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# CULTURED

## GETTING TO KNOW KENDELL CARTER

Q&A | JAN 2015 | BY TALI JAFFE



Kendell Carter, photographed by Dawn Altier

If you're heading to Art Los Angeles Contemporary this weekend, we recommend you check out artist (and *Cultured* collaborator) Kendell Carter, whose work is on view at Edward Cella gallery. In the days leading up to the fair, we caught up with Carter (who recently created a limited edition print for the Cultured Shop at FOG) to discuss Sterling Ruby, street mentality, physical vs. illusory space and why his daughter's art is priceless.

**Tali Jaffe:** Tell us about how you first connected with Edward Cella Gallery.

**Kendell Carter:** I connected with gallery director David De Boer at a dinner where we spent a good portion of the night vigorously debating the nature of the art world/market. Soon after, he and Edward [Cella] came to see an installation I had up at another L.A. space that week and that's how we all came together.

**TJ:** What was your experience at the Hammer Museum like?

**KC:** Working at the Hammer and with Ann Philbin and Jamie (James) Elaine was a fantastic experience for me. My Hammer Project was essentially my MFA Thesis Exhibition on steroids. So, to graduate and have the opportunity to leave a great nest, (I studied with and owe much to Christopher Miles and Craig Cree Stone) and land in the kind hands of the team at the Hammer was a tremendous leg up and an incredible introduction to the art market.

**TJ:** Do you particularly enjoy creating environments and installation works?

**KC:** For sure. It's my mode of choice. It facilitates so many experiences and opens up multiple contexts, thus creating both a predictable and not so predictable range of relationships. I like to think of myself as a conceptualist first, but I also really enjoy materiality and creating altered states. Installation allows so many more entry points. I studied environmental design at Art Center College of Design before moving on to get my MFA at California State University, so making space was natural for me. It think physical space is very "feel" oriented, whereas illusory space tends to be a bit more cerebral. I enjoy the pairing.

**TJ: What's your response to the phrase "urban art"?**

**KC:** It is what it is. I'm suspicious of categories. They tend to limit more than to clarify.

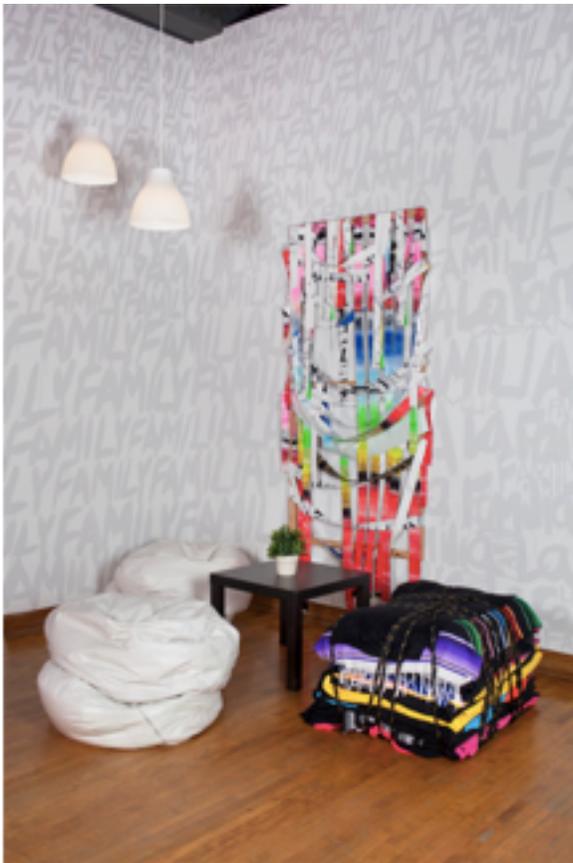
**TJ: Are you a fan of any street artists or graffiti artists?**

**KC:** I'm a fan of "street mentality." All of the best artists have one... from Duchamp to Irwin, to Frankenthaler, to Sherman, to Benglis to Ruby.

**TJ: Who are some of the artists you collect or have your eye on?**

**KC:** I love Sterling Ruby's flat works. Especially, the aerosol paintings and the detritus assemblages. Man, that's good stuff! And he's a good dude. I've also been watching Alexander McQueen's runway shows on YouTube. May he rest in peace. Talk about the beautiful struggle... He's so "hood."

**TJ: What was the last museum show you saw?**



**KC:** My daughter and some homeschool buddies went to see Lucy and the dinosaur fossils at the American Museum of Natural History.

**TJ: Where is your favorite place to take an out of town in L.A.?**

**KC:** The Standard Downtown. I'm a Ping-Pong nerd. My daughter and I also like to feed the seagulls on Long Beach.

**TJ: What do you consider your most valuable possession?**

**KC:** The box filled with my daughter's artworks and the stubs from all the fun events we've gone to. And my laptop. That's two, but I have to add my art archives! They're my other baby.

An installation view at Edward Cella. Photo by Dawn Altier