

DETERMINING THE TEMPO

LAYZIEHOUND AT ODA

BY SEAN STREAK

Liberation? Chained minds? Views of the unorthodox?

These are forms that Layziehound Coka intertwines to create his art, and inadvertently control his own desires.

Born in Bilanyoni in the heart of Zululand, Layziehound grew to understand the concept of greed and the splurge of currency on individual “needs” that are better understood as “wants” or “desires.” His upbringing and location helped to define his role and sculpt his mentality regarding the concept of one’s own spending and basic requirements.

He understands that the realisation of consumerism affecting humanity is ever-present in modern society, that the world follows a path of buying goods to appease desire whilst struggling to wrest control from the spark of greed that we all face at some point in our life. This unorthodox philosophy feeds his creativity and helps to craft the artist’s critique of consumerism that finds its way into his artwork.

After a major lifestyle change in his adolescent years, the shift from studying engineering to that of fine arts, Layziehound had an epiphany – giving up structure to embrace creativity, to grow differently and herald the coming of his own liberation. Though not the standardised idea of political freedoms nor physical lockage stood as the catalyst, this liberation would come from the annals of his mind, a psychological fracturing of the strongbox society has placed us in, the pivotal key-cutting used to open a section of the mind previously unexplored.

This is what Layziehound strives for and in his own words “The truth is we focus a lot on what our purpose is instead of focusing on enjoying our experiences and burning desires that keep us hoping and willing to live. We should chase after our dreams and desires, if we don’t, then why are we doing this, I mean... the rat race? Why? There’s no greater purpose than living your life the best way you find fitting to do so.”

This newly unlocked mental conditioning allowed Layziehound to pursue his overriding directive, to construct fine art, to blend American hip-hop street culture with South African Zulu heritage to create something truly unique — an amalgamation of intercontinental discourse aimed at those whose minds had not yet been breached, their doors still closed off to the lust-like composition that secretly drives our dreams and passions.

Nevertheless, the art speaks for itself, geometrics, colourful imagery and the human figure play roles in select works that hark back to earlier artists such as Basquiat. The mediums most present are those of charcoal and acrylic on paper and canvas, and send a clear message that leaks through his pieces to reveal the true meanings of self-desire and a vibrant lifestyle of self-indulgence. Layziehound’s art seems to form a parallel with his name suggesting that the speed of lifestyle and greed is opposite yet complementing the name of Layziehound himself.

When time comes into question his art whole-heartedly replies with an answer that is found within the deepest recesses of us all, that time is of the essence — that we are here for a finite amount of time though we are found on a seemingly infinite spectrum.

While looking at a rooted meaning within his work, the practical application has been remarkable, he has taken part in numerous group and solo exhibitions such as ‘Hazardous diction’ and ‘Guns



ABOVE: Layziehound Coka, *With Friends Like These, Who Needs Enemies*, 2017. Mixed media. Image courtesy of ODA Gallery. RIGHT: Layziehound Coka, *Silencing Justice*, 2017. Mixed Media. Image courtesy of ODA Gallery.

are drawn' and has an upcoming solo exhibition at ODA gallery in Franschoek taking place, entitled 'Dream Chasers – slaves to our desires'. The exhibition itself promises ideas of honesty, truth, our intangible needs and tangible desires, ultimately giving off explicit political poetry and bringing all forms into a unique mix for the public to feast their lustful eyes on. His upcoming exhibitions both solo and group are not to be taken lightly, they will definitely release emotion and urge within viewers and instil an idea of personal outreach to better understand our own being.

So finally how does Layziehound Coka tie into liberation? Well he epitomises it. He leads us on a path to the breaking away of the human mind from a shackled mental and rule-regulated existence, to let ourselves be free in our think tank, and this outlook eventually seeps into our spiritual, corporeal and finally – physical form.

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