

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

Art in America
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Humor and Bite: David Leggett's Playlist

By David Leggett

Chicago-based artist David Leggett is the subject of the "First Look" column in our June/July issue. "Saccharine backgrounds and playfully astute renderings of pop-culture figures invite viewers to laugh," Sean J. Patrick Carney writes. "Then, devastatingly, Leggett's jokes reveal themselves as brutal confrontations of systemic racism in the United States." Leggett's work is currently on view in the group show "FIGURED OUT! Bodily Form in Contemporary Ceramics" at Andrew Rafacz Gallery, Chicago, through August 19. A solo exhibition will appear at Kimmerich Gallery in Berlin this September. Here, Leggett introduces a compilation of his favorite videos, many of which tackle thornier aspects of the American experience with humor. —Eds.

I usually go on YouTube before I go to bed. I enjoy reading the comments sections of videos. The comments section represents the underbelly of how many people feel. There are some foul things being said, but some remarks are hilarious. It's not just trolls who live with their parents commenting; it's your neighbor, mail carrier, and pastor. I use some of the comments as titles for my work or as a springboard to create work. Those racist, homophobic, or just plain bizarre remarks help me to think outside my own experience.

Lupe Fiasco, "Double Burger with Cheese" (Unofficial Video). One of my favorite bootleg videos is for Lupe Fiasco's "Double Burger with Cheese." The fan-made music video seamlessly blends Fiasco's lyrics with clips from 1980s and '90s gangster movies. I watch this one often and think about how movies like *Boyz n the Hood* and *Menace II Society* helped shape my, and many of my friends', lives while growing up.

Chris Rock, "How Not to Get Your Ass Kicked by the Police." I often listen to comedy albums in my studio. Chris Rock is one of my favorite comedians. His sketch "How Not to Get Your Ass Kicked by the Police," from HBO's *The Chris Rock Show*, is as relevant today as it was when it first aired in 2000. Rock's take on police brutality—the skit is framed as a training video—uses satire to make a serious subject digestible for the masses. I hope my work has that kind of humor and bite.



Still from the animated music video for Killer Mike's "Reagan," 2012, directed by Daniel Garcia and Harry Teitelman, 4 minutes, 10 seconds. Courtesy Williams Street Records/Adult Swim.

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Killer Mike, "Reagan." I've been a fan of Killer Mike since the Dungeon Family days. I love what he, as well as Run The Jewels, his collaboration with Ei-P, does to raise political messages in hip hop. The video for his song "Reagan" has simple but effective animation. I have a BFA in illustration, and I admire the clean line work and graphic color. It goes straight to the point with a hard punch. The style reminds me of the work Gerald Scarfe did for Pink Floyd.

Vintage McDonald's Commercials. I'm a child of the '80s. When I was growing up, next to celebrating your birthday at Show Biz Pizza, having your party at McDonald's was high status with your friends. The McDonald's characters, from Mayor McCheese to Grimace, were so much fun. McDonald's commercials from that era are so trippy and capture a certain idealist image of America.

Parliament-Funkadelic, *Funkentelechy Vs. The Placebo Syndrome* commercial. Parliament is one of my favorite bands. Their music is super creative and so is their album art. They also introduced me to Pedro Bell's work. This commercial advertising their 1977 album *Funkentelechy Vs. The Placebo Syndrome* has the bop gun to set us all free.

Frankie Knuckles, Boiler Room DJ Set. I live in Chicago and it would be difficult not to mention a local legend like Frankie Knuckles. House music is big in Chicago and Frankie Knuckles was the godfather of house music. The set he played for Boiler Room is close to his untimely death in 2014 at age fifty-nine. He's such a skilled DJ. The crowd is actually dancing instead of just standing around.

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