



Jammie Holmes, *A Self Portrait of an Artist on Narrow Street*, 2019 Photo: Courtesy of the artist and Library Street Collective

Young Black Artists Speak About the Role of Art in This Moment

By: Nick Mafi
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Groundbreaking artists such as Njideka Akunyili Crosby and Jammie Holmes discuss their work in the context of 2020, and what power art has to lead us toward a better tomorrow

Jammie Holmes is one of those artists whose work is so charged with emotion, containing the raw feelings to a single canvas appears to be a feat in and of itself. For the 36-year old artist, who currently has a studio in Dallas, one question permeates through all of his work: “When can I live like you?” explains Holmes. In discussing his work *Endurance*, in which a Black man is giving another Black man a haircut, Holmes explains why he created a mural of flowers behind the seated subject. “I put flowers there because I wanted to tone down the Black in us. I’m six-foot-three, bearded with tattoos, and I love jewelry. I wanted us to look safer. It’s sad that we have to live like that.” Holmes made international headlines when on the last Saturday in May, the artist created a massive work that caught the attention of New Yorkers, and the world beyond. Holmes produced a banner and attached it to a small airplane that flew around New York City. The black-and-white banner read, “They’re Going to Kill Me,” which were among the last words of George Floyd.