

TRUE BELIEVERS

A Work in Progress That Explores Our Collective Ignorance

Pope.L, known for exploring themes of endurance alongside the history of race in America, shares a recent piece.



Pope.L's "I Machine" (2014-20). Credit...© Pope.L. Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, N.Y., and Vielmetter, Los Angeles

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

By Pope.L

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*In this new series, **The Artists**, an installment of which will publish every day this week and regularly thereafter, T will highlight a recent or little-shown work by a Black artist, along with a few words from that artist, putting the work into context. Today, we're looking at a piece by Pope.L, who's known for his paintings, performances and installations that often explore themes of endurance alongside the history of race in America.*

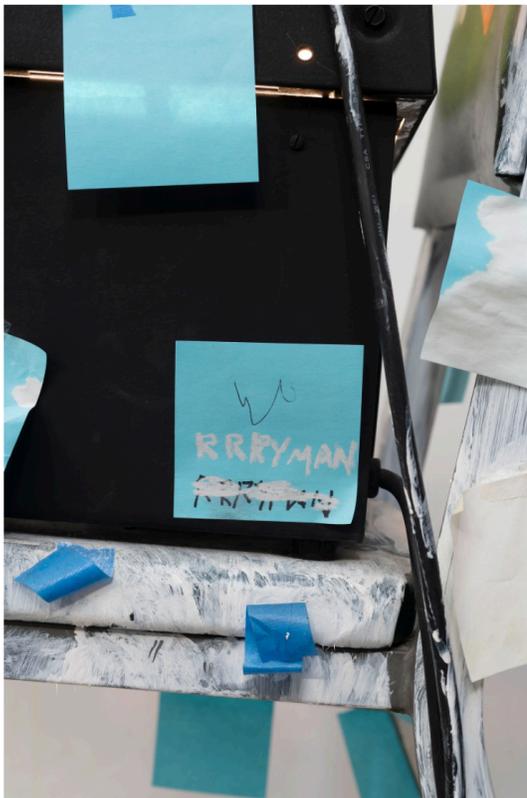
Name: Pope.L

Age: Ageless

Based in: Chicago, also home of the former governor and convicted felon Rod Blagojevich.

Originally from: A reed basket found floating on the Passaic River flowing through Newark, N.J.

When and where did you make this work? I made this work over the last 5 years or so in Chicago, the land of Lincoln. It's still being made.



A close-up of the artwork. © Pope.L. Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, N.Y., and Vielmetter, Los Angeles



Another detail of the artwork. © Pope.L. Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, N.Y., and Vielmetter, Los Angeles



An alternate view of "I Machine." © Pope.L. Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, N.Y., and Vielmetter, Los Angeles

Can you describe what's going on in it? This work is about our need for self-blinding and encourages reflection on our use, as a community, of unknowledge, misinformation and ignorance. The recent controversy regarding The New York Times allowing the printing of [a hot topic Op-Ed](#) by Senator Tom Cotton without proper vetting is a layered example. Who, in this scenario, is the most ignorant actor? The Cotton? NYT? Or us? Is it the Senator, because he recommends killing his own? Is it the "Tombs," because they condoned his ignorance and then claimed they did not know what they were publishing? Or is it Us'n, myself included, because, well, it's The Times, and they stand for us all? Well. Maybe they do not. Maybe they cannot. Maybe they have not. For a while now. And we, and we were too self-blinding to admit it?

What inspired you to make this work? Knowing I don't know.

What's the work of art in any medium that changed your life? Survivor, the band AND the TV show.