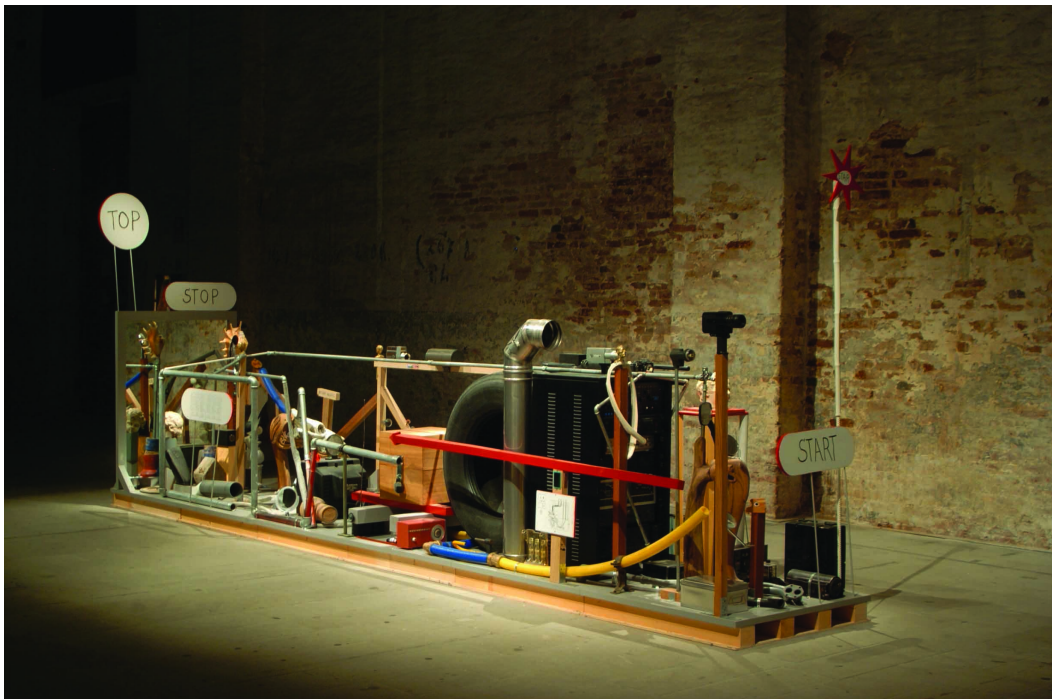


JIMMIE DURHAM AT THE CENTER OF THE WORLD

*AT THE HAMMER MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES, UNTIL
7 MAY 2017*



Jimmie Durham, *Something...Perhaps a Fugue or an Elegy*, 2005. Cameras, television, VHS player, amplifier, tripod, steel pipes, hardware, PVC pipes, plastic, rope, acrylic paint, pine, seashell, brass heads, cast marble-dust head, oak box, glass bottle, wood furniture parts, tree branches, tire, mirrors, metal lock, metal chains, lights, wires, plywood pallets, armadillo shell, cow skull and bones, ink on paper. 71 x 275 ½ x 63 in. (180 x 700 x 160 cm).

Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples, Italy. Image courtesy of kurimanzutto, Mexico City.

The artist, performer, activist and writer Jimmie Durham is probably better known in Europe, where he has lived and exhibited since 1994, than in the US. This retrospective, showcasing nearly 200 works from 1970 to the present, aims to introduce more to an American audience.

As a Cherokee, Durham, 77, was involved in the American Indian Movement in his early years and became part of New York's art scene in the 1980s. After a stint living in Mexico, he moved to Europe and is now based in Berlin and Rome. **He draws upon his Native American heritage to deconstruct a Western view of the world**, subverting aspects of Western art in his practice.

A wide range of Durham's art is on view (<https://hammer.ucla.edu/exhibitions/2017/jimmie-durham-at-the-center-of-the-world/>), from sculpture and installation to drawings, paintings and videos. Certain works directly question his identity, including **self-portraits pretending to be a stone statue of himself** or pretending to be the Brazilian artist Maria Thereza Alves.

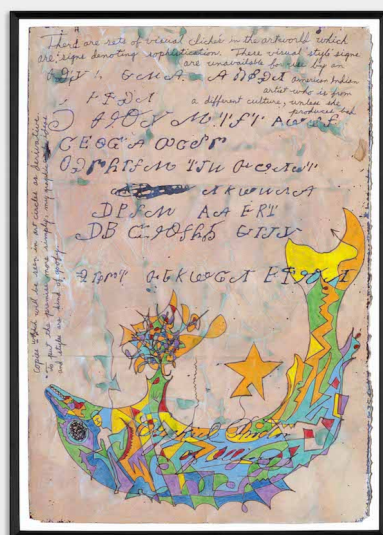
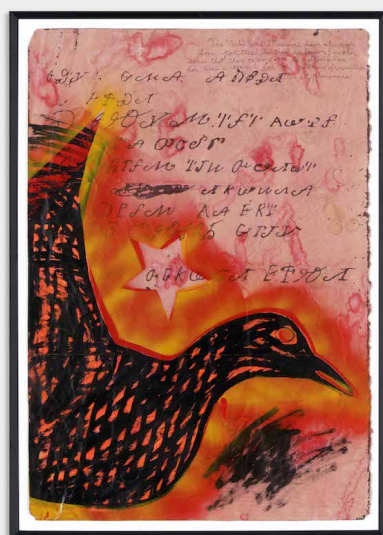
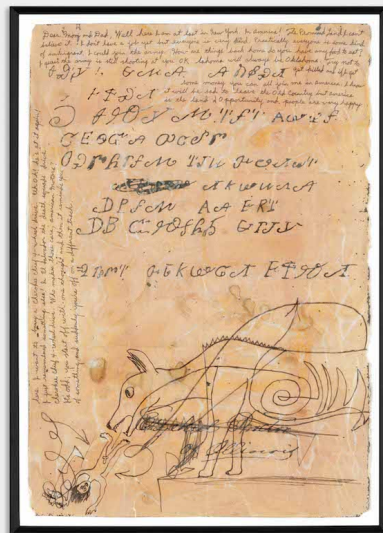
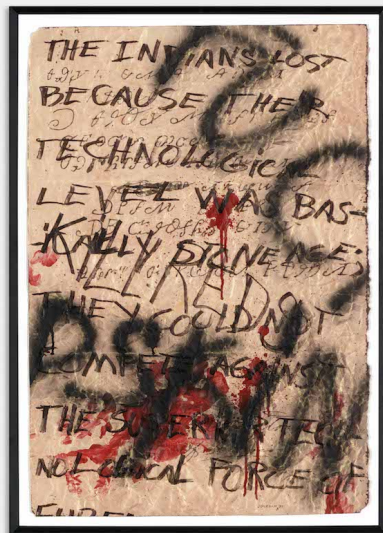


Jimmie Durham, Various Elements from the Actual World, 2009. Acrylic and oil paint, Formica, gold leaf, wool mittens, leather glove, various stones, paper, Egyptian wedding canopy, buttons made of mussels from the Mississippi River, shards of glass from Rome, chestnut wood, ink. 93 ½ x 118 ½ in. (250 x 300 cm). Collection of Lonti Ebers, New York City. Image courtesy of kurimanzutto, Mexico City.

Others are a reinterpretation of works by **Brancusi**. 'Head' (2006), made from wood and papier-mâché along with seashells, hair, turquoise and metal, revisits Brancusi's 'Sleeping Muse' (1910), made from painted bronze. By titling another piece, 'Anti-Brancusi' (2005), Durham mocks Brancusi's 'Young Bird' (1928) and the historical role of elegant materials in Western art. In place of Brancusi's bronze abstract bird on a pedestal of limestone and oak, Durham has fashioned his piece from poorer materials, such as ink on paper, rope, stone and cardboard boxes.

Elsewhere, Durham's installation 'Something...Perhaps a Fugue or an Elegy' (2005) loosely recalls the machine sculptures of the late Swiss artist **Jean Tinguely**. It has been cobbled from an assortment of high-tech items, including a television, a VHS player and cameras, besides pipes, brass heads and a cow's skull – a combination of Western machines and animal remains, referencing a hunter-gatherer tradition.

The rich variety in Durham's output is exemplified by how, in 2009, he created such contrasting works: a painting, 'Various Elements from the Actual World', and a sculpture, 'Upon reflection, I was no longer sure of my position', inspired by the philosopher's stone, transmuting baser metals into gold or silver. Additionally, smaller pieces in vitrines provide insight into the coming-together of ideas in Durham's practice and its evolution.



Jimmie Durham, Zeke Proctor's Letter, 1989. Acrylic paint, ink, and enamel spray paint on paper. 32 1/4 x 22 in. (81.6 x 55.9 cm) each of 4. Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Promised gift of Beth Rudin DeWoody. Image courtesy of kurimanzutto, Mexico City.



Jimmie Durham, *Malinche*, 1988-1992. Guava, pine branches, oak, snakeskin, , polyester bra soaked in acrylic resin and painted gold, watercolor, cactus leaf, canvas, cotton cloth, metal, rope, feathers, plastic jewelry, glass eye. 70 x 23 5/8 x 35 in. (177 x 60 x 89 cm). Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK), Ghent, Belgium. Image ©S.M.A.K. / Dirk Pauwels.

Jimmie Durham, *Ahead*, 1991. Pine, black walnut, metal, cotton shirt, tie, fiberglass, resin. 65 x 23 3/4 x 25 1/2 in. (165 x 60 x 65 cm). Private collection, courtesy of kurimanzutto, Mexico City. Photo: Nick Ash.