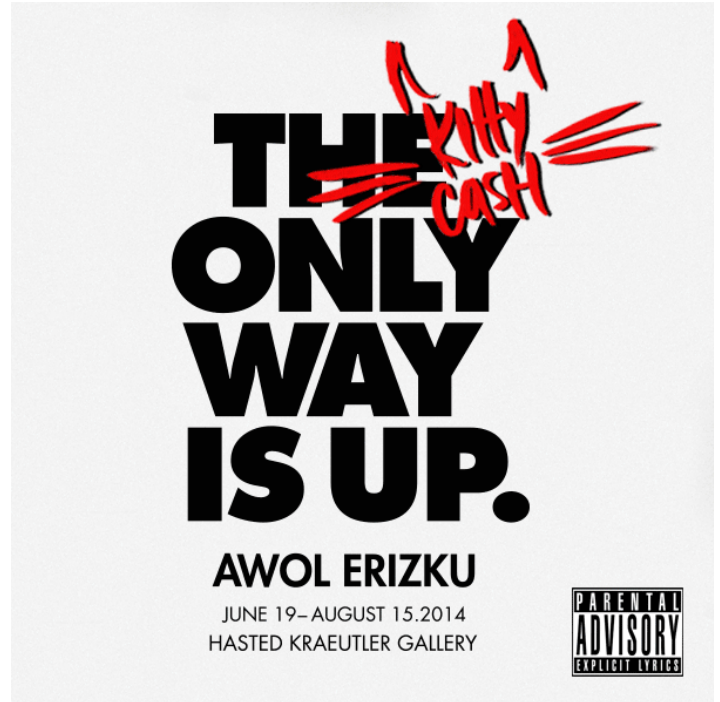




VICE PREMIERE

AWOL ERIZKU AND KITTY CASH'S 'THE ONLY WAY IS UP' MIXTAPE

By VICE Staff | Jun 12 2014



Art-show openings in New York are pretty wack affairs, filled with self-important dicks who like to talk really close to your face about “reappropriation” with rank coffee and cigarette breath. If we show up at all, it’s usually just for the free booze. However, there are a handful of artists who can attract a cool crowd of good-looking people with breath that smells like their tongue is made of mint leaves and their saliva come from the artesian aquifer in Viti Levu, Fiji. Artist Awol Erizku is among this rare breed.

You know our homie Awol—he shot two of the dopest shoots to appear in our past two fashion issues. The 26-year-old New York-based artist, who just wrapped up a master’s degree from Yale’s prestigious MFA program and has been exhibited alongside artists like Roe Ethridge, Richard Prince, and Roy Lichtenstein, is gearing up for a new show—***The Only Way Is Up***—at the Hasted Kraeutler gallery next Thursday. According to Hasted Kraeutler’s website, the show takes its title from a Quincy Jones record and consists of “re-contextualized and re-purposed ready-made objects.” To get you all primed and ready for the show, which aims to “explore the tension between the canonized world of art history and the vibrant world of the artist’s quotidian existence,” Awol has dropped a *fucking mixtape*. For the tape, Awol teamed up with New York DJ Kitty Ca\$h, who’s worked with progressive R&B and hip-hop artists like Kelela and MeLo-X. Kitty helped Awol pick the songs and she mixed and blended the tracks together.

Why drop a mixtape? The official answer from Awol’s camp is that it “contains lyrical as well as ideological references that provide context and inspired titles for some of the works in the show.” But we think it’s just because Awol is one talented-ass dude, who’s creativity extends far beyond the bounds of the cold, white walls of galleries.

Among familiar tracks by hip-hop artists like Future and A\$AP Ferg, the mixtape features Richard Prince critiquing Awol’s art and excerpts from Kerry James Marshall’s “The Importance of Being Figurative” lecture at the National Art Gallery.

We can’t guarantee there won’t be any dookie-breathed art snobs at Awol’s show, because they kind of come with the territory of being a burgeoning art phenom. But dropping this mixtape is a clear indication that he’s carving out a new lane in the art world for folks like us to follow. We’ll definitely be at Hasted Kraeutler on Thursday, turning up, even if we have to occasionally cover our noses.

The Only Way Is Up, June 19th, 6-8 PM, Hasted Kraeutler, 537 W 24th St. New York, NY