Slowed and Threwed: Records of the City Through Mutated Lenses
Robert Hodge

**Slowed and Throwed**, 2020
Mixed media collage on reclaimed paper
Courtesy the artist and David Shelton Gallery, Houston, Texas

Robert Hodge

**Don’t Play US for weak**, 2020
Mixed media collage on reclaimed paper
Courtesy the artist and David Shelton Gallery, Houston, Texas

Robert Hodge

**Body Rock**, 2020
Mixed media collage on reclaimed paper
Courtesy the artist and David Shelton Gallery, Houston, Texas

Robert Hodge

**Comin Dine**, 2020
Mixed media collage on reclaimed paper
Courtesy the artist and David Shelton Gallery, Houston, Texas

Robert Hodge

**June 27th**, 2020
Mixed media collage on reclaimed paper
Courtesy the artist and David Shelton Gallery, Houston, Texas
Robert Hodge

**Man Hold Up**, 2020
Mixed media collage on reclaimed paper
Courtesy the artist and David Shelton Gallery, Houston, Texas

Robert Hodge

**Southside We ROLL on Choppers**, 2020
Mixed media collage on reclaimed paper
Courtesy the artist and David Shelton Gallery, Houston, Texas

Robert Hodge

**Chopped, Chopped**, 2020
Mixed media collage on reclaimed paper
Courtesy the artist and David Shelton Gallery, Houston, Texas

Musician and artist Robert Hodge composes imagery from used record covers for his collages. The album covers he chooses are resonant and personal, enabling him to explore themes of memory and commemoration.
SLOWING TIME

Perhaps the quality most associated with the music of DJ Screw is his stretching of sound by reducing tempo, thereby seemingly slowing time. Slowing records from 45 to 33 RMP (revolutions per minute) allowed him to render a known-song unfamiliar. DJ Screw’s slowing down the tempo of a song increased the presence of lyrics. Similarly, in Liss LaFleur’s newest serenade, *Don’t Worry Baby* (2020), the projected figure slowly lip-syncs the chorus of The Beach Boys’ 1964 pop song “Don’t Worry Baby” as a looping serenade. The artist states, “With this work I am questioning: what happens when you inhabit other people’s materials—specific to this song, queer womxn embodying harmonies originally written and performed by cis men, who were singing about their hetero loves?”

Tay Butler
*Eight Hour Drive*, 2020
Analogue collage rephotograph on adhesive vinyl and found objects

Liss LaFleur
*Don’t Worry Baby*, 2020
HD digital video installation: color, sound, 16:00 minutes
Courtesy the artist and Galleri Urbane, Dallas, Texas
Jamal Cyrus

**For the Two Southsides**, 2020
Collaged *Jet* Magazine, conch shell, canvas, and cotton
Courtesy the artist and Inman Gallery, Houston, Texas

In Jamal Cyrus’s *Jet Auto Archive* series, the artist samples visual material from his personal collection of 1990s *Jet* Magazine issues. *Jet* Magazine eventually shifted from its progressive writing about Black culture to an advertising-based model, co-opting the initial politics of the publication to harness Black consumer power. In his collage work, Cyrus appropriates and rebuilds with this charged and potent historical material.
Tay Butler
**SLAMA**, 2020
Analogue collage, inkjet print on adhesive vinyl

Karen Navarro
**Twisted**, 2019
Archival inkjet print, wood, Epoxy, and acrylic paint
Courtesy the artist and Foto Relevance, Houston, Texas
Tay Butler
**Juke**, 2019
Analogue collage, inkjet print on canvas

Tay Butler
**Diaspora**, 2019
Analogue collage, inkjet print on canvas
LA YERING AND COLLAGE

DJ Screw’s mastery of “chopping”—emphasizing and layering instrumentals, melodies, and lyrics—produced original sounds through his unique form of collage. “He’d layer one record over another, dragging a finger alongside the turntable wheel to slow the speed until the two tracks melted into one song, toying with the phrasing of each to tease out the message,” writer and Houston hip hop scholar Lance Scott Walker explained.

Many of the exhibiting artists’ use collage in their artwork, likening the artists to visual DJs. In Tomashi Jackson’s video collage Forever 21: The Essence of Innocence Suite (2015) the title is drawn from “The Essence of Innocence: Consequences of Dehumanizing Black Children,” a 2014 study published by the American Psychological Association. The study troublingly concludes that Black youth are perceived as less innocent than their white peers, likely resulting in their disproportionate subjection to policing and police brutality.

Tomashi Jackson
Forever 21: The Essence of Innocence Suite
1: Give Me the Reason (To Forgive)(Texas Courtroom) (DC Classroom)
2: Give Me the Reason (To Forget)(Texas Courtroom)
3: Give Me the Reason (Tell Me How)(Detroit, Cleveland, Ferguson), 2015
Single channel video: color, sound, 7:34 minutes, edition of 3
Courtesy the artist and Tilton Gallery, New York City, New York
EXPERIMENTATION

DJ Screw was an experimental artist with an innovative musical practice. His mixtapes had no track listings, entailed collaborative efforts, and were independently produced. All of DJ Screw’s mixing, including the rap freestyling, was improvised. Just as DJ Screw made music without a conventional instrument, many artists make photographic work without using a camera. One example of this is Ayanna Jolivet Mccloud’s prints, which combine photographic reproductions of Black protesters. To address the erasure of Black history, Mccloud uses archival images to create revised interpretations of the past. “I build sculptures and collages,” she explained in a statement about her work.

Ayanna Jolivet Mccloud
Mapping Crossroads, Atlantic Ocean, and Riots (Baltimore, London, & Watts), 2020
Digital photographic print (six parts)
SAMPLING AND RECLAMATION

DJ culture centers around the mixing of sound recordings, known as “sampling.” Likewise, many participating artists have appropriated, or visually sampled, existing material. Sondra Perry’s work *IT’S IN THE GAME ‘17 or Mirror Gag for Vitrine and Projection* (2017) focuses on Perry’s twin brother Sandy, whose physical resemblance and statistics as a student athlete were licensed, without his consent, by the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) to video game developer EA Sports. In the video, Sandy’s video game character and a newly made avatar, Sondra, explore artifacts that have been taken out of their original contexts and are now housed in the collections of encyclopedic museums. This is in turn juxtaposed with 3D renderings of artifacts from those museums found online.

Sondra Perry

*IT’S IN THE GAME ‘17 or Mirror Gag for Vitrine and Projection*, 2017

HD video and animation: color, sound, 16:20 minutes:
Rosco chroma key blue paint
Commissioned by the Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo (HOK), Norway and the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania for the exhibition *Myths of the Marble* (2017)
Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York, New York
REMEMBRANCE OF PLACE

Although born in Smithville, Texas, Robert Earl Davis Jr. later known as DJ Screw called Houston, Texas home for the last 19 years of his life. Dr. Regina N. Bradley, scholar of African American culture contends, “If nothing else, Screw culture was a love letter to Houston, a sonic rendering of the illegibility of Houston’s Black communities made legible by slowing it down.” DJ Screw’s stretched sound is fitting for the city’s oppressive heat, humidity, and car culture. His connection to the city is evident in his mixtapes, which include lyrical references to parts of Houston, as well as collaborations with Houston-based rappers. “You can’t do Houston without Screwston. There’s no way around it,” said rapper E.S.G. The participating visual artists are also Houston-affiliated—either from or at some point based in the city.
1.

2.

3.

4. 5. 6. 7.

8.

9. 10. 11. 12.


16. 17.
Rabéa Ballin

1. *Plaits, twists or braids*, 2017
Silkscreen on Mylar

Rabéa Ballin

2. *Orb*, 2017
Silkscreen on Mylar

Rabéa Ballin

3. *Remixing View*, 2019
Silkscreen on Mylar

Devin Kenny

*long shadows - twin twin flames*, 2021
Live streamed performance on Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 6:30PM. Check camh.org for more details.

Tay Butler

4. *Silk Shirt So My Chest Show When I Flirt*, 2017
Photomontage on wood
Tay Butler
5. Lakefront, 2017
Photomontage on wood

Tay Butler
6. Moonlit, 2017
Photomontage on wood

Tay Butler
7. 4-5-6, 2017
Photomontage on wood

Karen Navarro
8. Fragment, 2019
Archival inkjet print, wood, and Epoxy
Courtesy the artist and Foto Relevance, Houston, Texas

B. Anele
9. In Brine, 2018
Digital print, spray adhesive, and found cans
Jimmy Castillo
10. Hiensley St at South Street, 2018
Digital inkjet print

Jimmy Castillo
11. The Old Lady’s Little House, 2017
Digital inkjet print

Jimmy Castillo
12. Mendoza’s Bakery, 2018
Digital inkjet print

Ann Johnson
13. Plantation Song, 2019
Intaglio on raw cotton and found objects
Courtesy the artist and Hooks-Epstein Galleries, Houston, Texas

Ann Johnson
14. Untitled Study, 2019
Intaglio on cotton
Courtesy the artist and Hooks-Epstein Galleries, Houston, Texas
Shana Hoehn

15. **Floating Ladies, Horizontal Line #1**, 2020
Cyanotype on canvas, screenprint on plastic, fabric, hood ornament, and steel

Rabéa Ballin

16. **F is for...**, 2009
Digital photograph (five parts)

B. Anele

17. **Making Me**, 2019
Digital print, mirror, and industrial fan
MATERIALITY

The material possibilities offered by vinyl records and cassette tapes propelled DJ Screw. His mixtapes were limited almost entirely to production on cassette because the record and compact disc were insufficient to hold his 100-minute mixes. Despite technological shifts in media formats, DJ Screw remained committed to DJing with vinyl. In their parallel processes, the exhibiting visual artists similarly have a commitment to material specificity, often working with unexpected materials that offer unique formal, conceptual, or physical attributes. In Charisse Pearlson Weston’s assemblage sculptures, she combines distorted fragments of text and photographs etched in glass. In Weston’s words, “Materials, like glass and language [...] correlate to the fragility and fungibility of blackness.”

Charisse Pearlina Weston
breach (a notion of freedom), 2019
Layered, slumped, and manually folded glass; photographic decals; high-fire enamel; derived from David Walker and Frederick Douglass etched on glass; and bricks
DOUBLING

DJ Screw used two copies of the same records to produce his namesake “chopped and screwed” sound. His methodological focus on doubling not only resulted from his use of twin records, but also reflects his emphasis on doubling lyrics or beats. Doubling occurs in the work of several participating artists. Shana Hoehn reproduces images from her growing archive of femme forms, including medical and media portrayals of madness and mid 20th-century hood ornaments onto banner-like textiles. The women are accompanied by their double—a possible shadow, sister, or twin.

Shana Hoehn
**Untitled**, 2020
Cyanotype on canvas and bronze
DJ SCREW

Born Robert Earl Davis Jr., DJ Screw (1971-2000) popularized “chopped and screwed” music in Houston by using two turntables to slow down and layer hip hop tempos. On the 340+ known mixtapes he created, DJ Screw distorted works by popular musical artists and layered freestyle vocals by numerous Houston-based rappers—including Al-D, E.S.G., Big Moe, Fat Pat, Lil’ Keke, Hawk, Big Pokey, and Z-Ro—for his “chopped up” version of the original. DJ Screw would take a small commission to create a mixtape for an individual featuring requested songs. His underground mixtapes started as handwritten lists; he would then dub copies of the original “grey tape” to sell to the public. The hallmarks of the chopped and screwed technique—reducing pitch, slowing tempo, distorting input, and chopping lyrics to produce new meanings—have become synonymous with Houston hip hop, earning DJ Screw the nickname “The Originator.” Despite his untimely death at age 29 in 2000 of a codeine overdose, the hip hop DJ and leader of Houston’s Screwed Up Click continues to influence artistic genres around the world.

DJ Screw during the recording of 3 ‘N the Mornin’, Samplified Digital Recording Studio, February 22, 1996

Ben DeSoto
DJ Screw inside his home, 1995
Digital photographic print
Courtesy SoSouth Music Distribution, Houston, Texas
DJ Screw’s personal record collection, 1980–98

“When Swangin’ and Bangin’ came out, I never knew that Screw hadn’t heard his name on the radio [before that song played]. I learned after he passed that he was emotional hearing that [his name on the radio].”

—E.S.G., rapper and member of the Screwed Up Click

DJ Screw in baseball uniform, 1970s
“Growing up, me and Screw thought that we’d be truck drivers like our fathers. But along the line somewhere, we both fell in love with music, the scratching, the DJing, to the point where we both became DJs. It was always a house party back then in the neighborhood. And we became known as the DJs. We did house parties, and man it grew from house parties to high schools, to middle schools. Screw didn’t have his name yet, he wasn’t DJ Screw.

We did sell mixtapes at a high school for lunch money. Our parents would give us lunch money; we will save our lunch money and go buy blank cassette tapes. And on the weekends we’ll catch the bus downtown to the record store. We’d buy whatever record we didn’t have. We’d come back, we’d walked through the park and all the gangsters, they’ll just stop, ‘Man, what y’all got now? What y’all got now?’ We show them what’s up. ‘Alright y’all, put in a mix.’ So we’d go back to my house, we get on the mix, I make my mixtapes, he’ll make his. Still not Screws yet. This is just what we did. That went on for a couple of years. I stopped DJing, Screw stayed with the tables, and he became DJ Screw, and the rest is history.”

—Big Bubb, Owner of Screwed Up Records and Tapes

“You look at this picture. This is when you know you have hip hop in you, you know? When you wear that haircut- for real, for real!”

—E.S.G., rapper and member of the Screwed Up Click
**DJ Screw and DJ Chill behind the turntables, circa 1992**

DJ Screw and his close friend DJ Chill were hired to provide music for a middle school dance at Gregory Lincoln Education Center. Their equipment included one turntable that belonged to DJ Screw (left), one turntable that belonged to DJ Chill (right), a coffin made by DJ Chill’s father, and a guitar amplifier.

**DJ Screw’s Soundwaves receipt, 2000**

“If you wanted to go to the record store with Screw, just prepare: you ain’t doing nothing for the rest of the day.”
—Will-Lean, rapper and member of the Screwed Up Click

**Screw tape list for Lil’ Keke, circa 1999**

This list for a personalized mixtape for famed rapper and Screwed Up Click member Lil’ Keke included songs by local artists Lil’ Troy, Big Pokey, Fat Pat, and Botany Boyz. Lil’ Keke’s Screw tape list was written on the back of a flyer for a sales job at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Phone numbers have been digitally altered.
Screw tape list for Soc, n.d.

Screw tape list for Steve, circa 1999

Rappers and friends who ordered a mixtape from DJ Screw would prepare a list of the songs that they wanted “chopped and screwed.” This Screw tape list for “Steve” (possibly late rapper Big Steve of Woss Ness) included tracks by local artists Big Pokey, C-Note, Geto Boys, Southside Playaz, and Lil’ O. Phone numbers have been digitally altered.

Partial song list for a Screw tape, 1999

DJ Screw jotted down phone numbers and mix lists in small notepads. This page shows what looks like a partial list of songs for a Screw tape. The songs are by Fat Pat and the group Dead End Alliance (DJ Screw, Fat Pat, H.A.W.K., and Kay-K), suggesting that it was created for someone from the Dead End, the South Side Houston neighborhood from where the group’s members lived.

Maestro in his studio, Samplified Digital Recording Studio, February 22, 1996
**DJ Screw on the mixer and turntables**, February 24, 1996

DJ Screw is in the “wood room” at his house on Greenstone Street in the Gulfgate area, where he lived with his longtime girlfriend Nikki Williams and recorded many Screw tapes and legendary freestyle raps.

“What Screw did for the culture, he brought neighborhoods together. Back in the days when we was coming up, it wasn’t too many neighborhoods that kicked it together. But we went to Screw house, everybody came together. There wasn’t no beef, no flexing, none of that. If it wasn’t for Screw, the radio wasn’t playing us. But I’d rather be played on the Screw tape than on the radio.”

—Will-Lean, rapper and member of the Screwed Up Click

**99’ Live Screw tape**, 1999

This original “grey tape” by DJ Screw was made to commemorate the birthdays of Screwed Up Click members and brothers Lil’ Randy and Ron’O. The music on the tape was chosen by Lil’ Randy and DJ Screw and mixed by the latter in his signature “chopped and screwed” style.
**DJ Screw grey tapes, 1990s**

Original mixtapes created by DJ Screw, also known as Screw tapes or grey tapes, were primarily recorded on 100-minute grey Maxell brand tapes. He often wrote his name, his beeper number, the title of the tape, and the word “fool” on the label by hand. Grey tapes did not come with track listings.

“A lot of people don’t know that each mixtape is somebody’s personal tape. That mean they had to write down a list of songs and name your tape. It was a milestone, like somebody’s birthday, graduation, anniversary, getting out of jail, ‘bout to go to jail. It was just one of them milestones in my life and they wanted to come to Screw House and make a Screw tape.”

—Will-Lean, rapper and member of the Screwed Up Click

**DJ Screw, 3 ‘N the Mornin’ (Part Two), Bigtyme Recordz, 1995**

DJ Screw’s personal copy

Although DJ Screw was known mainly for his underground mixtapes, he recorded a series of “above ground” albums for the local label BigTyme Recordz, owned by Russell Washington. The studio albums were recorded and mixed by Maestro at Samplified Digital Recording Studio in Missouri City, Texas. The popular 3 ‘N the Mornin’ was released as two records and sold approximately 200,000 copies.
Ben DeSoto

**DJ Screw inside his home**, 1995
Digital photographic print
Courtesy SoSouth Music Distribution, Houston, Texas

Ben DeSoto

**DJ Screw inside his home**, 1995
Digital photographic print
Courtesy SoSouth Music Distribution, Houston, Texas

This concert at Houston’s Club Fusion celebrated the release of the albums *The Leprechaun* by Lil’ Flip and *Forever Botany* by Botany Boyz. Guests were a “who’s who” of Houston hip hop scene, including Screwed Up Click members and a young rapper named Slim Thug.

Juneteenth Rap Explosion featuring Screwed Up Click’s D.E.A., Southside Playaz, Straight Profit Records, June 1999

This Juneteenth concert, commemorating the 1865 announcement of abolition of slavery in Texas, was held at Vernon L. Richards Riverbend Park on the outskirts of Smithville, the small Texas town where DJ Screw was raised. Performers were all members of the Screwed Up Click, including Dead End Alliance and Southside Playaz (Mr. 3-2, Mike D, and Clay Doe).

Big Mello promotional photograph, 1996

Big Mello was one of the first to rap about Houston’s custom car culture. In this dramatic photograph, he is standing in front of the JPMorgan Chase Tower in downtown Houston. This copy was owned by DJ Screw.

Tire & Wheel Connection II and Car Tek Audio presents its 4th Annual Car & Truck Show and Concert flyer, 1997
On Da Grind Records presents Big DeMo June 27 Birthday Jam All Access Pass, 1999

*June 27th* is the best known of DJ Screw's mixtapes, created for his friend DeMo's birthday and featuring a 35-minute freestyle, or improvised rap, by multiple Screwed Up Click members over the beat for “Da Streets Ain’t Right” by Kris Kross. Screw tapes were often commissioned to celebrate birthdays and other significant life events.

This is DJ Screw’s backstage pass to a concert held three years later on the anniversary of the *June 27th* tape.

Memorial service program for DJ Screw, November 2000

“He died a week after my son was born. I made it to the service, but I was a little twisted at that time. I was there, but I wasn't there mentally. If this funeral was today, you’d have to have it at the NRG Stadium.”

—E.S.G., rapper and member of the Screwed Up Click

DJ Screw’s car, July 22, 2006

DJ Screw drove a 1996 Impala Super Sport on blades (chrome rims with a propeller-like shape). In 2006, his car was restored with his portrait on the hood and displayed at the Screwfest event held at the Pasadena Convention Center and Municipal Fairgrounds.

“Screw’s Impala still smells like Sandalwood, like the old shop. So when I got that aroma, it kind of messed with my head. That boy loves some sandalwood!”

—Big Bubb, Owner of Screwed Up Records and Tapes
Screwed Up Click members, n.d.

Members of the rap collective the Screwed Up Click gather for a group picture in front of a “Screwed Up Click” backdrop.
Back row: Ira, unknown, Big Pokey, Z-Ro, Trae, MJ
Middle row: Yungstar, Meshah Hawkins, Big Moe, Lil’ Keke, Brandy, unknown
Front row: Chris Ward, Lil’ O, Russell, Sam, Bird

Screwed Up Click members at Screwed Up Records & Tapes, September 21, 2004

Standing: Mike D, Lil’ 3rd, Chris Ward, Trae, Head, Grace, Big Pokey; Seated: Lil’ Keke, Big Moe, Mr. 3-2

El Franco Lee II

DJ Screw in Heaven, 2008
Acrylic on canvas

H.A.W.K., back to camera, n.d.
Exterior of original location of Screwed Up Records & Tapes, circa 2000
Courtesy Screwed Up Records & Tapes

Exterior and interior of the new location of Screwed Up Records & Tapes, 2020
Digital inkjet print
Courtesy Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas,
Photo by Kristin Massa
Screwed Up Records & Tapes promotional magnet, n.d.

“I’m Screw first kinfolk, Screw first cousin. Running the Screw Shop. Been running it ever since Screw deceased. We currently been at this current location for over eight years now. We were formally located at 7717 Cullen, the building that Screw opened. And we was there since about 1998. It wasn’t my decision [to take over the shop after Screw passed]. It just kind of happened. When Screw passed and was untimely for all of us, you know? There wasn’t no plans, no guidelines, or that Bubb will take over. But I was already doing what I’m doing now back then while Screw was alive. I seen his vision and what he had created, and with me and him probably being the closest two of kinfolk, you know, I just kept it going.”

—Big Bubb, owner of Screwed Up Records and Tapes

Screwed Up Records & Tapes promotional sticker, n.d.

“Here at the home of DJ Screw, The House That Screw Built, we make T-shirts and paraphernalia all in dedication to him. You got a lot of people out there bootlegging and doing other Screw designs and stuff. The family, the foundation, see no profits from that. We do it for Screw, not for you. That’s why we’re here. That’s the reason for the season and all that. All about Screw baby. Still here keeping his name alive, legacy going.”

—Big Bubb, owner of Screwed Up Records and Tapes
Gate from the original Screwed Up Records & Tapes, 1998

“Unfortunately after Screw passed, we had to move away from the original shop, so in that process, we tried to strip everything out the shop that was symbolic. And this gate is the original gate from the old shop on Cullen. We brought it along with us, so anyone who ever bought Screw tapes, they’ll know the meaning of this gate.”

—Big Bubb, owner of Screwed Up Records and Tapes

Facsimile of the Screw Bible, 2020

“This is what we call a Screw Bible because it dissects every chapter that Screw made and has the track listing, the artists, the name of every CD that’s been recorded. It’s very helpful if you don’t know about your Screws. We’re currently up to chapter 343 and steady growing. At the time that Screw passed, he only had probably about 80 titles that we actually sold from Cullen. And after Screw passed, we stayed diligent about it, and we had to catch up to the times by turning these cassettes into CDs. If Screw breathed on a track, we heard it.”

—Big Bubb, owner of Screwed Up Records and Tapes

Original merchandise from Screwed Up Records & Tapes, including pen, magnet, and keychain, n.d.

Courtesy El Franco Lee II
Ariel Santschi
**Let My Hands Do The Talking (scratching),** 2020
Song: Southside Playaz “Swang Down” ©Laftex Records
Filmed: October 29, 2000 at DJ Screw’s studio
Courtesy *Soldiers United for Cash* (documentary) ©REL Entertainment, LLC

Ariel Santschi
**Chopped & Screwed (dj technique),** 2020
Song: DJ DMD ft. Lil’ Keke & Fat Pat “25 Lighters” ©Inner Soul Records
Filmed: April, 1999 at club Fat Tuesdays in Austin, Texas
Courtesy Pitch Control (TV show) ©REL Entertainment, LLC

**Interview with Big Bubb and Will-Lean,** 2020
HD video: color, sound, 13:37 minutes
Courtesy Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas,
Video by Kristin Massa

**Interview with E.S.G. and Rocky Rockett,** 2020
HD video: color, sound, 10:53 minutes
Courtesy Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas,
Video by Kristin Massa

Ben DeSoto
**DJ Screw inside his home,** 1995
Digital photographic print
Courtesy SoSouth Music Distribution, Houston, Texas