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Josiane M.H. Pozi

Born and based in London, Josiane M.H. Pozi is a filmmaker and visual artist truly of and for the digital age, holding our technologised present up to the light, marveling in all its warmth, its grime, its stillness. Her first solo show, *Pingey*, opened at Gandt, New York in the fall of 2020; its installation comprised a wood-panelled domestic space foregrounded by a glowing screen playing footage of Josiane's family spliced together with low-res phone photos. In the clip, Josiane sits on an espresso-brown leather couch with her father; in the installation, a similar couch sits opposite the screen, inviting viewers to join 'round the proverbial living room to peer into her world. On a Macbook nearby, a video of her own CV swirled into technological oblivion. Her works form a portrait of everyday life, which may or may not start to feel more like a series of vignettes each day, set against the unsettlingly familiar jolt of digital distortion.



Artist Josiane M. H. Pozi and artist and composer Klein in conversation

The two friends and collaborators discuss Crazy Frog, Chicken Run, capitalism, PinkPantheress and Keane.

This story originally appeared in i-D's The Darker Issue, no. 365, Winter 2021.

Josiane M. H. Pozi is an artist and filmmaker and she makes modern and affecting video works, that are a little bit lo-fi but focus in on moments of emotional truth and experience. She has already had solo shows in New York and London. Over the last four years she has also worked consistently with the artist and composer Klein, on music videos and live visuals.

Klein: I don't want to look at my face.

Josiane: Why not?

I wanna look at you. Let me look at your face?

I'll turn my camera off. I don't want to feel like you're looking at me

Why can't I look at you? Wait, what are you drinking?

Milk with tea. I'm having tea.

This is crazy. This is actually the first time I've seen you, Miss Bougie Ass, with your freaking semi-skimmed milk. You usually be having your oat milk coffees.

There's no oat milk and there's no coffee. I can only have milk in tea. I can't have it alone. Do you know what I mean? You know how people in the morning have a glass of milk? I just think way too much about, like, that is milk. I can't do it. Like when I'm eating eggs... I think about eating eggs too much, do you know what I mean?

And then you then think about the animals and their life before.

Yeah, and I'm just like damn, I hope you had a good life.

What's the film about eggs again? Oh yeah Chicken Run.

That film used to scare me so much. It reminds me of, like, Saturday at 11:00 a.m. and there is nothing on except old reruns of *The Chuckle Brothers*, or *Antique Road Show*.

Did you ever hear that song the Chuckle Brothers did with Tinchy Stryder?

No, wait? Was it a Red Nose Day situation?

No, it was for SBTV. At this point in 2017, The UK music industry had lost the plot. Absolutely lost the plot.

Wait lemme play it. [Josi and Klein singing together] *SBTVVVVVV*. What ever happened to Tinchy Stryder?

Funny, you say that. I was supposed to make a video for my song *No More Shubz* that actually explored, like his rise and downfall.

I'm looking at an article about the forgotten artists of the 00s. Where are they now... Who the hell are The Zutons?

You don't need to do that.

Oh yeah, *Valerie*. Oh my god, Daniel Bedingfield, he is in LA, he's got green hair.

Daniel Bedingfield is in the spirit of freaking Jack Harlow.

Do you think when an artist falls off they turn into another artist?

Daniel Bedingfield is in the spirit of Lewis Capaldi.

If I fall off can I turn into a little bug? Like the most hippy hoppity

junebug. When will the animals start making music? When is the animal Grammys?

Do you remember the Crazy Frog era?

I do remember Crazy Frog.

He was literally a frog.

Yeah I remember. I found it so wild that he was a frog but he still had a dick. Frogs don't have dicks.

That's capitalism for you, man.

(Josiane breaks into a fit of laughter)

So Josiane, I'm not going to lie, when you asked me to do this I freaking chuckled because I was like, wow, me. Hilarious. Because I really be spending half of the time trying to conk your head. And wow, we've really come a long way from me sliding into your DIMS like a fuckboy. And then, boom, you're still in my life. Can we explore the cosmopolitan (real word, wrong context) of the Abigality (not a real word) of the Balony (not a real word)?

I remember this so vividly. I was just about to go into Foundation, and you followed me on Instagram. I didn't really know why, but I was like wow, she's cool, she makes music. I didn't really understand art or music then. I was making lil videos and I'd post them on Vimeo or Instagram and they'd get no views.

We're the #NoViewGang

I miss the days where you could get one like on something. If you only get one like on an Insta post your life will change for the better.

The ones that have no likes are probably the most iconic ones for me.

Honestly, my objective is to get no likes on Instagram. That's when I know that my shit is popping. But yeah. You messaged me. I think I had posted about *Twilight Forever* and we started chatting. Then you were doing a show and asked me if I wanted to do visuals for it. I remember Googling "What the fuck are visuals?". We met up in Dalston and went to the milkshake place – is the milkshake place there anymore? – we were chatting about all these different softwares that I had no idea about.

I remember asking if you knew what modu8 was...

I said yes, but I had no idea. I didn't have any money for it, so on the day of the show I just had to use the free trial which had a fucking watermark on it.

When was the first time that you were making something and you were like, Fuck it. I'm not going to do what other people want me to do. When was that? That you were like, you know what? I want to do my own shit.

I think my approach to video making is that it's... the most selfish thing. I do it for myself. I wanted to convey the emotions of what I was feeling growing up, or in the moment of making a video. I haven't ever really been too concerned too much about what people think in terms of how a video should be, or the style of video because that's not even the point. What is it even trying to say? What are you trying to convey in this one minute video? Are you even capturing the emotions that you're trying to convey in this one minute video? I always had a fascination to be like, okay, I want to just do, like, a series of projects where I'm just trying to capture emotion in, like, two seconds or something. I think that's the power of the medium. The same way you can listen to a one minute long PinkPantheress song and be in your feelings.

Do you know that meme? You go to the toilet at a PinkPantheress gig, and you come back and the crowd is empty. I said shit...

Yeah.

But it's so iconic. Her record is like 16 minutes long, but you're able to

get nostalgia, tears, pain, shookness.

And it's like, why can't video making be exactly the same? I think a lot of people don't allow themselves just to make whatever they want because they're too aware of how they may be perceived by other people.

This is something that we've spoken about before, but it's hard to make what you want when everything you see in the media and that is seen as the norm hasn't evolved, like colour gradient hasn't evolved since the freaking 90s.

Especially with editing, and in terms of mainstream music videos or mainstream films or whatever. I feel like they don't really challenge the audience... everything seems kind of spoonfed.

The editor of 2021 is just a bot my G. They really be like, okay, let me just join the clips together, let me just fill in the gaps.

The editor should be like a conductor. You're controlling how a person feels. There's such an art in that.

That's why I think I felt really refreshed coming across your work. Especially in London, which is a city completely rooted in capitalism, in following what other people are doing, being afraid to do your own thing. What you're seeing on TV is like...

... perpetuating that.

Yeah, and I think kind of seeing your stuff was so necessary and so important. It's not easy to do something in a way that no one expects.

That's what I'm saying. I don't feel like the spectator is being challenged at the moment. People rely on tropes just because they want to be successful. Capitalism is driving people to abandon what they want to do in the hopes of maintaining a certain amount of I don't know, social capital, physical capital. But at the end of the day, it's like, look, you're only in this life once. You're only going to know yourself once. Why would you abandon things that you want to do to follow other people's ways of making art? I feel like in the last year, especially during the pandemic, I realised that success for me is just doing my ideas. It's like the hardest thing to do, sitting down and allowing yourself to do it.

Don't worry about money. In Jesus' name, the money will come. Or you know we can get into trapping.

If all fails, I don't really mind working the land, making jam. I'm just going to make jam.

What's your plan for today, then?

I woke up in the morning wanting to listen to Keane.

What's that?

You know, Keane. You know that band (*sings Everybody's Changing*)

That's crazy. I was thinking about them the other day. I feel like if I look back at that era, there was no opportunity for any other band other than just the same white bands that already existed. And I think that was the thing. I remember not really being into Bloc Party, and I thought they were cool. But I really just was like, who cares? He's Nigerian. Imma be there. Remember the other day when we went to that bar and you saw Violence, and then you were like, nahhhhh. And then you were like, nahhhhhhhhh.

I think I was like, so overcome... it actually reminds me of an interview for Sky that Emily did while she was like 12 for school, and she goes, I feel my mind expanding as I learn.

Who said that?

Emily.

For y'all reading this Emily is Josiane's little sister.

Yeah shout out to Emily. But that's the thing I felt seeing Violence perform I was like, what the fuck? This guy needs to be massive! Growing up, especially in Britain, you weren't really exposed to Black musicians outside of hip-hop or jazz or R&B. Like for the longest time I didn't even think I could be an artist because I'd go to institutions and I wouldn't see people like myself.

Obviously, when you're talking about Keane, and kind of growing up and hearing these bands – it could be Keane or it could be Slayer – it kind of forces you to think these are the best rock artists. But then seeing Violence just blew our minds. In that moment, I think we both realised that what we are presented with in the mainstream is not actually reality. Do you know what I mean?

Yeah and I think it's really sad that you can switch any other radio station on and you just find the same songs.

That's what I'm trying to say. If you're not going to play someone cool on the radio I'm going to go on Reddit, I'm going to go on some site, and imma find it. I think that's why I would say that actually one thing I loved about how both of us have used the internet is to expose people to things we think more people should know about, even if it's just in some silly ass post on Instagram.

The way I'm asking this question I'm going to sound like a fed. But what do you feel is your dream? The other day you did say that you wanted us to do creative direction for Megan Thee Stallion. What other iconic figures do you like to work with? Drake? Mary J Blige?

Oh my God, talking about Drake. In my first year of uni, and I had been listening to his *Scorpion* album, I was listening to *Mob Ties* and I just found it so medieval and I wanted to make some medieval ass video for this song because it's just so good. I DM'd him and sent him a proposal and obviously got no reply back. So doing creative direction for Drake would be cool.

What's your 'I have a dream moment'?

It sounds wack, but it's true, mine is just to be content with the work that I'm making and myself, striving for that. And I'd love to do creative direction. I love to have all these opportunities but like, shit. If I even get there, can I even back it? All of these ideas I have. Can I even back it? And also to not value myself based off of things. Like you can do creative direction, or win at Cannes, or be an amazing artist because I'd love to be all be all three but what does it even mean? All these accolades? If you're not even good with yourself? So yeah I guess I want to be content.

Credits

Photography Nick Knight
 Fashion Arthur Jafa
 Hair Soichi Inagaki at Art Partner using Kieh'l, in collaboration with Josiane M.H. Pozi
 Make-up Emma Miles at Caren using Pat McGrath
 Nail technician Chisato at Caren using Sisley's Restorative Hand Cream
 Digital operator Joe Colley
 Photography assistance Tom Alexander, Grace Hodgson, Shane Ryan and Otilie Landmark
 Digital operator Joe Colley
 Technical supervisor Michael Gossage
 Fashion assistance Marina de Magalhães
 Hair assistance Masayoshi Fujita
 Production Liberte Productions, Kat Davey, Bella Hollamby and Jared Pasamar
 Production assistance Jack Beazley
 Retouching Epilogue Imaging
 Casting director Samuel Ellis Scheinman for DMCASTING













