. When no revision is provided, when the archive is allowed to remain as is, it is a tacit legitimation of fraud.

The Native American Art and Art Studies Association (NAASA) met on October 25-29, 2017, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the eve of Durham's retrospective opening at the Whitney on November third. This was the show's third venue after the Hammer and the Walker Art Center.[11] Given the exposure, I was dismayed to find the meeting would not address the issue of fraud and was given various reasons by the organizers: there had not been enough time. There was not enough interest. Or, it would be too distracting. Of course, in time the urgency of the situation would fade, and perhaps that's what the silence had been about—letting the brouhaha blow over. Still, it seemed to me that this professional organization was the ideal venue for this discussion and letting that opportunity slip seemed negligent, especially in light of the unexpected strength and success of the resistance to the narrative of Durham as a Cherokee artist. Although as early as 1993 Mithlo, Suzan Shown Harjo, and others had sounded the alarm in print,[12] this most recent set of discussions was being held on various social media platforms, as well as mainstream art online publications such as *artnet News* and *Hyperallergic*. However, Native platforms such as *Indian Country Today* provided the sharpest Native perspectives; America Meredith, the publisher of *First American Art Magazine*, was particularly strong in articulating the situation.[13]

Institutional Response

Surprisingly, museums quickly mobilized and attempted to confront the situation. In fact, they were uncharacteristically nimble in programming discussions to publicly engage the issue. The Hammer quickly put out a statement that partially reads: "While questions about Durham's identity have arisen periodically, since the early 1990s with the passing of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act, curators, art historians, and artists of the contemporary art field who have worked with the artist, including those from the Native Arts field, have accepted Jimmie's understanding of his ancestry as Cherokee."[14] I assume the strategy here was to calm the public by attesting that experts in the field had already concluded the issue as a case of self-identification.[15] It's not clear how this

statement was meant to address the fact that it was the Cherokee themselves that had denounced Durham's claims, something the statement failed to mention. An editorial article in *Indian Country Today* written by Cherokee artists, scholars, and legislators clearly outlined a straightforward investigation that included genealogical and biographical data. They concluded that "No matter what metric is used to determine Indigenous status, Durham does not fulfill any of them." They also expressed their frustration at the lack of rigor demonstrated by those who complacently continued to attribute a Cherokee identity to Durham: "That scholars writing about Durham repeatedly fail to fact-check any of Durham's claims is egregious, especially when a multitude of research and resources are available." [16]

Other host venues responded more thoughtfully. The Walker hosted a couple of panels in addition to the talk by Smith with which I began. An online discussion was held on September 15, 2017, titled "How Can Contemporary Art Be More Inclusive of Native Voices?"[17] The discussion focused on addressing a systemic lack of Native American representation within museums—as artists and as museum professionals. The participants included the artists Jeffrey Gibson (Choctaw-Cherokee), Luzene Hill (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians), Dyani White Hawk (Sičangu Lakota), Candessa Teehee (Cherokee Nation), and the curator Kathleen Ash-Milby (Navajo). The panelists saw the Durham discussion as an opportunity to have a broader discussion about the museum's responsibility to Native American communities and to recommend approaches to address this lack. Gibson conveys how some of this strategy developed:

> Kathleen and I were talking about it . . . and she said something really wise to me: 'We need to get this conversation to day two.' There's the immediate emotional reaction, and then everything was hovering in this immediate reactionary place. Then day two or day three would be when we've all had a chance to step back and get some objective opinion and thoughtful responses and then start the conversation again from there.

This may be the reason that the NAASA conference, which would take place the following month, did not address the issue. As a former president of the organization, it's possible that Ash-Milby had advised on a cooling-off period on the topic. During the Walker panel, she expressed concern that

> we dwell too much on Jimmie Durham and that it drowns out all the good work that's happening in the field. I've also been concerned that it becomes divisive within our field. We all need each other, and we all have a common goal, which is to promote contemporary Native art, because there is such outstanding work being done today.[18]

We should nonetheless keep in mind that the issue of Durham's identity fraud followed immediately on the heels of an earlier heated engagement occurring earlier at the Walker that year, which involved local Dakota communities and had become international news. When the museum purchased a sculpture by the Los Angeles-based artist Sam Durant titled *Scaffold* to become part of their refurbished sculpture garden,

it became clear that the museum had not thought through its significance at its new site. While the work had been produced for the Documenta 13 exhibition in 2012 and had been earlier displayed in Europe without controversy, among the elements of the work was a large wooden structure that invoked a gallows—a referent for the mass hanging by the US government of 38 Dakota men from nearby Mankato, Minnesota in 1862. The local Native communities had neither been alerted to this work's installation nor consulted and eventually their opposition was successful in persuading the museum to dismantle and bury the piece.[19]

The Whitney also quickly put together a panel titled "Beyond Jimmie Durham: Contemporary Native American Art and Identity," held on November 16, 2017, which included Ashley Holland (Cherokee), Elizabeth Theobald Richards (Cherokee), Jolene Rickard (Tuscarora), Jeffrey Gibson (Choctaw-Cherokee), and Kathleen Ash-Milby (Navajo). Although all the panelists were Native, they were not all in agreement on how to frame the discussion. Some saw it as a complicated discussion about an artist who at least understood the issues and was able to thoughtfully challenge audiences. A particularly ambivalent response was that of Jeffrey Gibson, whose avant-garde practice has earned him much acclaim. His trajectory has been heavily informed by Durham's work and he admits that, until now, he had been primarily addressing Durham's work, and not his claims to being Cherokee. During the panel discussion, Gibson addressed his very personal engagement with Durham's work and biography, narrating how it has contributed to his efforts to

> carve out a space for not just an Indigenous voice, but also a hybridized queer voice, a voice of a generalized person of color, a Choctaw voice, and an artist's voice. I refuse to compartmentalize the different parts of my identity in an effort to make it accessible for others' understanding. I cannot deny that Jimmie's work has had a tremendous impact on how I think about these topics. He has complicated them with his subjectivity. And his lifetime's worth of work has stirred up questions that we must continue to grapple with. I have to assume that had I not believed him to be of Cherokee descent then I may not have felt such a relationship to his work.

He goes on to discuss the fluidity and multiplicity of identity, what he terms "the complex constructs of identity," recounting that to "shift [identities] between different contexts during my lifetime has saved me and kept me from trying to assume a singular fixed identity determined by someone else outside of my reality."[20]

The next discussion was held on March 29, 2018 at the Walker and titled "Beyond the Guest Appearance: Continuity, Self-Determination, and Commitment to Contemporary Native Arts," and included Nicholas Galanin (Tlignit), Ashley Holland (Cherokee), Candice Hopkins (Carcross/Tagish First Nation), Steven Loft (Mohawk), and was moderated by Dyani White Hawk (Sičangu Lakota). The talk was introduced by Kate Bean, a Dakota scholar who prefaced the conversation by reminding the audience about the colonial legacy of institutions—such as museums—misrepresenting Native cultures, and, more specifically, about the work of local Native communities in addressing the Durant controversy.[21] While these conversations presented a strategic moment to talk about the lack inclusion of Native artists, and the necessity for

including Native curators and administrators in major museums, to a great extent Durham and his work remained the unaddressed elephant in the room.

Scholarly Responses

Of course, partly because of academic publishing's process of peer review, scholarly responses have come much more slowly. Durham's work has been extremely influential for many scholars of contemporary Native arts, both Native and non-Native. Thus, unlike D'Souza's quick reassessment of her position, it may take some time for these scholars to more fully address this issue. Initial references to the evolving controversy were brief and tentative. Early comments included brief mentions in *Native Art Now*, a survey of contemporary Native art coedited by Kate Morris and Veronica Passalaqua, which includes an essay titled "A Gathering Place: Relationality in Contemporary Native Installation Art," coauthored by Janet Berlo and Jessica Horton. In the essay, found in a section of the book titled "National Borders, Ethnic Identity, and Native Sovereignty," the authors reference the Indian Arts and Crafts Act as part of their discussion of Durham's work:

> Although it was intended to keep fakes and foreign knock-offs from competing in markets for Native goods, numerous artists have criticized the act for excluding self-identified Natives who could not, or chose not to, provide "proof" of their ancestry. Jimmie Durham, one of those affected, famously wrote in a public letter, "authenticity is a racist concept which functions to keep us enclosed in 'our world' (in our place) for the comfort of a dominant society."[22]

Of course, tribal affiliation is not always based on race, as is the case with the Cherokee, for whom membership is dependent on establishing lineage to ancestors enrolled in the 1893 Dawes Rolls. It is not based on blood quantum.

Horton, whose rigorous and insightful work has earned her a strong reputation, is one of several scholars whose work has heavily relied on Durham's claim to a Cherokee identity. She was also one of the contributors to the retrospective catalogue.[23] A more focused treatment of Durham's work appears in her *Art for an Undivided Earth: The American Indian Movement Generation*, a book that was released during the time the retrospective made its way across the United States. The volume addresses the art of a handful of artists whose works "reposition displaced indigenous people, art, and knowledge at the center of an unfinished story of modernity."[24] It is a study that considers their work as addressing issues beyond the politics of identity. The first chapter, titled "The Word for World and the Word for History Are the Same: Jimmie Durham, the American Indian Movement, and Spatial Thinking," is devoted to examining what she argues is "Durham's formative role within the 'AIM generation.'" Her pursuit was to consider Durham's activism as an essential part of his art practice. However, now the challenge will be how to reconfigure her writing on Durham's activism, given his false claims to being Cherokee.

In another publication, an essay titled "Indigenous Artists against the Anthropocene" included in a special issue of *Art Journal* dedicated to "Indigenous

Futures," also published in 2017, Horton continues to engage the activism of contemporary Native artists. In this instance, she focuses on artists engaging environmental issues. She relates a moment in which two of Durham's solo exhibitions were cancelled because he lacked the proper documentation proving enrollment, which is required by the US Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990. In a footnote, Horton addressed the Durham controversy in passing:

> As this issue goes to press, Durham's identity is undergoing fresh scrutiny by a group of enrolled Cherokee artists, activists, and scholars. Although this article was written before the present controversy, it is not focused on authenticating his heritage or treating him as a representative of contemporary Cherokee people. Durham is included because of his role in a discourse about contemporary art that concerns the colonization of the Americas and the centrality of Indigenous people to the story of modernity in and beyond the United States.[25]

It may be that the timing of the reemergence of the controversy around Durham's identity may not have allowed her a fuller response. However, even this brief note fails to consider that Durham gained his voice within these discourses because of his claims to speaking not just *for* Native folks but *as* a Native artist. In this instance, the onus on a scholar of visual arts is not to authenticate identity but, rather, to examine the implications of positionality within the processes of representation and analyze the dynamics of power involved in determining who is speaking for whom.

Another quick, initial published response was by Candice Hopkins, a scholar and curator who has heavily engaged Durham's work. In part of her contribution to the same *Art Journal* issue, titled "We Are Always Turning Around on Purpose: Reflecting on Three Decades of Indigenous Curatorial Practice," she discussed two exhibitions curated by Durham and Jean Fisher titled *Ni'Go Tlunh A Doh Ka/We Turn Around on Purpose* and *We the People*. In passing, she laments that "The nuanced and generative discussions that these exhibitions sparked on Native contemporary art, politics, and identity are currently being drowned out by renewed calls for Durham to authenticate himself as a Cherokee person."[26] However, the "drowning out" that concerns Hopkins is a mischaracterization of the necessary reassessment that must take place once Durham's identity is reconsidered. While his curatorial work does raise "nuanced and generative discussions," these become even more complex when considering his subversive place of enunciation—in the guise of a Cherokee artist.

In contrast to these tentative asides, the commentary section titled "Decentering Durham" in the Fall 2017 issue of *First American Art Magazine*, which I mentioned above, included contributions from various Indigenous scholars and artists. Nancy Marie Mithlo saw the issue as having to do with "The institutional dismissal of American Indian tribal sovereignty, including our rights to protect our land, language, children, health, education, and natural resources." Roy Boney, Jr., focused on the misappropriation of the Cherokee language, on which many of Durham's works rely. James Luna clearly called out Durham's lack of engagement with the community he claims. And America Meredith points to the complicity of the scholars and curators of the exhibition in Durham's ruse. As she states "The catalogue [of Durham's

retrospective] will stand as a 320-page testament to this refusal to listen, to conduct adequate research, or to engage with the Cherokee tribes."

While these critical commentaries serve as the beginning of a corrective to a massive accumulation of scholarly texts, reviews, and art news that constitute the Durham archive, key figures in the controversy remain obstinate about defending Durham. For example, Anne Ellegood, the curator of the retrospective, refuses to acknowledge the paramount implication of Durham's forgery. While introducing her talk on March 25, 2018 as part of the opening at the Remai Contemporary, the exhibition's last venue, she stated

> He was born in 1940 and raised in Washington, Arkansas. Although he's not enrolled in any of the three Cherokee tribes in the United States, he was raised with the understanding that he is of Cherokee descent. For many years Jimmie's claims of Cherokee ancestry have been disputed. And, I want to acknowledge that he is not recognized by the Cherokee nation, which as a sovereign nation determines their own citizenship, while also respecting the artist's life experience and self-identity. In the context of contemporary art practice, Durham has been exhibited and written about by numerous curators and scholars with the understanding that he is an Indigenous person. My talk today is also from the perspective that he is Cherokee, despite the controversy around that.[27]

Until the very end of the run of her exhibition, despite all the public conversations, the publications, as well as private consultations, Ellegood continued to insist on Durham's claims as a form of "self-identity." And she supports her position with the fact that the artist has been "exhibited and written about by numerous curators and scholars with the understanding that he is an Indigenous person." Her justification for continuing to support his claims depends on an archive that states as much.

Reconsidering the Archive

What follows is a brief consideration of the nature of archives, keeping in mind that one of their functions has been to support the continuous project of colonization. I will end with a brief discussion of Durham's work and the radical reassessment required when it is understood as the product of a non-Native artist. I will specifically reconsider his self-portraiture in order to claim that—like a move in the game Othello when one move can force the complete reconfiguration of all the pieces in a line—once we begin to see how the duplicity of his claims to Cherokee identity undermines the intended meaning of one self-portrait, all other self-portraits also become devoid of that meaning. One can then imagine how this can be extrapolated to his entire oeuvre and all the scholarly work that supports it.

And I include my own work in this reassessment. As part of my dissertation, I wrote about Durham's portraiture, understanding it, at the time, to be the work of a Cherokee artist. While that writing is now archived, this essay is a gesture toward rewriting the record. Therefore, I begin by considering three processes during which archives are activated, namely during their formation, conservation, and dissemination.

These are moments in which the nature of an archive is defined, each moment being guided by a purpose. The formation of an archive requires a curatorial approach from the outset, a process of selecting what gets incorporated into a collection of materials, and what is left out. Similarly, at moments in which the archive requires maintenance, an archivist will make similar decisions as to what is privileged and what is neglected. Finally, an archive becomes most meaningful when it is activated, when its contents are disseminated through use. These stages of the archive anticipate an intended use. One could even argue that the archive itself determines how it will be deployed. The archive's descriptive nature is, at the same time, also prescriptive.

These three moments of purposeful meaning-making, however, can be destabilized when the whole impetus behind the production of the archive is undermined. In this case, Durham's body of work, and all the scholarship and criticism it has generated, has, to a great extent, depended on being read as an address from a Cherokee artist. When this foundational premise is radically undone, the archive can no longer function as intended—as the legacy of a Cherokee trickster. In my dissertation, which analyzed art history's colonial approach to Native imagery, there is a chapter titled "Decolonizing the Native Body: Reconsidering Native Self-Portraiture." In this section, I make an argument for Native self-portraiture as operating both as a depiction of the artist as an individual as well as a representative of a specific Native community—what I described as a "testimonial effect." The idea was to consider certain Native self-portraiture as specifically working toward decolonizing the narratives of Native imagery proposed and/or promoted by art history—self-portraiture as a site in which the Native body is produced as sovereign.

Double Pretense

One of the examples I analyzed was Durham's *Self-portrait* from 1987. It is arguably his most famous self-portrait, in which his body is coarsely represented as nude with a roughly carved out face topped with tufts of fur and hair with a face painted in dabs of blue and purple with a red star on the forehead. The body is made of canvas painted brown, with reddish feet and hands covered with writing, which reads as the disjointed musings of an artist. It included random observations, such as

> Hello! I'm Jimmie Durham. I want to explain a few Basic Things About Myself. In 1986 I was 46 years old. As an artist I am confused about many things, but basically my health is good and I am willing and able to do a wide variety of Jobs. I am Actively seeking Employment.
>
> Mr. Durham has stated that he believes he has an addiction to Alcohol, Nicotine, Caffeine, and does not sleep well.[28]

At the time, I found this flippant approach to this exercise in self-portraiture usefully subversive. Of this sculpture, I wrote:

> The viewer is asked to sympathize and empathize simultaneously with the artist's subject position. The text compels us to occupy various positions; the first-person

> address (Hello!) places us in dialogue with Durham while the next paragraph shifts to a description where he is placed in the third person ("Mr. Durham has stated.") We are left to wonder whose voice this is. At the same time, the body represented before us is no longer a subject but an object being described. The playful disorientation produced by the text is a strategy often used by Durham. Viewing these works becomes a collaborative performance that often requires the viewer to play the role of the colonizer.[29]

At the time, I was convinced that this self-portrait—and so many others by him that similarly embody a Native subjectivity—defiantly addressed the viewer, anticipating a reading that began with stereotypes but would lead to a self-awareness of one's role in perpetuating the colonizer's gaze.

Now that Durham's claim to a Cherokee identity has been discredited, we need to reread these images, originally meant as ironic, as the duplicitous attempts at Native tricksterism by someone pretending to be Native. It is a strange doubling. While Durham affects a Native subjectivity premised on a stereotype, we are now forced to consider a duplicated affect. Durham has discussed self-portraiture as a form of double pretense: "But of course, I'm not pretending to be. I'm pretending to be pretending to be. . . . I just like the idea of a double pretense, that you're not really living your life. You're not really there at all. I don't know how 'here' I am, but I know the self-portrait is already a double pretense."[30]

This may at first seem a bit enigmatic, but if we take a little time, we realize that he is talking about a pretense that is made visible by a second level of pretension. A portrait is already meant to be an idealized image; the sitter commissions the artist to produce this first order of pretense. However, when the artist is the one doing the pretense, as is the case with a self-portrait, you can think of this as a second order of pretension—the artist conveys an idealized image of himself as a gesture that pretends to be objective, or at least disinterested. While self-portraits are often thought of as moments of ultimate transparency in which the artist offers an unmediated image—at least unmediated by an interlocutor—they ultimately portray a pretension to be oneself; they picture the self as affect.

Another way to think about the process of making pretense visible is drag, commonly thought of as a self-consciously campy display of gender identity. Durham's original intent may have been to reconsider self-portraiture as the result of a double pretense—of the artist pretending to be her or himself. However, once we recognize that there is a third level of pretension at play in Durham's work—his pretending to be Cherokee—it is unavoidable to see this self-portrait—and, in turn, all of his portraits—as a form of ethnic drag, a minstrelsy in which the caricature has been taken at face value.

Conclusion

Now that we are well beyond "day two" of this conversation, the question remains: What will it take to responsibly address the archive? What forms will the correctives take? Beyond the provisional footnote acknowledging the issue, what is the proper

approach? Durham fulfilled the great desire of a contemporary Native artist capable of eloquently speaking the enemy's artspeak. Many professionals—scholars and curators both Native and non-Native—desired this so much they were willing to overlook the reality of his duplicity. Now that we know otherwise, we can continue to poke at this archive, to provoke it, to see it for what it is: the projection of a white desire for a convenient history of art. As Louise Siddons suggests in her recent review of Horton's book, this revisioning of Durham inevitably leads to a broader critique of the discipline of art history: "Recognizing that the institutional canon of Native American art is a reflection of the history and demographics of the discipline should, however, make us even more skeptical of its validity. In other words, we should be wary of the tendency to recenter Euro-American experience and contexts at the expense of Indigenous sovereignty." [31]

Alternately, we can move on to focus on the many contemporary Native artists who have been successfully engaging the contemporary art scene, many of whom have become much more visible now that Durham is no longer the privileged example of a contemporary Native artist.[32] However, the legacy of this archive, the inspirational role it has played for Native artists, curators, and scholars requires an address. This presents us with an opportunity to reconfigure the desire to have Native artists play the role of Shakespeare's Caliban, the colonized savage who learns the enemy's language only to be able to curse him with it.[33]

Notes

1. Smith thoughtfully considered various possible responses to the ensuing Durham controversy in "The Most American Thing Ever Is in Fact American Indians," Walker Art Center magazine, https://walkerart.org/magazine/paul-chaat-smith-jimmie-durham-americans-nmai-smithsonian.

2. Nikos Papastergiadis and Laura Turney, *On Becoming Authentic: Interview with Jimmie Durham* (Cambridge, Prickly Pear Press, 1996), 36–37.

3. For her initial review, see Aruna D'Souza, "Jimmie Durham: In the Artist's Retrospective at the Hammer, Politics is Not Identity," *4Columns*, April 19, 2017, http://www.4columns.org/d-souza-aruna/jimmie-durham.

4. For her reappraisal, see Aruna D'Souza, "Mourning Jimmie Durham," *Momus: A Return to Art Criticism*, July 20, 2017, https://momus.ca/mourning-jimmie-durham/.

5. D'Souza specifically cites a statement signed by eight luminary Cherokee artists, art professionals, scholars, and Cherokee Nation representatives, which affirms that "No matter what metric is used to determine Indigenous status, Durham does not fulfill any of them. Jimmie Durham is not a Cherokee in any legal or cultural sense." See Cara Cowan Watts, Luzene Hill, America Meredith, Kade Twist, Lynne Harlan, Pauline Prater, M.B.A. (Cherokee Nation), Brian K. Hudson, Candice Byrd, Yvonne N. Tiger, and Ashley Holland, "Dear Unsuspecting Public, Jimmie Durham Is a Trickster," *Indian Country Today*, June 26, 2017, https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/dear-unsuspecting-public-jimmie-durham-is-a-trickster-Rk7_oZ6TPkmIlQLNJN-gPw/.

6. D'Souza, "Mourning."

7. Lucy Lippard, "Jimmie Durham—Postmodern 'Savage,'" *Art in America* 81, no. 2 (February 1993), https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/features/from-the-archives-jimmie-durham-post-modernist-savage-63245/.

8. In a casual conversation with me on November 13, 2019, while we participated in a conference in São Paulo, Lippard reaffirmed her conviction to believing Durham's claims to a Cherokee identity.

9. Nancy Marie Mitchell [Mithlo], "Letters: Identities Clarified?" *Art in America* 81, no. 7 (1993): 23. Fortunately, the letter was republished by *First American Art Magazine* on June 12, 2017, http://firstamericanartmagazine.com/mithlo-responds-durham-1993/.

10. Smith, "The Most American Thing."

11. The Durham retrospective then ended its run at the Remai Modern in Saskatoon, Canada. NAASA is an organization dedicated to the study of Native American art from North America. It was founded in 1985, and is the main forum for bringing together the small and tightly knit group of professionals in the field. For more information, visit https://nativearts.org/about-naasa/.

12. In addition to Mithlo's letter to *Art in America* in 1993, cited above, see Suzan Harjo, "Tribal and Cultural Identity: The Cases of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act," *Artpaper* 13, no. 2 (1993), 9–11.

13. Reprinted in this special issue as a retrospective group of essays, the *FAAM* fall issue of 2017 featured Native scholars, artists, and Cherokee community members writing passionately about Durham's career and his fraudulent claims.

14. The full statement is published in Brian Boucher, "Cherokee Artists and Curators Denounce Artist Jimmie Durham as a Fraud, Saying He 'Is Not a Cherokee,'" *artnet News*, June 27, 2017, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/cherokee-curators-artists-jimmie-durham-cherokee-1007336.

15. The United Nation's Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues puts out a useful factsheet that attempts to define Indigenous identity, "Who Are Indigenous Peoples?" that lists various factors to consider, including "Self- identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level *and* accepted by the community as their member" (emphasis added); see http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf.

16. Watts, et al., "Dear Unsuspecting Public, Jimmie Durham Is a Trickster."

17. "How Can Contemporary Art Be More Inclusive of Native Voices?" *Sightlines*, Walker Art Center magazine roundtable discussion, https://walkerart.org/magazine/inclusion-native-american-art-panel-discussion.

18. Ibid.

19. Claire Voon, "Dakota Elders Decide to Bury Sam Durant's Controversial Sculpture," *Hyperallergic*, September 5, 2017, https://hyperallergic.com/398866/dako-elders-sam-durant-scaffold-burial/.

20. Whitney Museum of American Art, "Beyond Jimmie Durham: Contemporary Native American Art and Identity," panel discussion held on November 16, 2017, New Yok, NY, https://whitney.org/media/35952.

21. See Ashley Holland's discussion of this panel in this special issue, 13–24.

22. Janet C. Berlo and Jessica L. Horton, "A Gathering Place: Relationality in Contemporary Native Installation Art," in *Native Art Now! Developments in Contemporary Native American Art since 1992*, ed. Kate Morris and Veronica Passalacqua (Indianapolis: Eiteljorg Museum, 2017), 198.

23. Anne Ellegood, ed., *Jimmie Durham: At the Center of the World* (New York: Prestel Publishing, 2017).

24. Jessica L. Horton, *Art for an Undivided Earth: The American Indian Movement Generation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 1. The other artists she includes are Kay WalkingStick, Robert Houle, James Luna, and Edgar Heap of Birds.

25. Jessica L. Horton, "Indigenous Artists against the Anthropocene," *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (2017): 49, https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2017.1367192.

26. Candice Hopkins, "We Are Always Turning Around on Purpose: Reflecting on Three Decades of Indigenous Curatorial Practice," *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (2017): 41, https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2017.1367191. The title of Hopkin's essay comes from Durham's title.

27. Anne Ellegood, talk given at the Remai Contemporary, March 25, 2018, Saskatoon, Canada. https://remaimodern.org/field/watch-listen/jimmie-durham-lecture-series-anne-ellegood-jimmie-durham-post-american

28. Laura Mulvey, Dirk Snauwaert, and Mark Alice Durant, eds., *Jimmie Durham* (London: Phaidon Press, 1995), 60.

29. Mario A. Caro, "The Native as Image: Art History, Nationalism, and Decolonizing Aesthetics," PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 2010), 182, https://www.academia.edu/8180031/_The_Native_as_Image_Art_History_Nationalism_and_Decolonizing_Aesthetics_.

30. Whitney Museum of American Art, *Teacher's Guide: Jimmie Durham: At the Center of the World*, https://whitney.org/Education/ForTeachers/TeacherGuides/JimmieDurham.

31. Louise Siddons, "Review of Art for an Undivided Earth: The American Indian Movement Generation" *Panorama* 5, no. 1 (2019), https://doi.org/10.24926/24716839.1691.

32. A noteworthy example is the inclusion of nine Native artists—Nicholas Galanin, Caroline "Coco" Monnet, Jeffrey Gibson, Laura Ortman, Thirza Cuthand, Jackson Polys, Adam and Zack Kahlil, and James Luna—in the 2019 edition of the Whitney Biennial. It's worthwhile conjecturing to what extent this may have been the result, or a means, of revising the Durham archive.

33. Durham's continued influence on the art world was confirmed yet again when he was awarded the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement Award in the 2019 Venice Biennale. See Sarah Cascone, "Jimmie Durham Is This Year's Winner of the Venice Biennale Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement," *artnet News*, April 4, 2019, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/jimmie-durham-venice-biennale-golden-lion-1508710.