



Artist Profile

Chaun Webster is a Poet, Publisher and Graphic Designer in no particular order. Webster's poetry finds its influences in the intersections of the Black Arts Movement and Jazz, the Concrete Poetry Tradition and Graffiti. July 2009 marked the launch of Free Poet's Press, the small publishing company Webster began in order to create self-determining space for art production in Black and Brown communities. As guerrilla media FPP utilizes low-tech production methods and local distribution to disseminate radical ideas through the arts. In Osayande's introduction to Webster's debut book of verse, *fuck poetry: bread is the politik of the hungry*, he states, "At times his poems call for retribution and utter visions of battle-cries, bullets and blood. At other times they convey a palpable frustration of being powerless to defend against the everyday acts of violence by the 'Leviathan' that violates our senses, if not our very bodies, on the daily. At all times, they offer us an authenticity in expression and execution that leaves us inspired or convicted or both." Webster went on to be awarded a Verve Grant for Spoken Word Poetry through which he produced his *HaiCOUP: a fieldguide in guerrilla (po)ethics*, with Twin Cities Poet's Marissa Carr, Ibrahima Kaba, and Jake Virden. Being determined to produce without having to depend on grant funding Webster raised funds through Kickstarter to release the RE-Scripted Chapbook Series garnering critical attention from Associate Professor of Communications at Morgan State University, Dr. Jared Ball who wrote the foreword saying, "RE-Scripted is anti-colonialism." Currently Webster has been awarded the 2013 Neighborhood Partnership Initiative Grant through CURA and will be developing a critical literacy initiative in the Cleveland Neighborhood of North Minneapolis.

Artistic Experience

Audited Class in Art and Politics, Rutgers University

June 2010

Audited a class during the month of June 2010 taught by Professor Ewuare Osayande at Rutgers University. This trip and class were formative in that it gave me an opportunity to extrapolate insights from my own context as I looked at how Black people related to their Blackness socially, politically and artistically on the East Coast.

Book of Rhymes Spoken Word Showcase, McPhail Center for Music

October 2010

Performed as the Featured artist at Book of Rhymes Spoken Word Showcase leading up to the release of debut book of verse: *fuck poetry bread is the politik of the hungry*.

Art and Politics: Recurring Themes in Black Literature, Bethel University

November 2010

Organized and facilitated an academic conversation between Dr. Mahmoud El-Kati and Professor Ewuare Osayande about the unique aesthetic and political motivations of Black Art as it has evolved. This event was attended by a cross-section of artists, professors, students, workers and community members alike. The conversation probed these two great minds on the consistent motif of liberation in Black Literature from David Walker to Assata Shakur.

Book Release of, fuck poetry: bread is the politik of the hungry, Capri Theater

November 2010

Released *fuck poetry: bread is the politik of the hungry*, at the Capri Theater following the July launch of Free Poet's Press. With a full audience and performances by Ibe Kaba and Ewuare Osayande, who introduced the book, the work gained the attention of an emerging artist attributed to the unique voice and the professional quality of the work. *fuck poetry* also featured cover art by nationally acclaimed and award winning artist, Ricardo Levins Morales.

Collaboration with Bush Fellow Nate Young in Postracialization Exhibit, XYZ Gallery

September 2011

The Postracialization Exhibit at The XY&Z Gallery featured recent drawings by Nate Young that were accompanied by Webster's poetry in recorded audio. The exhibit used seemingly random associations of letters words and iconic figures to displace assumptions surrounding race, gender, class, sexuality and the static nature of those categories. The opening featured a live performance by Webster which was an improvisational composition guided by a random letter generator.

Performing Artist at Equilibrium, The Loft Literary Center

December 2011

Opened for national artists Jamaica Osorio and Remi Kanazi at Equilibrium, the award winning spoken word series at The Loft Literary Center.

Focus Group for Grant Creation, The Loft Literary Center

March 2012

Formative part of The Loft Literary Center's focus group for the creation of a grant that would specifically empower artists of color to do their work in non-traditional art spaces. The ideas from this focus group would materialize into what is now The Loft Literary Center's Spoken Word Artist Immersion Grant.

Independently Contracted Teaching Artist at Jackson Street Village, The Loft Literary Center

March 2013-Present

Developed curriculum for 6-8yr olds and 13-18yr olds that gives an introduction to the written and oral traditions of Indigenous and POC communities. Using visual art in a concrete poetry and graffiti sense, visuals are very much a part of this curriculum's basis of expanding vocabulary and building writing techniques. The capstone of the class is the development of a chapbook featuring the student's work.

Writer for Opine Season

March 2013-Present

Founding member of and weekly columnist for Opine Season, a co-op op-ed page of engaged writers covering non-traditional politics from non-dominant perspectives.

Awards

2011 Verve Grant for Spoken Word Poets, Intermedia Arts

July 2011 Webster received a Verve Grant for Spoken Word Poets from Intermedia Arts, one of Minnesota's premier arts organizations and is slotted to complete another project via the Verve Grant Fall of 2011.

2013 Neighborhood Partnership Initiative Grant Recipient (NPI), CURA

Recipient of CURA's 2013 NPI grant through which Webster will be building a critical literacy initiative that will focus intensively on six square blocks of the Cleveland Neighborhood of North Minneapolis.

Publishing Credits

Webster, Chaun. *fuck poetry: bread is the politik of the hungry*. Minneapolis, Free Poet's Press, 2010

Carr, Marissa; Kaba, IBe; Virden, Jake; Webster, Chaun. *HaiCOUP: a fieldguide in guerrilla (po)ethics*, Minneapolis, Free Poet's Press, 2012

Webster, Chaun. *RE-Scripted: An FPP Mixpage*. Minneapolis, Free Poet's Press 2012

Webster, Chaun. *Fear of a Nat Planet*. Minneapolis, Free Poet's Press 2012

Webster, Chaun. *obSEEN Diction*. Minneapolis, Free Poet's Press 2012

Webster, Chaun. *because when we say NAT it be writ large*. Minneapolis, Free Poet's Press 2012

Interviews

Webster, Chaun. "*HaiCOUP: a fieldguide in guerilla (po)ethics*. Interview by Bao Phi StarTribune, 2012. Web. 5 April. 2012

Webster, Chaun. Interview by Joseph Quintela. *Short, Fast and Deadly*, 2013. Web. 20 Mar. 2013