

ARTiculate

MEMORIAL ART GALLERY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

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ALPHONSE MUCHA

MASTER OF ART NOUVEAU

KALUP LINZY

*CONVERSATIONS WIT DE CHUREN V:
AS DE ART WORLD MIGHT TURN*

KALUP LINZY

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Written by Almudena Escobar López | Time-Based Media Curatorial Assistant



Conversations wit de Churen V is part of an ongoing series that Kalup Linzy (U.S., b. 1977) developed while still in graduate school at the University of South Florida in 2003. In this series, Linzy combines elements of Def Comedy Jam, Tyler Perry's "Madea" character, and the early films of John Waters and Andy Warhol with the inherent drama of the soap opera genre. The title, a satirical play on *All My Children* and *As the World Turns*, sets the humorous and absurd tone of the piece.

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Linzy's early love for television and pop music is present in his films, music videos, and public performances. The artist grew up in a small town in central Florida with his grandmother and aunt, watching daytime soap operas and doing impersonations for his congregation, family and friends. His dream of becoming a soap opera star became true when he appeared on *General Hospital* with James Franco in 2010 in the recurring role of Kalup Ishmael. As Linzy explains, humor and popular art forms are central to his work:

I love satire, and I love what I satirize. Yes, satire can be used as political propaganda to demoralize and dehumanize, but that's not what I'm doing. I am role-playing, satirizing, and paying tribute at the same time to the genre of the soap opera. I also want to keep people coming back to my work. Those who enjoy it and follow it know there is always another episode around the corner.

As da Art World Might Turn tells the story of Katonya, a rising artist about to have her first gallery show. In the video, Katonya, Linzy's cross-dressing alter ego, learns "how to deal with the economics of the art world." Linzy makes evident the artifice of the character by wearing a cheap wig and no makeup, having visible body hair, and overacting like a soap opera star. To accentuate the artificiality of the performance, Linzy manipulates the dialogue, dubbing the voices in the accent and vernacular speech of his native central Florida. As a result, Katonya's melodramatic, satirical, and unequivocally queer performance shows how racial and sexual stereotypes are also artificial and constructed.

CONVERSATIONS WIT DE CHUREN V: AS DA ART WORLD MIGHT TURN IS ON VIEW IN THE MEDIA ARTS WATCH GALLERY THROUGH DECEMBER 8, 2019.

IMAGE, ABOVE: KALUP LINZY, *CONVERSATIONS WIT DE CHUREN V: AS DA ART WORLD MIGHT TURN* (STILL, DETAIL.) 2006. IMAGE PROVIDED COURTESY OF ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX (EAI), NEW YORK. THELMA M. KNAPP FUND.