

# EBONY



Artist Jammie Holmes  
Photo: Austin Hunt

## HOW ARTIST JAMMIE HOLMES CAPTURES BLACK MALE VULNERABILITY AND JOY IN HIS ENGAGING PORTRAITS

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In the ever-evolving landscape of contemporary art, only a few artists can truly captivate the essence of the Black male experience. Jammie Holmes is at the forefront. Through his striking visual execution, he offers a voice and space to express vulnerability. "I like to challenge the idea of what a Black man in America should be," he tells EBONY. Several of his pieces are now on display in *Jammie Holmes: Make the Revolution Irresistible*, an exhibition at The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth in Texas.



**Blame the Man #2**, Jammie Holmes, 2021.  
Image: Jammie Holmes Photograph by Chad Redmon  
Courtesy of the Artist and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York and Aspen

A Thibodaux, Louisiana native, Holmes highlights Southern histories and contemporary realities in his work. His latest exhibition includes paintings ranging from early to recent works, showcasing his signature approach toward art. His work, *Blame the Man #2*, leaves viewers grappling with the juxtaposition of a man resting in power and remembering his family in spirit. *Lefty* is a composition that honors veterans and the 1960s Civil Rights movement. Collectively, these works represent Holmes's community—the lens through which the artist explores this nation's history while invoking connections to essential themes of human existence.

EBONY spoke with Holmes to learn more about his craft and how he reframes the Black male as an emotional being.

**EBONY:** What inspired your latest exhibit, *Jammie Holmes: Make the Revolution Irresistible*?

**Jammie Holmes (JH):** The works selected create a cohesive body of work that engages in conversation with one another. The title is from a quote from social activist Toni Cade Bambara: "As a culture worker who belongs to an oppressed people, my job is to make the revolution irresistible." As I delved deeper into Toni's work, I found inspiration from her.

**EBONY:** Can you discuss your imagery around Black masculinity and how growing up in Louisiana influenced your directive?

**JH:** The art of storytelling has been around forever in Louisiana. I love telling stories of my environment and culture on the canvas. I love to use natural beauty and rural settings as a backdrop in my art. Growing up there gave me a deep understanding of the social, cultural and historical dynamics of the South. I explore themes of race, identity and the human experience that can be felt worldwide. I love to show vulnerable strength, resilience and joy. I feel that showing everyday life is a way of humanizing men in society. Growing up, it has always been, "Be a man." At what point do we cry? At what point do we get to laugh, dance or be sad?

**EBONY:** What's one thing people would be surprised to learn about you?

**JH:** I always wanted to work for Nickelodeon! I thought it was the only way to be an artist. That played a role in my life because it kept me sketching as a kid. Nowadays, I enjoy spending time in my studio. I look back before I leave every day because we are not promised tomorrow. Every time I make it back to that space, it's with extreme gratitude.

*Jammie Holmes: Make the Revolution Irresistible* is on view at the [Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth](#) through November 26, 2023.