

BFA Senior Thesis Conversations featuring Jason McDonald

Questions by Daniela Segovia



Artist's Statement

My work takes two divergent paths. With one path, I craft objects that examine and critique, through a racial and economic lens, the inequalities that exist between Black and White people in the United States. I cast my gaze on the disparities in the U.S. from life expectancy, to the achievement gap, to the too frequent election of racist officials. I seek to spark a dialogue between the viewer and the viewer's relationship with the ugly reality of a nation built on the backs of, while simultaneously demonizing, my ancestors, my family, and myself. I find personal power by expressing myself this way, an attempt to understand and explain my lived experience as a person of African descent. By making this work I hope to shed light, for myself and my viewers, on what it means to be a Black person in America today. A product of 400 years of racist ideology and policymaking.

The other path is one where I explore my curiosity about the material of glass itself. My work often begins as a study of a specific technique, tool, or property of glass. I create iteratively, often focusing on a single idea for weeks at a time, until I feel I have some understanding. More than technical pursuits alone, I might become fascinated with the optical quality of glass, or the weight of the material, or innovating new methods of glass-working. The limitless nature of the material is fertile ground for exploration.

Currently, I'm exploring ways to interweave these two trajectories. To tie together the important stories I want to tell about social inequality while simultaneously displaying my commitment to craft with intentionally made objects.

See more of Jason's work on Instagram [@jasonmcdonald42](https://www.instagram.com/jasonmcdonald42) or visit his website Jasonmcdonaldglass.com.



Besieged



Black Figure #1



Trail Equality

What is your thesis investigating?

My work explores issues of equity, inclusion, and equality. Much of my work is about existing as a black man in white-dominated spaces.

How has your project evolved?

When I came to school I was very craft-focused. I realize now that I was missing a huge opportunity to tell my stories through my work. Now when I get into the studio to create, I'm asking how I can use my media to speak about important issues.

What or who are your major influences?

Fred Wilson, Theaster Gates, Kara Walker.

What's next for you?

Graduate school is on the horizon.



Inclusion #1