



People Paper

Cara Jones

This exhibition incorporates photography, video, performance and poetry to explore the relationship between individuals and their unique interpretation of the human body. Through the act of writing poetry on people's bodies, I infuse myself, the artist, in each portrait, documenting an interactive moment of reflection.

Artist Statement:

My series, *People Paper*, began with my introduction to photography in my first year of art school in 1997. Like a painter's brush, my camera is a tool I use to explore and document the relationship between language, perception, and environment. I incorporate handwritten text in my work to infuse myself into the portrait. By placing the subjects in diverse settings, I combine elements that reflect my experiences captured in the poems. Over the last 20 years, I experimented with various materials to write on the skin of my subjects, and I found that eyeliner pencil was the best medium for the series. The thick texture moves quickly across various skin types, creating an ideal method of transferring text on the body. The *People Paper* series began with the classic Mamiya C Series – Twin-Lens Medium Format Camera and a single lens 35 mm camera. However, in 2007, I embraced the digital era, incorporating a digital camera into my practice. Despite this shift, I maintained a commitment to minimalism in post-production, making only a few alterations in Photoshop.

During the *People Paper* series' early years, I enlisted fellow artists' help to write my poems across my skin and entered public spaces. As onlookers tried to read the text with only fragments available for consumption, many asked for access to the complete poems. The performance was not just an experiment but an interactive experience that invited strangers to express their curiosity and desire to read the entire text. It served as a commentary on the intricate choices individuals make about what they reveal to the world. The series has evolved, including spoken word poetry and video and live adaptations. These

performances are an essential component of the work that helps me build trust and empathy through sharing some of my most vulnerable thoughts with those who choose to be a part of it.