



CHEEKY LaSHAE Marries Karaoke, Puppetry, and Performance Art

By Charlie Schmidlin — Jul 8 2015

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Photo of



CHEEKY LaSHAE from Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/CheekyLashae/timeline>) of the artist. Photos courtesy of Jackson Ray Petty © 2014

CHEEKY LaSHAE (<http://www.cheekylashae.com/>) is a grand reaction to rapid judgment, a performance-as-object that seeks to blur audience and artist, and—at the very least—a fluid-identity karaoke singer who jumps freely from “Careless Whisper” to “The Lady Is a Tramp,” promptly followed by Sisco’s “Thong Song”.

It is also the alter-ego of Yale-educated, Brooklyn-based artist Kenya (Robinson), who is currently working to bring CHEEKY to a worldwide stage via her *KARAOKE UNIVERSAL* project and tour. Currently in the application process, it joins the communal aspect of karaoke with “the history of drag performance, puppetry, the visual imagery of *2001: A Space Odyssey* and real-time projection mapping”.

Clearly no small feat, but a fact expertly grasped by (Robinson), whose work has been exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Art, Brooklyn Academy of Music, and the 60 Wall Street Gallery of Deutsche Bank.



Photo of CHEEKY LaSHAE from Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/CheekyLashae/timeline>) of the artist.

“Not only does CHEEKY exist in the realm of performance art,” (Robinson) tells The Creators Project, “It requires elements of theatre, sound and lighting design, tour merchandise development, musical direction, computer programming, model making and live projection mapping. I’m sure a host of elements will present themselves as the project grows.”

In past and present, CHEEKY has developed in public and gallery settings through various participants: while in residency at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, (Robinson) connected with colleagues Claudia Bitran (<http://www.claudiabitran.com/>) and Kuldeep Singh (<http://www.singhkuldeep.com/>), who both donned the CHEEKY kit. Jessica Gallucci (<http://curatorsintl.org/collaborators/jessica-gallucci>) inhabited it before them while painter Mike Shultis (<http://michaelshultis.com/>) assisted the performances.



CHEEKY LaSHAE Upper Field

from **Kenya Robinson**

04:56 |

HD

CHEEKY LaSHAE Upper Field (<https://vimeo.com/100736238>) from Kenya Robinson (<https://vimeo.com/user2046059>) on Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com>).

Among the other practicalities of bringing *KARAOKE UNIVERSAL* to life, (Robinson) is also trying to solve the riddle of involving the audience—especially those who aren't necessarily performers or artists.

“I am considering live projection mapping onto the surface of CHEEKY LaSHAE to act as both a mirror to the karaoke singer, and a rebellious puppet to all viewers,” she says. “I think that the appeal, and, in fact, the equalizing nature of karaoke is determined by an openness to various skill levels by the audience... If you're a terrible singer, the audience will encourage your participation as a courage fetish. If you are a great singer the audience will openly celebrate that brilliance can be found anywhere. It's a win-win.”

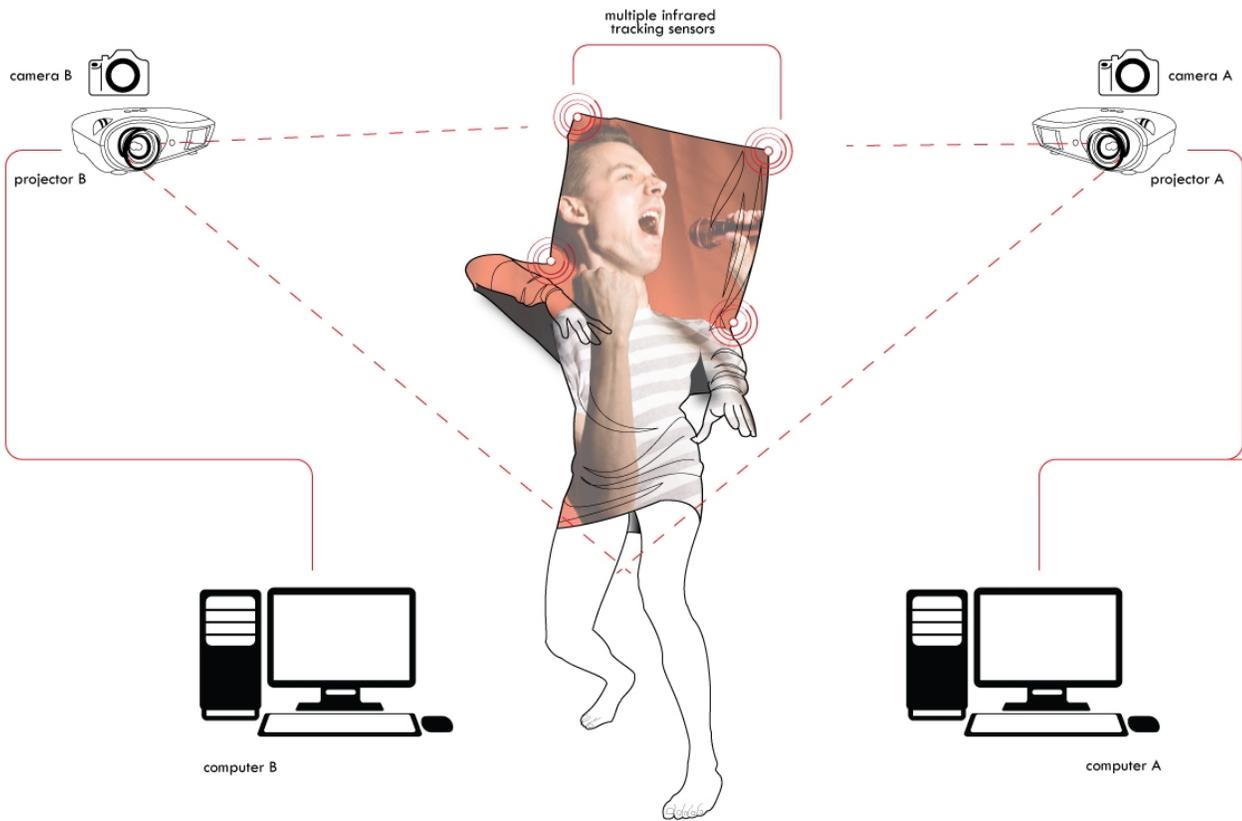


Diagram of CHEEKY LaSHAE projection mapping. Photo from website (<http://www.cheekylashae.com/>) of the artist.



hooker

from **Kenya Robinson**

hooker (<https://vimeo.com/84058181>) from Kenya Robinson (<https://vimeo.com/user2046059>) on Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com>).

CHEEKY LaSHAE (<http://www.cheekylashae.com/>) will be hosting its first annual Whine Tasting with sommelier Judia Elmore Black of Enjoie (<http://enjoielife.com/>) (details to come via Instagram (<https://instagram.com/kenya9/>)). Kenya (Robinson) will next feature her *#WHITEMANINMYPOCKET* (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/04/03/kenya-robinson_n_6973488.html) concept in a group show, *PUSSY DON'T FAIL ME NOW*, at Cindy Rucker Gallery (<http://www.cindyruckergallery.com/>), from July 9th – August 14th.

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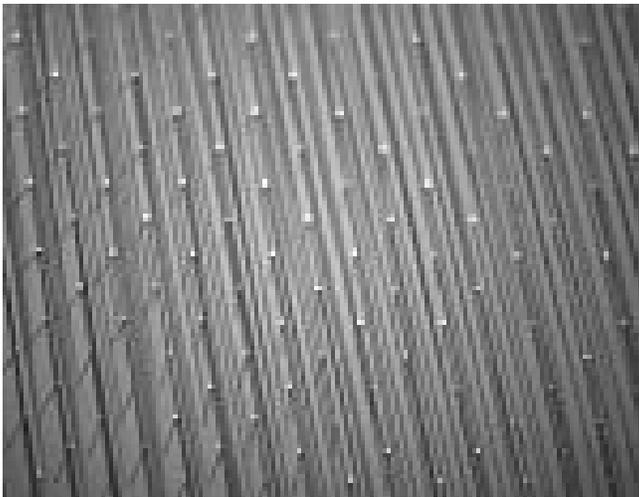
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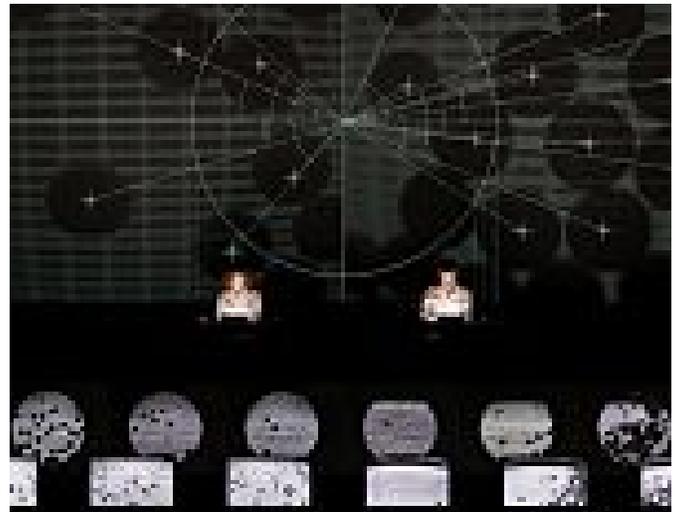
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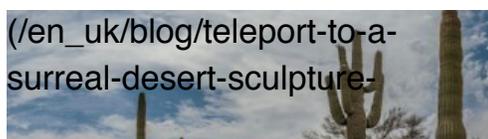
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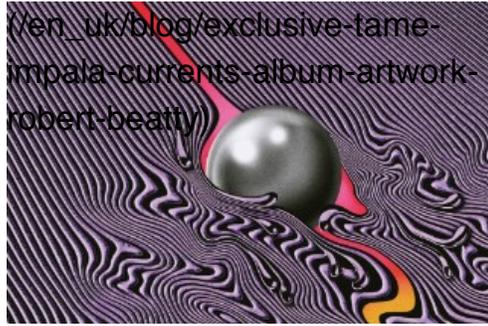
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