VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

THE CULTURE
HIP HOP & CONTEMPORARY ART IN THE 21ST CENTURY

m.A.A.d.

COHEN GALLERY 234
Kahlil Joseph,
born Seattle, WA, 1981

**m.A.A.d.,** 2014
two-channel video (color, sound)
duration: 15 minutes, 26 seconds, looped

The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Gift of the artist 2023.288

**m.A.A.d. Transcript**

Explicit language contained in the lyrics below.

[Heli-copter propeller]

[“m.A.A.D. City” by Kendrick Lamar featuring MC Eiht]

♫ If Pirus and Crips all got along
They’d probably gun me down by the end of this song
Seem like the whole city go against me
Every time I’m in the street I hear

Yawk! Yawk! Yawk! Yawk!

Man down
Where you from, nigga?
Fuck who you know, where you from, my nigga?
Where your grandma stay, huh, my nigga?
This m.A.A.d city I run, my nigga

Brace yourself, I’ll take you on a trip down memory lane
This is not a rap on how I’m slingin’ crack or move cocaine This is cul-de-sac and plenty Cognac and major pain
Not the drill sergeant, but the stress that weighing on your brain It was me, L Boog, and Yan Yan, YG Lucky ride down Rosecrans It got ugly, waving your hand out the window, check yo self Uh, Warriors and Conans
Hope euphoria can slow dance with socie—♪♪

[Silence]

[Car motor]

[“good kid” by Kendrick Lamar]

♪ Ill education, baby
Want to reconnect with your elations?
This is your station, baby

All I see is strobe lights, blindin’ me in my hindsight
Findin’ me by myself, promise me you can help
In all honesty I got time to be copacetic until
You had finally made decision to hold me against my will
It was like a head-on collision that folded me standing still
I can never pick out the difference and grade a cop on the bill
Every time you clock in the morning, I feel you just want to kill
All my innocence while ignorin’ my purpose to persevere
As a better person ♩♩

[Helicopter propellor]

[Door squeaks]

[Lo-fi beats]

[Static and unintelligible chatter]

[Speaker 1] Be true to the gang!

[Speaker 2] Birthday girl!

[Speaker 3] Try to come up? Try to come up?

[Speaker 3] Shit

[Speaker 3] Y’all gotta make—y’all gotta make movies and shit! This is movies!
[Speaker 3] Huh? Hope you want me to make the movie, you got me recording yo’ ass. Do something! Tell a nigga what’s up in Compton.

[Speaker 4] Bam! Bam!

[Speaker 3] Huh? Bam? Bam?

[Speaker 4] Yeah, yeah!

[Speaker 3] Ay ay ay ay ay gotta kid wanna pull that nigga!

[Speaker 5] Don’t make me go get down.

[Speaker 3] Go get the [unintelligible]!

[Speaker 3] Go get the [unintelligible]!

[Speaker 3] Go get the [unintelligible]!

[Speaker 6] It’s a Compton thang! It’s a Compton thang!

[Speaker 4] It’s a gangsta Compton thang!
[Speaker 3] Put that muthafucka up, kid!

[Speaker 7] We don’t wanna kill nobody. We don’t wanna kill nobody.

[Speaker reciting lyrics from “Sherane a.k.a Master Splinter’s Daughter” by Kendrick Lamar]

[Speaker] Okay repeat after me: “Lord God, I come to you a sinner.”

[Group] Lord God I come to you a sinner.

[Speaker] “And I humbly repent for my sins.”

[Group] And I humbly repent for my sins.

[Speaker] “I believe that Jesus is Lord.”

[Group] I believe that Jesus is Lord.

[Speaker] “I believe you raised him from the dead.”

[Group] I believe you raised him from the dead.

[Speaker] “I would ask that Jesus come into my life.”
[Group] I would ask that Jesus come into my life.

[Speaker] “And be my Lord and Savior.”

[Group] And be my Lord and Savior.

[Speaker] “I receive Jesus to take control of my life.”

[Group] I receive Jesus to take control of my life.

[Speaker] “And that I may live by him from this day forward.”

[Group] And that I may live by him from this day forward.

[“good kid” by Kendrick Lamar]

♫ But what am I ‘posed to do when the topic is red or blue
And you understand that I ain’t
But know I’m accustomed to just a couple that look for trouble
And live in the street with rank
No better picture to paint than me walkin’ from Bible study
And called his homies because he had said he noticed my face
From a function that tooken place, they was wonderin’ if I bang
Step on my neck and get blood on your Nike checks
I don’t mind ‘cause one day you’ll respect
The good kid, m.A.A.d. city ♫

[Gunshots]

[Car horns and police sirens]

[Car motor]

[Speaker 1] Get all yo’ good, love? Yeah, we can drop you back off.

[Speaker 2] That nigga straight, man. That nigga ain’t trippin’.

[Speaker 2] It’ll be the same old shit. Imma pop a few shots. They gon’ run away the opposite way. [Unintelligible] He gon’ tear their ass up. Simple as that.

[Speaker 1] I hope that bitch [unintelligible].

[Speaker 1] Wait hold up, I see someone.

[Voices fade]

[Ominous music builds and fades]
Me and my niggas four deep in a white Toyota
A quarter tank of gas, one pistol, and orange soda
Janky stash box when the federales’ll roll up
Basketball shorts with the Gonzales Park odor
We on the mission for bad bitches and trouble
I hope the universe love you today
‘Cause the energy we bringin’ sure to carry away
A flock of positive activists and fill they body with hate

If it’s necessary, bumpin’ Jeezy first album, lookin’ distracted
Speakin’ language only we know, you think it’s an accent
The windows roll down, all I see is a hand pass it
Hotboxin’ like ♪♪♫

[Lyrics fade]

[Laughter builds over beats]

[Unintelligible dialogue]

[Speaker] Oh which way? Which way?

[Speaker] How crazy is that?
[Speaker] That is shenanigans. That nigga is shenanigans.

[Music Fades]

[Group speaking, unintelligible dialogue]

[Together] Last time I checked I was the man in these streets.

[Speaker] Yeah yeah that shit right there. I’m tryna be the nigga in these streets.

[Speaker] There you go. You know that’s how this shit goes.

[Speaker] ‘Aight here’s the plan, luh. We gon’ use the kickback as an alibi. Wait ‘til the sun go down. Roll out.

[Dialogue fades]

[Horses whinny]

[Goats bleat]

[Helicopter propellor grows and fades]

[“Backstreet Lifestyle” by Kendrick Lamar]
All my life I want money and power
Respect my mind or die from lead shower
I pray my dick get big as the Eiffel Tower
So I can fuck the world for seventy-two hours

Goddamn I feel amazing, damn I’m in the matrix
My mind is living on cloud nine and this nine is never on vacation
Start up that Maserati and VROOM VROOM! I’m racing
Poppin’ pills in the lobby and I pray they don’t find her naked
And I pray you niggas is hatin’, shooters go after Judas
Jesus Christ if I live life on my knees, ain’t no need to do this
Park it in front of Lueders, next to that Church’s Chicken♪♪

[Music slows to a stop]

[“Part One: Sing About Me” by Kendrick Lamar]

When the lights shut off and it’s my turn
To settle down, my main concern
Promise that you will sing about me
Promise that you will sing about me
I said when the lights shut off and it’s my turn
To settle down, my main concern
Promise that you will sing about me
Promise that you will sing about me

I woke up this morning and figured I’d call you
In case I’m not here tomorrow
I’m hopin’ that I can borrow
A peace of mind, I’m behind on what’s really important
My mind is really distorted
I find nothing but trouble in my life
I’m fortunate you believe in a dream
This orphanage we call a ghetto is quite a routine
And last night was just another distraction ♪

[Music stops]

[Speaker] This my son right here, y’all. See, most fathers would say “this lil’ bonnie on the flip!” Nah, this ain’t lil’ bonnie on the flip. This is lil’ Kevin Dewane White, know what I’m sayin’?

[“Sing About Me, I’m Dying of Thirst” by Kendrick Lamar]

♪ You ran outside when you heard my brother cry for help
Held him like a newborn baby and made him feel
Like everything was alright and a fight he tried to put up
But the type of bullet that stuck had went against his will
As blood spilled on your hands, my plans rather vindictive
Everybody’s a victim in my eyes
When I ride, it’s a murderous rhythm and outside became pitch black
A demon glued to my back whispering, “Get ‘em”
I got ‘em, and I ain’t give a fuck
That same mentality that told my brother not to duck
In actuality, it’s a trip how we trip off of colors
I wonder if I’ll ever discover a passion like you and recover
The life that I knew as a young’n in pajamas and dun-ta-duns
When thunder comes it rains cats and dogs
Dumb niggas like me never prosper
Prognosis of a problem child, I’m proud and well devoted
This Piru shit been in me forever
So forever I’mma push it, wherever, whenever
And I love you ‘cause you love my brother like you did
Just promise me you’ll tell this story when you make it big
And if I die before your album drop, I hope♪♪

[Gunshots, music stops]

[Unintelligible chatter begins and fades]

[“m.A.A.D. City” by Kendrick Lamar]

♪ That was back when I was nine
Joey packed the nine
Pakistan on every porch is fine
We adapt to crime ♬

[Music stops]

[Police sirens]

[Speaker] Ah huh, got them niggas! Got you good. Got you good.

[Gunshots]

[Speaker] Ay these niggas killed m a—

[Silence]

[“Sing About Me, I’m Dying of Thirst” by Kendrick Lamar]

♩ Promise that you will sing about me
Promise that you will sing about me
I said when the lights shut off and it’s my turn
To settle down, my main concern
Promise that you will sing about me
Promise that you will sing about me

You wrote a song about my sister on your tape
And called it Section.80, the message resembled “Brenda’s Got a Baby”
What’s crazy was, I was hearing about it
But doubted your ignorance how could you ever just put her on blast and shit
Judging her past and shit, well, it’s completely my future
Her nigga behind me right now asking for ass and shit
And I’mma need that forty dollars even if I gotta
Fuck, suck and swallow in the parking lot
Gonzales Park, I’m followed by a married man, a father of three
My titties bounce on the cadence of his tinkling keys
Matter of fact, he my favorite ‘cause he tip me with E’s
He got a cousin named David and I seen him last week
This is the life of another girl damaged by the system
These foster homes, I run away and never do miss ‘em
See, my hormones just run away and if I can get ‘em back
To where they used to be then I’ll probably be in the denim
Of a family gene that show women how to be woman
Or better yet, a leader, you need her to learn somethin’
Then you probably need to beat her, that’s how I was taught
Three niggas in one room, first time I was tossed
And I’m exhausted, but fuck that “Sorry for your loss” shit
My sister died in vain, but what point are you trying to gain
If you can’t fit the pumps I walk in? I’ll wait
Your rebuttal a little too late
And if you have a album date, just make sure I’m not in the song

[Music continues unintelligibly underwater]

[Music returns]

♪ I’ll probably live longer than you and never fade away
I’ll never fade away, I’ll never fade away, I know my fate
And I’m on the grind for this cake, I’mma get it or die trying
I’m eyeing every male gender with intentions of buying
You lying to these motherfuckers, talking about you can help ‘em
With my story, you can help me if you sell this pussy for me, nigga
Don’t ignore me, nigga, fuck your glory, nigga...

When the lights shut off
And it’s my turn to settle down
My main concern
Promise that you will sing about me
Promise that you will sing about me
I said when the lights shut off
And it’s my turn to settle down
My main concern
Promise that you will sing about me
Promise that you will sing about me♪♪