

TAHIR CARL KARMALI
/ WORKS FROM 2014 - 2015



Artist and photographer born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya based in Brooklyn, NY. Originally began with ink and acrylic painting. My background in painting and studio practice guided my photography process. I am keenly interested in socioeconomics and the movement of people - in my work I often take portraits of groups of people with objects I feel best describe their disposition.

Selected Exhibitions (2014 - 2015):

- 2015 – “Jua Kali” as part of “Making Africa” at Guggenheim, Bilbao, Spain
- 2015 – “Jua Kali” in OBSCURA Festival, George Town, Malaysia
- 2015 – “Jua Kali” in Rencontres Internationales de la Photo de Fès, Fès, Morocco
- 2015 – “Jua Kali” in LagosPhoto Festival, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2015 – “Jua Kali” in IFCV Festival International de Fotografia, Mindelo, Cape Verde
- 2015 – “Jua Kali” as part of “Image Afrique ’15” in ArtBasel, Theaterplatz, Basel
- 2015 – “Jua Kali” in Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie, Ghar el Melh, Tunisia
- 2015 – “Jua Kali” as part of “Edition POPCAP” at Artificial Image, Berlin (Buy Prints)
- 2015 – “Jua Kali” as part of “Making Africa” at Vitra Design Museum, Weil Am Rhein, Germany
- 2014 – “Untitled” – Art Cabinet, Nairobi, Kenya
- 2014 – “Jua Kali” – Kuona Trust Arts Centre, Nairobi, Kenya
- 2014 – Group exhibition at International School of Kenya
- 2014 – “Value” – Kuona Trust Arts Centre, Nairobi, Kenya

Awards:

- 2015 - POPCAP African Contemporary Photography Awards
- 2014 - Kuona Trust Grant - Value
- 2014 - Kuona Trust Grant - Jua Kali

JUA KALI (2014)

Stemming from the informality of curating one's life experiences to generate a perceived self-image. Inspired by the informal sector that breathes character into Nairobi's economy. The Jua Kali sector is built from the opportunistic personality and perseverance of the Jua Kali worker who often use locally available recycled or found objects to develop their creations. I use this element of Nairobi to describe one's perceived self-image created from the idea of the Jua Kali philosophy.

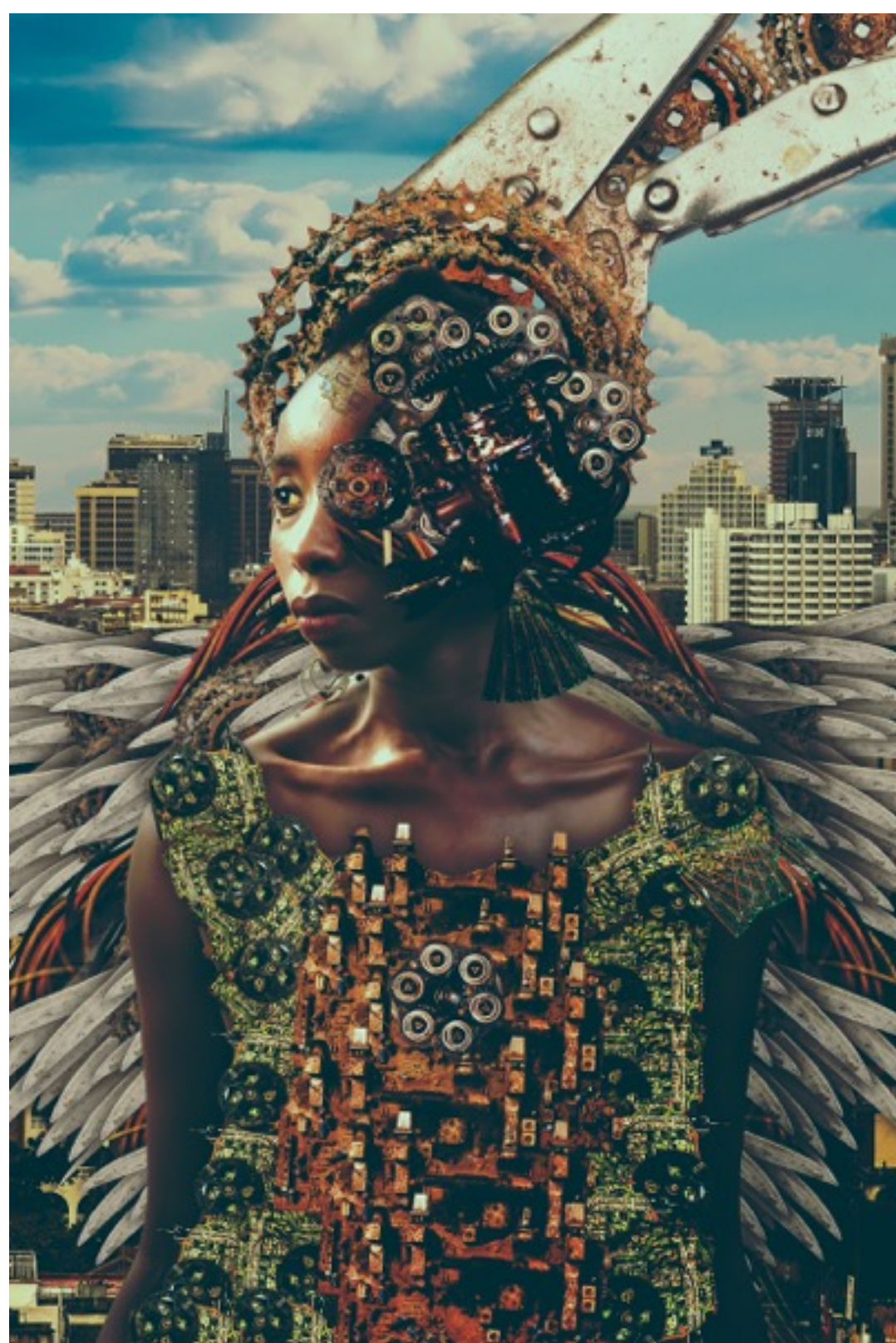
Each Portrait describes a personality that has created a surreal self-image to fit in Nairobi's Jua Kali world. The images are created to look as if one adorned themselves with found objects, which somehow work together to make them superhuman.

JUA KALI is Swahili for "Fierce Sun" – referring to the informal labourers that worked under the hot sun. Now it is a term used for people that work in any informal way and used to describe work that is substandard. I want to change this perception as in reality it is the Jua Kali sector that fuels the city of Nairobi.

Series of 14 images One Metal installation











DISPLACED (2015)

Displacement is a central theme of contemporary life as an expatriate. But what does displacement look like? In this series of formal portraits of people who have moved away from their home, the plastic drop cloths reference seamless backgrounds associated with studio portraiture while simultaneously playing with the notion of the environmental portrait.

Translucent but not clear, the sheet allows the background to be visible but denies the viewer the ability to read specific details of the objects and elements surrounding the subjects. While displacing the subject from their surrounding.

Series of 20 Images











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