

Amos Paul Kennedy Jr.: Open Book Takeover

June 26, 2017



Amos Paul Kennedy Jr., Detroit-based printer and MCBA Printer-in-Residence, uses the book form, posters, postcards, and other printed media produced in a highly typographic and colorful style to deliver messages of social relevance.

Kennedy presents “Open Book Takeover” during the Minnesota Center for Book Arts (MCBA) [Book Art Biennial](#) Exhibition June 9 – August 13. Free and open to the public! For more information go to [Open Book Takeover!](#)

How have you amplified individual and collective voice through your art?

By speaking truth to power.

How does the MCBA Book Art Biennial theme “Shout Out: Community Intervention, Independent Publishing, and Alternative Distribution” inform your work?

By doing. My work is informed by the work. It fuels itself.

How do you define success?

Success: Not getting arrested. Not getting killed by the police. To be a Black man who has not been harassed by the world would be success. Let me assure you, I am not a success.

What did you want to be when you were a child?

I just wanted to grow up. I was raised in the south and was scared that I would be murdered because I was negro.

What is the biggest lesson you've learned as an artist?

That I am not an artist. I make stuff. To segregate people by titles is a form of racism. Why practice racism?

Can mistakes lead to creative success?

There is no such thing as mistakes unless you want to suppress people. One learns through experiences. The outcome of the experience will vary. The concept of mistakes is rooted in the institutional racism of this civilization.

What is your greatest success as an artist?

Not being killed by the police.

As an artist, what keeps you up at night?

Fighting institutional racism. It is the core of this nation. In fact, I am fighting to save the humanity in each of us.

What called you to the book arts as a profession?

I was thirty-eight years old when I learned about letterpress printing. I enjoy the processes of letterpress printing.

Who do you look up to and why?

I look up to no human. I look down to no human. We are equal. I look them in the eyes.

What quotation inspires you to follow your passion?

"Die happy. Since you are going to die, you should live happy." —Anonymous

BIO:

Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr. uses letterpress printing and antique wood type to express his socio-political views about such topics as the vulnerability of children, his African heritage, and community activism. Much of his work centers around literary works by people of cultural heritage and civil rights activists, raising questions of race, class, and equality in American society. As a public artist, his art is not only the created work, but also the process of facilitating engagement.