

***Heriberto “Eddie” Palacio III (B. 1994)***

*Visual Artist*

[www.PalaceOfArts.net](http://www.PalaceOfArts.net)

I am an interdisciplinary Artist that explores human relations and awareness through research that investigates social constructs, masculinity, gender studies, emotional intelligence, and African American studies. My exploratory studio work consists of different mediums that prioritizes the audience's interpretation of context over the aesthetic of medium specificity. This allows me the freedom to create without emphasis on the medium as a catalyst for my work. I continually investigate my relationship to my audience through the use of popular culture motifs while still contemplating the relationship between commercial art to academic art and how that affects the delivery of his work to his audience.

I further investigate my interests through research on how relationships amongst individuals or a group influence emotional competency and expression. I explore the value of emotional intelligence in various communities and how to acknowledge and potentially repair relationships within them using this research and furthering my studio practice. My larger utopian goal is to use my art practice to raise awareness of the need for emotional intelligence so that marginalized communities (and dominant communities alike) are better equipped to build relationships between peers for the betterment of our social relationships. This goal is meant to be open ended, having no true resolution, but taking steps toward long-term healing within these communities.

My work has taken specific interest in platonic relationships between African American males. I am exploring and exposing the boundary of the “black bromance” and its controversy within the black community and larger social climate of American culture. A bromance, an urban term, is an intimate, non-sexual relationship between two or more men. It is a tight, affectionate, homosocial male bonding relationship exceeding that of usual friendship, and is distinguished by a particularly high level of emotional intimacy. It is not a common phenomenon in the Black community and when it does occur, it is rarely discussed. I am questioning the boundaries of people’s understanding of this in the context of black men and their projected, stereotyped capacity of affection to only be sexual, lustful, or violent. My work challenges how people receive these images, making them to ponder within themselves, and amongst others, what is platonic, homosexual, too intimate, passable, suspect, etc.

I am interested in making a connection to my own implication in Black masculinity through this lens. I have begun this investigation through self portrait. I have shared a written piece that speaks more to this experience.

**As I Am Nigga**  
**a written piece by Heriberto “Eddie” Palacio III**

*I am a pretty nigga.*

I like my skin care routine, grooming myself and bubble baths, cuz that shit is self-care. I like smelling like coconuts and mangos bruh. My skin glows and my scalp feels fresh as fuck. I like to feel pretty. I can like dat shit and still be a man.

*I am a beautiful nigga.*

My hair is long as fuck and my curls stay poppin bruh. My haircare routine is important to me. I stand in the mirror for hours doing it up! I use fruity flavored chapsticks because I like the smell of it on my lips. I keep my nails trimmed and groomed. I like to feel beautiful. I can like dat shit and still be a man.

*I am a happy nigga.*

I enjoy life bruh. I am always cheeing at some shit. I like to make people smile cuz life is too hard to be actin' hard too! I find joy in simple shit. I am a happy ass black boy, and no one can take that shit from me. Yeah, life out here is hard for me, but I like to feel happy. I can like dat shit and still be a man.

*I am a dorky nigga.*

I like to read shit and learn shit. I enjoy school and getting smarter. I read manga. I watch anime and play video games. I get excited over superhero comics and card games. I cosplay as my favorite characters and rock that shit with pride. I enjoy learning new languages. I like being dorky. I can like dat shit and still be a man.

*I am a proud nigga.*

I am not afraid to be myself. I am breaking out of the roles assigned to me by society. I am proud of my people and all of their “flaws”. I will always be myself, pave my own path, and become something in my own right. But I will never abandon my blackness nor my people. Being myself does not water down my black magic, it enhances it. I'm nigga? I'm taking that word back bruh. I am proud to be a nigga. I can like all'a dat shit and still be a man.





































