

Jon McCurley's site-specific exhibition *Skull Island* is an investigation of diaspora, identity, and white supremacist culture. The title of the exhibition is the place name of an undiscovered island that first appeared in the 1933 film *King Kong* and later re-appeared as the title of the 2017 reboot of the franchise, *Kong: Skull Island*. On a recent trip to visit family in Vietnam, McCurley discovered that *Kong: Skull Island* was filmed near the small northern city where his mother is from, Ninh Bình in Ninh Bình province. Ostensibly, King Kong lived in a jungle outside of Ninh Bình where McCurley's family actually originated. This discovery influenced a body of personal and historical research on western representations of imperialism in North America, Asia, and further Afield.

*Skull Island* references earlier works by McCurley that were produced as part of art duo Life of a Craphead (2006 – 2020). These works considered entertainment as it relates to more personal narratives of trauma. Through his own identity as a mixed-race first-generation Canadian settler, McCurley confronts networks of white supremacy that reverberate as western fantasies of world history and social existence. *Skull Island* connects personal experience and family narratives with a range of cultural forms that reify a pervasive aesthetic of repetitive extraction and propaganda including tourism, adventure sports, blockbuster films, games, and multinational confectionery, a.k.a. snacks.

The images collaged in *Skull Island* are rife with citations drawn from the artist's life — from King Kong to Cadbury, *Tomb Raider* to Golden Hands Bridge, Lonely Planet to Group of Seven, Epcot Centre to the hospital where McCurley was born. Through an accompanying bibliography, each citation invites viewers to participate in an action of reciprocal and performative undoing.

Curated by Jenn Jackson.

Jon McCurley (b.1982, Toronto / Tkaronto) works in performance, video, and sculpture. He was half of the art group Life of a Craphead (2006 - 2020), and was co-founder of the performance venue Double Double Land (2008-2017). In 2018 Life of a Craphead was nominated for the Sobey Art Award. He was recently part of the 2021 Mediacity Biennale, Seoul, South Korea, and he has upcoming work at the Commonwealth Games, Birmingham UK in 2022. Jon is of Vietnamese and Irish descent.