

# ENTRANCE

## PRACTICE IN PUBLIC

JIM JOE

September 4 – October 6, 2024  
Tuesday – Saturday  
11 – 6 PM

48 Ludlow St. NY, NY 10002

Additional works on view at:

Rose Reading Room  
New York Public Library  
476 5th Ave. NY, NY 10018

### INQUIRIES

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(646) 838-5188

JIM JOE is a living artist working in New York City whose practice encompasses calligraphy, poetry, image-making, public art, collaborative design, exhibitions, and performance.

Entrance is pleased to present PRACTICE IN PUBLIC, a solo presentation of new works by JIM JOE opening September 4, 2024. This exhibition draws inspiration from The New York Public Library, where JIM JOE served as the 2023 Picture Collection Artist Fellow. Focusing on the two branches located on Fifth Avenue between 40th and 42nd Streets, JIM JOE treats the public library as both a studio and collaborator, drawing from its rich resources and environment. The exhibition features new works produced entirely within these historic buildings, including drawings, prints, rubbings, and sculptures created between 2023 and 2024.

EVERY BOOK I REQUESTED IN ROOM 300 AT THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY IN THE YEAR 2023 and EVERY BOOK I REQUESTED IN ROOM 300 AT THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY IN THE YEAR 2024 contains the artist's personal research requests over the past two years. The original top sheets of these requests have been preserved by the library, while the artist has retained the carbon copies. The framed works on view at Entrance comprise of all the carbon copies, while a selection of the original drawings will be exhibited in the Rose Reading Room of the New York Public Library. A book compiling all the drawings, EVERY BOOK I REQUESTED IN ROOM 300 AT THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY FROM JANUARY 2023 UNTIL SEPTEMBER 2024, will be available for purchase at Entrance.

*I meet JIM at the Bryant Park library after work one day. I haven't seen him for a while and he's asked me to write the press release for his upcoming show. I've never written one before and I suggest it might be interesting if I wrote it without ever looking at the artwork. He agrees, shows me around the library, and takes me to the Picture Collection, which is the nucleus of this whole thing.*

*I've never been there before—it's a small room with a few rows of shelves stuffed with folders all of which have three to five letter uppercase headings; ARTIS, BURG, LOO, HARL, WRI. Nothing in this room is precious in the sense that the images need to be handled in a certain way, unlike most other things in the building. It is not obligatory to use the collection guide either; you are welcome to pull out a random folder and get to looking. It isn't uncommon for pictures to appear in the wrong folder, and they are often*



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double-sided, inscribing the pictures with a duality of belonging and not-belonging in the categorical world of their folders. JIM explains to me the constraints of his project: he draws using pictures from this collection as a point of departure, and the only thing he brings with him into the library to use is a pencil, any other material is sourced from inside the library itself.

JIM takes me to a different room he's been working out of and tells me about another drawing project involving call slips, in which he'd look up the call number for a book on the library's digital catalogue, and draw a picture of the book's cover based off of a small jpeg that appears next to the call number online. The call slips, which the library stopped printing, are made of carbonless copy paper, so he'd keep the copy and give the original drawing/call slip to the librarian. Apparently, one of them caught on to this and started keeping them in JIM's artist file at the library.

The library closes and we head out, and he finally tells me the name of the show: PRACTICE IN PUBLIC. It's an uncharacteristically cool evening in early August, so we decide to walk all the way downtown. He starts telling me something else about the man this branch is named after, but I'm not listening anymore because I am trying to recall a vague Jamesian notion of shared consciousness that all of this reminds me of, but I can't. Later on I realise I have confused James with Freud, and that the Freudian thing isn't what I was thinking of either. I was misremembering an idea that didn't exist, or rather, one that does exist, just as a result of misaligned fragments in my mind, instead of something someone else wrote that I can cite as truth. This idea isn't new-it's subjunctive-it's just been rearranged and skewed, and became something else that it could have been, but wasn't before.

JIM and I both like words a lot. We like when they are misused and take on other meaning, when they are utterly literal, when they sound like things they don't mean, and when they make no sense at all in a way that makes so much sense, which is probably why we like a lot of the same stand-up comedians. What I think we like about this is the way alternate meaning isn't necessarily engendered by new thoughts, or by introducing new things, but rather by the process of readjustment, misalignment and obfuscation. I write and think about the subjunctive mood quite often, not only because it is a generative mode that does not necessarily require input, but because it can be humorous and transport us to strange places. This is also something I've always liked about JIM's work-the distinct way it makes me smile, and the distinct way it makes me laugh. I always thoroughly enjoy the places it takes me.

I realise after we separate that I had seen the work itself, and that what's key is the way JIM becomes a vehicle of artmaking for the library, a machine engineering possibilities from the inside. And sure, we all know the library is a mechanism of research, and therefore holds within it a multitude of potentialities, but this is different. I think JIM would be the first to tell you that there is nothing inherently original about making drawings based off of looking at pictures, and he's right, there isn't. Many pictures themselves come to be through the process of re-creation or imitation. This work is solely original in the sense that it so obviously bears a distinct origin: the library, and that's what I find remarkable. In JIM's process, art is made in and of the library, rather than using it as a means of separation or as a mode of moving somewhere else. In this sense, the Picture Collection and the library are not a point of departure, but a means of arrival to a place that already existed, just that we couldn't see.

- Chanterelle Menashe Ribes