

Jacob Kassay

OTNY



BUF, 2016

**Albright-Knox Art Gallery
February 18–June 18, 2017**

For his first solo museum exhibition in the United States, Jacob Kassay (American, born 1984) presents new sculptures dispersed through the museum's galleries and transitional spaces that draw attention to the way we rationalize, navigate, and narrate our own movement through space. In this most recent body of work, Kassay is particularly interested in the rote habits we build about our domestic interiors: those often ignored, but powerful, implicit memories that unconsciously replace eyesight. Spatial memory, created through blunt repetition, is how we find a water glass without glancing at the cupboard, pad downstairs without looking up from the phone, or, bleary eyed, navigate from bed to bathroom in the black of night for the hundredth time.

The three groups of work in Kassay's exhibition approach embodied memories in different ways. Two are adjacent to each other and operate in tandem. First, Kassay has replaced the rubber grip on the handrail for the stairs that connect the Albright-Knox's 1962 Building and its 1905 Building exhibition galleries with a nearly identical copy. The key difference is that the underside of Kassay's new handrail has been impressed with the braille letter *H* repeated thousands of times; participants in the museum's accessibility programs helped the artist workshop his plans. The sound we make when pronouncing a soft *H* is something almost indistinguishable from breathing out or from a sigh: "hhhhhhhhh." Our mouth does not even shape the letter. Kassay has described this work as a kind of concrete poetry that transforms a linguistic form into a material abstraction. For those able to read the braille, each decisive, rhythmic step up or down a stair is paradoxically contrasted with the patently indecisive sound of "hhh," an

expression of exhaustion. Kassay's simple *H* thus repeated becomes something strange, even unrecognizable, just as our brains stop recognizing as "real" any word read or repeated over and over again. This phenomenon, sometimes referred to as "jamais vu" (the opposite of *déjà vu*), is also evoked in the title of Kassay's exhibition. *OTNY* refers to four photographs by artist Tony Conrad, *Man Misspelling His Own Name, 1977*. In them, Conrad used a photo booth and American Sign Language to represent himself misspelling or miming misunderstanding of the one name he had repeated more often than any other.

At the top of this staircase sits Kassay's large-scale sculpture *BUF*, a proportional representation of an actual staircase. Rather than featuring stairs to climb, however, it models the exterior volume of a staircase in a home. Disengaged from its role enabling movement through space and rendered with a pristine, white surface in a geometric form that rhymes with Minimalist sculpture, this image of an architectural fragment becomes an oddly familiar dead end and an un-home-like troubling of the inherently functional character of domestic space. What Kassay has created is a circuit between a subtly changed, legible experience of climbing the Albright-Knox's staircase and a resolutely in-between sculpture of a space that refuses to "go" anywhere.

In another gallery, Kassay presents the final component of his exhibition: eight aluminum volumes absolutely covered with collections of both unopened and half-used commercial goods. Each sculpture mirrors a storage shelf for assorted home stuffs—the objects stowed beneath counters and inside the cabinets we use daily. Kassay left the original graphic labels on the miscellaneous items, and these texts help picture shelves that were used to store both frequently used items (a familiar label for "B&G Kosher Dill Gherkins") as well as forgotten, even dusty goods waiting to be discarded (a stockpile of "Labatt Blue Light Lime," perhaps). Each sculpture is a perfect frozen image of one shelf in a pantry, linen closet, or garage in a real home, with each item's original location precisely mapped and reproduced on the clean, essentialized



Detail from *Jerk*, 2017

volumes Kassay designed as supports. Stripped of all exterior cabinetry, they display the innards of domestic life that would never be fully visible otherwise. Hauntingly, these common objects float above the floor within their sculptural substructures, their strange bedfellows illustrating the absolute absurdity of our illusion of domestic order and capturing the surreality of objects that familiarity had rendered practically invisible.

Collectively titled *Jerks*, these accumulations refer to a hypnic or hypnagogic “jerk,” the neurological term for a common but not fully understood shock or start that sometimes wrenches us awake when we are just on the brink of falling completely asleep. While Kassay’s use of this term links the sculptures with a kind of illumination, their “coming to” is twinned with the nearly irresistible pull of exhaustion and the unconscious.

By choosing to present his meditation on our navigation of domestic life within the museum’s walls, Kassay brings this kind of haptic memory into focus. His works remind us of the extent to which we deploy, unaware, a kind of self-defense that allows us to rationalize, normalize, and internalize even exceptionally strange developments in order to continue operating in the world. This is a useful skill, but also one that risks making us blind.

About the Artist

Jacob Kassay was born in 1984 in Lewiston, New York. Past solo presentations have been held at The Kitchen, New York; The Power Station, Dallas; and Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia. He has been included in group exhibitions at venues including MoMA PS1, New York; Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble; FRAC Poitou-Charentes, Angoulême; and Kunsthalle Andratx, Mallorca. In 2010, Kassay's work was part of the 8th Gwangju Biennale and the White Columns Annual. The artist lives and works in Los Angeles.

Works in the Exhibition

BUF, 2016

Aluminum and urethane
83⁷/₈ x 38³/₄ x 63¹/₂ inches (213 x
98.4 x 161.3 cm)

H, 2017

Nylon and stainless steel
3 inches in diameter x 569³/₄
inches long (7.6 x 1,447.2 cm)

Jerk, 2017

Aluminum
B&G Kosher Dill Gherkins
Bellissimo Sun Dried Tomatoes
with Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Bounty Paper Towels
Campbell's Tomato Soup
Casa Mamita Ancient Grains
and Habanero Salsa
Casa Mamita Southwestern
Bean Salad
Cento White Clam Sauce with
Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Cooling rack
Cugino's Dipz! Mix
Dakota's Pride Pinto Beans
Deep-dish pizza pan (13¹/₂ inches)
Disposable party platter

EKCO baking sheet
Fit & Active Sugar Free Apricot
Preserves
French's Classic Yellow Mustard
Full Circle Organic Low Sodium
Chicken Broth
Good Cook cake pan (13 x 9
inches)
Guercio Brand of Quality Whole
Black Pepper
H. K. Anderson Rod Pretzels
Hunt's Whole Peeled Plum
Tomatoes
Ice bucket
Kraft Lite Raspberry Vinaigrette
Dressing
Kraft Miracle Whip Light
Dressing
Lee Kum Kee Hoisin Sauce
Lipton Onion Recipe Soup &
Dip Mix
Lipton Soup Secrets Extra
Noodle Soup Mix with Real
Chicken Broth
Marco Polo All Natural Caponata
Marinella Premium Gold Italian
Grilled Eggplants in Olive Oil
Muffin pan

Napkin holder
Napkins
Orrington Farms Beef Flavored
Soup Base and Food
Seasoning
Orrington Farms Chicken
Flavored Soup Base and Food
Seasoning
Pillsbury Sugar Free Brownie Mix
Pillsbury Sugar Free Quick
Bread & Muffin Mix
Pizza pans
Priano Alla Genovese Pesto
Sauce
Progresso Vegetable Classics
Minestrone Soup
Prunes
Royal Ann Imported Capote
Capers
Seville Classics Mesh Organizer
Rack
Spaetzle ladles
T.A.C.U. Co. baking sheet (12 x
15½ inches)
Thai Kitchen Peanut Satay Sauce
Trader Joe's Thai Red Curry
Sauce
Trader Joe's Thai Yellow Curry
Sauce
Tuong Ot Toi Viet-Nam Chili
Garlic Sauce
Viva Vantage Paper Towels
Weber's Dill Pickle Relish
Wegmans Butter Beans
Wegmans Cannellini Beans
Wegmans Organic Jalapeño
Hot Sauce
Wegmans Pitted Prunes
Wegmans Solid White Albacore
Tuna in Water
Wegmans Tomato Sauce
Wegmans Whole Mushrooms
Williams Sonoma Turkey Gravy
Base Classic Recipe
Wilson baking sheet
Wilson pizza pan
35⅝ x 51⅛ x 46 inches (90.5 x
129.9 x 116.8 cm)
Jerk, 2017
Aluminum
Anna Spaghetti
Barilla Whole Grain Thin
Spaghetti
Canister
Coca-Cola
Crisco Pure Canola Oil
D'Avolio All Natural Basil-
Infused Premium EVOO
DFL water bottle
Don Bruno Sherry Vinegar
Duraflame Décor Matches
Extra Fancy Cultivated Wild Rice
Fancy Feast Gravy Lovers
Fancy Feast Seafood Feast in
Gravy
Fancy Feast Tuna Feast in Gravy
Friskies Pull 'n Play Cat Treats
Garlic
Golden Boy Brand Fish Sauce

| | |
|---|---|
| Golden Buffalo 100% Pure Sesame Oil | <i>Jerk</i> , 2017 |
| Guinness Draught | Aluminum |
| Guinness Nitro IPA | Amazing Goop All-Purpose Adhesive & Sealant |
| Hoddle | Aqua Mix Grout Deep Clean |
| HSBC water bottle | Blitz Silver Care |
| Italpasta Fettuccine | Brasso Metal Polish |
| Kikkoman Seasoned Rice Vinegar | Canned air |
| Labatt Blue Light | Clorox Clean-Up Cleaner + Bleach |
| Labatt Blue Light Lime | CVS Health Hydrogen Peroxide |
| Long grain rice | Duck Adhesive Remover |
| Maitre Jacques Champagne | Dutch Glow Amish Wood Milk |
| French Wine Vinegar | Easy-Off Oven Cleaner |
| Maxwell House The Original Roast Medium Ground Coffee | Elmer's Glue-All Multi-Purpose Glue |
| Nittnaus TBA Premium Wine | Fuller Brush Co. Scented Moth Block |
| Not Your Father's Root Beer | Fuller Brush Co. Scented Moth Block |
| Onions | Fuller Brush Co. Scented Moth Block |
| Schlitz mug | Fuller Brush Co. Scented Moth Block |
| Storage bins | Fuller Brush Co. Scented Moth Block |
| Temptations Mix Up cat treats | Fuller Brush Co. Scented Moth Block |
| Trader Joe's Simple Syrup | Fuller Brush Co. Scented Moth Block |
| Trudeau travel mug | Fuller Brush Co. Scented Moth Block |
| Uncle Ben's Converted Long Grain Rice | Fuller Brush Co. Tile Cleaner |
| Various beer koozies | Fuller Brush Upholstery Cleaner |
| Viet Huong Two Crabs Brand Fish Sauce | Goof Off |
| Wegmans Seasoned Twice-Baked Croutons | La Florentina Lemon bath soap |
| Wine rack | LePage Household Multi-Purpose Adhesive |
| World Classics 100% Pure Balsamic Vinegar di Modena | Lily of the Valley Bath Soap |
| 51 x 35 x 42 inches (129.5 x 88.9 x 106.7 cm) | Lime-A-Way |
| | Liquid agitator |
| | Lysol All Purpose Cleaner |
| | Mr. Clean Multi-Purpose Cleaner |

Murphy Pure Vegetable Oil
Soap Original Wood Cleaner
PC-7 Epoxy Paste
Pledge Extra Moisturizing
Furniture Spray
Quick Grip All-Purpose
Permanent Adhesive
Stickley Furniture Dressing
Twinkle Copper Cleaner
Walgreens Isopropyl Alcohol
Weiman Stainless Steel Cleaner
& Polish
Windex Crystal Rain glass cleaner
Windex Multi-Surface Vinegar
cleaner
37 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 38 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (95.6 x
29.2 x 98.4 cm)

Jerk, 2017

Aluminum
Advil Liqui-Gels
Arrojo Texture Paste
Bumble and bumble Bb. Texture
Hair(un)dressing Crème
Clinique Clarifying Lotion
CVS Extra Strength Gas Relief
CVS Health Lubricant Eye Drops
CVS Pharmacy SPF 30 Sunblock
Equate 100% Pure Petroleum
Jelly
John Frieda Full Repair
Protecting Root Lift Foam
Johnson's Baby Powder
Kiehl's Vital Sun Protection SPF
30 Sunscreen

Lush mask sample
Organix Nourishing Coconut
Milk Conditioner
Phyto Phytoplage Protective
Sun Veil
Q-tips, box
Sea Breeze Antiseptic for Skin
and Scalp
Secret Clinical Strength Invisible
Solid Ooh-la-la Lavender
Sundown Naturals High Potency
Vitamin D3
The Body Shop Body Polisher
The Body Shop exfoliating cloth
The Body Shop Peppermint
Cooling Foot Spray
Vaseline Intensive Care Aloe
Soothe lotion
Woven basket, hair bands,
brushes, shower cap, comb,
peppermint clips, bobby pins,
styling clips
Woven basket, hotel soaps,
shave cream sample
37 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (94.6 x
29.2 x 92.1 cm)

Jerk, 2017
Aluminum
Bayer Low Dose Safety Coated
Aspirin
Clinique Happy perfume
CVS Extra Strength Gas Relief
Degree Men Deodorant
Dove Dry Spray Antiperspirant

Elizabeth Arden perfume
Extra Strength Roloids Antacid
Listerine Total Care Zero
Anticavity Mouthwash
Listerine Total Care Zero
Anticavity Mouthwash Fresh
Mint
Old Spice Classic Deodorant
Stick
Secret Clinical Strength
Antiperspirant/Deodorant
The Body Shop Refreshing Foot
Spray
The Body Shop tin with nail
scissors, cuticle clipper, nail
files, toe divider, box with
dental floss, Phillips electric
toothbrush charger, Efferdent
denture cleanser tablets,
Orajel maximum strength pain
reliever, Oral B toothbrushes,
Glide Pro-Health dental floss,
Crest complete toothpaste,
flossers, Reach flosser, Butler
Flossmate, Oral B Complete
Satin Floss, Sensodyne
Toothpaste Fresh Impact, box
with Glide Pro-Health flosses,
Colgate Total Dental Floss,
Greater Buffalo Area Honda
Dealers Broad Spectrum SPF
30, box with individual CVS
flossers, Oral B floss handle,
Reach floss handle, Tupperware
dose cup with replacement

floss cartridges, replacement
floss cartridges, flosser head,
box with GUM flossers, Colgate
Total dental floss, Crest Glide
Deep Clean Floss, Glide Floss,
Fixodent Control Denture
Adhesive Cream, Fixodent
Complete Denture Adhesive
Cream, Abreva Docosanol 10%
Cream, Dentek dental mirror
Tums Freshers Antacid
Ultra Strength Roloids Antacid
Wire shelf rack with Probiotic
CVS prescription bottle,
CVS Pharmacy Vitamin D3
prescription bottle, CVS pill
organizer, Dr. Scholl's callus
remover, emery board with
wooden handle, Home Depot
sandpaper with wooden
handle
Wire shelf rack with Solo
bathroom cups, Medicool's
PediNova electric manicure
pedicure set with case,
container with Solo bathroom
cups, Canyon Rose terry cloth
spa headbands, container with
Up&Up Organic Cotton Balls
Woven basket with Kiehl's
Crème de Corps Soy Milk &
Honey Whipped Body Butter,
Lather Lavender Lime
Moisturizer, Temple Spa Peace
Be Still Calming Face & Body

Lotion, NetJets Hands Free
Sunscreen SPF 30, Rite Aid
Antifungal Clotrimazole
Cream, Neosporin First Aid
Antibiotic Ointment, Wegmans
Extra Strength Hydrocortisone
Cream, Neutrogena Clear Pore
Treatment Nighttime Pore
Clarifying Gel, Duane Reade
Maximum Strength Triple
Antibiotic Ointment Plus,
Maximum Strength Cortizone-
10 Anti-Itch Crème, Arthritis
Hot Pain Relief Crème,
Neosporin + Pain Relief First
Aid Antibiotic/Pain Relieving
Ointment, Preparation H Anti-
Itch Cream, CVS Pharmacy
Maximum Strength
Hydrocortisone Plus Anti-Itch
Cream, Carac Fluorouracil
Cream, Water-Jel First Aid
Burn Cream, spray cap
Woven basket with True Blue
Spa Footloose & Fancy Fizz
Bubbly Foot Bath, PedEgg
Professional foot file, True Blue
Spa Glycolic Acid Cracked
Heel Treatment, Iowa Nature
Foot Balm, wooden foot
massager, Yogatoes toe divider
37¾ x 12¼ x 38¾ inches (95.9 x
31.1 x 98.4 cm)

Jerk, 2017
Aluminum
Blaster Penetrating Catalyst
Blubber
Castle 5 Heavy Duty Silicone
Hinge Lubricant
Copper siding sample
Don Pepino Spaghetti Sauce
can, toothbrush, pencils, pen,
spoon, coat hanger, car mat
hardware, screws, bolt
Dry cleaning bag, work rags
Finishing nails, box
Ford Tar and Road Oil Remover
Gunk Swab Concrete Floor
Cleaner
Gunk White Lithium Grease
Hand planer
Klean Strip Boiled Linseed Oil
Murphy's Pure Vegetable Oil
Soap tin, drill bits
Off! Skintastic Insect Repellant
Paintbrush
Pebble
Pennzoil Z-4 Multi-Purpose
Lubricant
Pressure gauges
Prince Albert Crimp Cut Long
Burning Pipe and Cigarette
Tobacco tin
Protexall Screen Pruf
Raid House & Garden Bug Killer
Rain-X windshield cleaner
Republic matchbook
Schwinn tire quick release

Screwdriver/socket set
Scrubbing Bubbles sponge
Socket set
Twine
Vaseline
Well-Worth Foaming Surface
Cleaner
Zippo lighter
43 x 10³/₄ x 37⁵/₈ inches (109.2 x
27.3 x 95.6 cm)

Jerk, 2017

Aluminum
Flor De A. Allones Fabrica de
Tabacos Especiales No. 5 box
Gas can cap and nozzle
Grip Rite Panel Board Nails
Jar with finishing nails
Jar with screws

Jar with wire nails
Jif Peanut Butter jar with screws
Maxwell House Coffee tin with
various nails, screws, conduit
hardware

Numberall Rotary Steel Hand
Stamp

Painter's tape

Peanut butter jar with finishing
nails

Peanut butter jar with flooring
nails

Peter Pan Creamy Peanut Butter
jar with 10d finishing nails

Peter Pan Creamy Peanut Butter
jar with 8d finishing nails

Peter Pan Creamy Peanut Butter
jar with magnets

Peter Pan Creamy Peanut Butter
jar with nails

Roll of sandpaper

Rope

Scott's tissue box with TJ Maxx
plastic bag, Target plastic
bags, Budwey's plastic bags,
ECM plastic bag, ShurFine
plastic bags

Squeegee

The Project Center Fine Thread
Drywall Screws

Threaded rod, nuts, washers

Wylar's Bouillon jar with screws
42⁵/₈ x 11¹/₈ x 33¹/₂ inches (108.3 x
28.3 x 85.1 cm)

Jerk, 2017

Aluminum

Armor All Car Wash Wipes

Armor All Original Shine Finish
Protectant

Audio wire

Birchwood Casey Heavy Duty
Bore Solvent

Echo Professional Grade
Premium Bar & Chain Oil

Emery board

Fiendoil Sportsman's Oil

Gunk Heavy Duty Engine
Degreaser

John Bull Premium Heavy
Weight Chamois

Never-Seez Anti-Seize and
Lubricating Compound
Oil in bag
Oil in bottle
Outers Gun Oil
Rag
Republic matchbook
Rough sponge
Rust-Oleum Automotive Touch-
Up Paint
Selected Quality Tomatoes box
with sponge, shammy, Quickie
Auto Pro Polishing Cloth, rag,
copper tubes, Memorex CD
Sponge
Stake
String
Tent stake
Toothbrushes
Turtle Wax Minute De-Icer
Victor Lock De-Icer
WD-40
Winchester New Gun Oil
41 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 37 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (106.4 x
28.9 x 95.9 cm)

All works are courtesy of the
artist and 303 Gallery, New York.

Jacob Kassay: OTNY

Willa Nasatir

Eric Mack: Vogue Fabrics

**Tamar Guimarães and Kasper Akhøj:
*Studies for A Minor History of Trembling Matter***

February 18–June 18, 2017

These exhibitions are organized by Senior Curator Cathleen Chaffee.

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Image credits

Kassay: © Jacob Kassay, courtesy 303 Gallery, New York.



**Albright-Knox
Art Gallery**

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