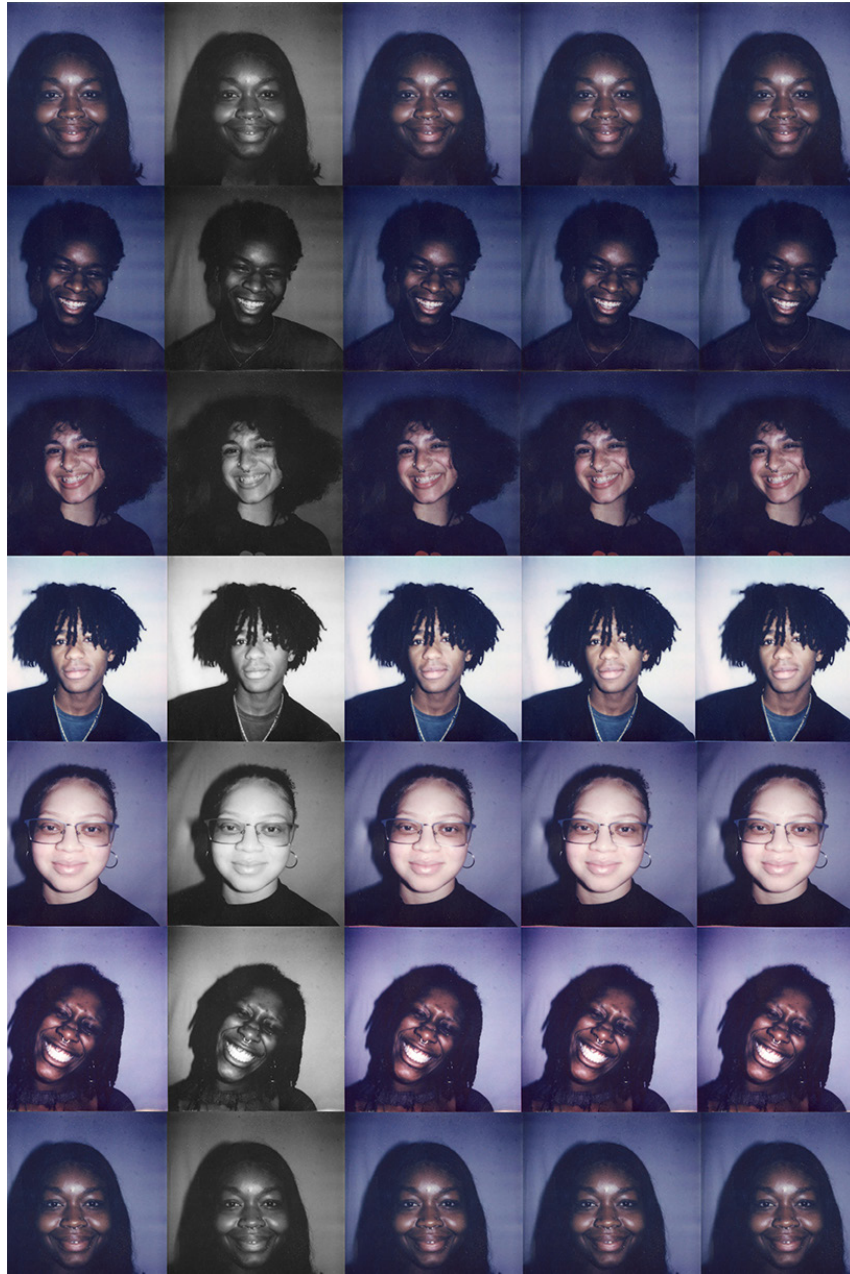


# JACOB SUTTON

## NATURAL



**DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES**

October 26–November 17, 2023

# NATURAL

---

*NATURAL* is a multimedia exploration of Black identity, beauty standards, and the objectification of Black bodies in society. Through documentary filmmaking, photography, and graphic text, Sutton challenges stereotypes, celebrating strength and individuality within the Black community.

# JACOB SUTTON

---

As a Black filmmaker and photographer, I am aware of the power of imagery and the importance of representation. For too long, the Black experience has been misrepresented and caricatured in art, perpetuating harmful stereotypes, and limiting our collective understanding of the richness and diversity of Black culture. I am committed to capturing the full range of human emotion and expression in my work, exploring the complexities of the Black experience, and celebrating the beauty and resilience within our community. For me, visual storytelling is not just a means of artistic expression, but a powerful tool for social change.

In my art, I experiment with various forms of expression including portraiture, documentary interviews, dance/movement, photography, archival footage, spoken word poetry, music, and fashion. These mediums allow me to immerse the audience in a multisensory experience that evokes a deeper connection to the stories being told.

**Jacob Sutton** is an interdisciplinary artist working in film, photography, and installation art. Originally from Los Angeles, he is currently pursuing a BA in Film & Television at Columbia College Chicago. His diverse portfolio includes narrative, documentary, experimental, dance, and fashion/editorial films, as well as live performance videography. Jacob is also actively involved in the exhibition and gallery scene, seeking to connect his passion for visual storytelling with the physical world. Central to Jacob's artistic vision is a mission - to illuminate the depth, richness, and complexities of the Black experience. Through his work, he endeavors to unravel the stories often untold, celebrating the beauty and resilience within the community.

**Instagram:** [@jacobsuttonfilms](https://www.instagram.com/jacobsuttonfilms)

**YouTube:** [@jacobsuttonfilms](https://www.youtube.com/jacobsuttonfilms)

**Website:** <https://jacobsuttonfilms.wixsite.com/jacobsuttonfilms>



*KELSO, 2023, Photograph, 24" x 36"*





ALEXIS, 2023, Photograph, 24" x 36"





*SHILOH*, 2023, Photograph, 24" x 36"





VINCE, 2023, Photograph, 24" x 36"





VICTORIA, 2023, Photograph, 24" x 36"





*TAYLOR, 2023, Photograph, 24" x 36"*





*KELSO (ii)*, 2023, Photograph, 24" x 36"





*ALEXIS (ii)*, 2023, Photograph, 24" x 36"





*SHILOH (ii)*, 2023, Photograph, 24" x 36"



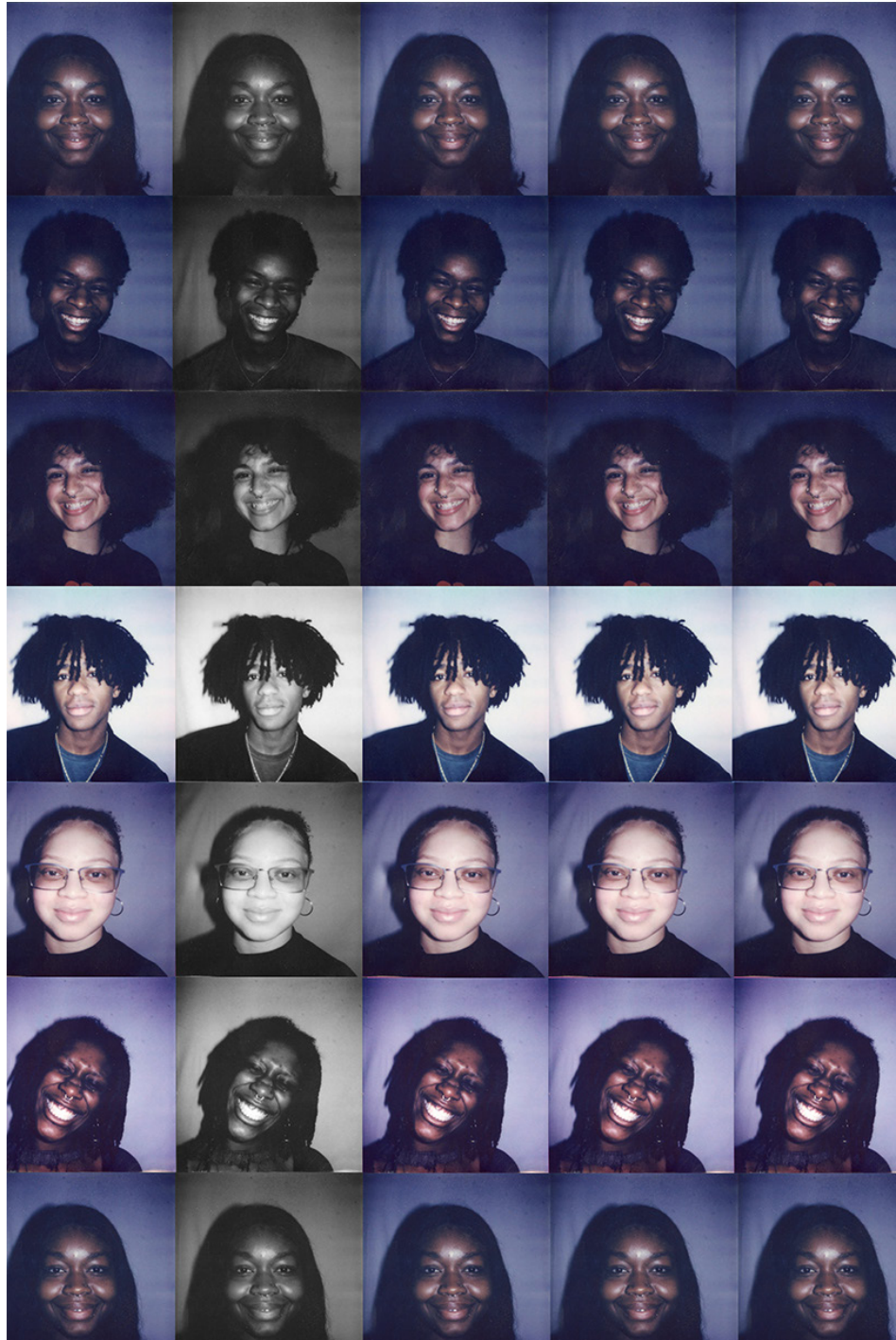


TAYLOR (ii), 2023, Photograph, 24" x 36"

**ALL  
POWER  
II  
THA  
PEOPLE**

*ALL POWER II THA PEOPLE, 2023, Graphic Text, 36" x 60"*





*NATURAL - Cast Polaroids, 2023, Photograph/Collage, 50" x 84"*

**SWING**  
**NATURAL**

SWING, 2023, Graphic Text, 50" x 84"



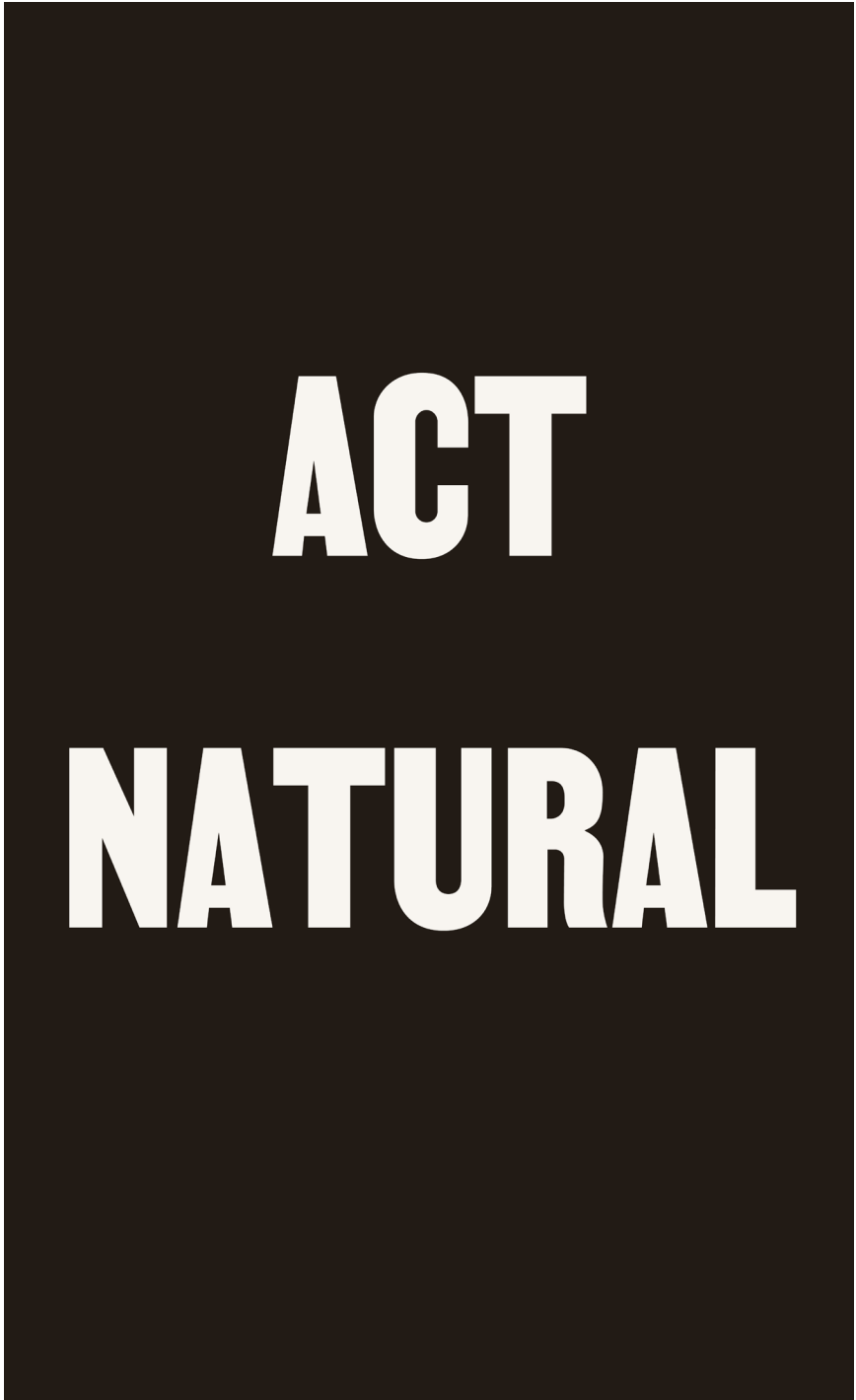
**THINK**  
**NATURAL**

*THINK*, 2023, Graphic Text, 50" x 84"

**BE**

**NATURAL**

*BE, 2023, Graphic Text, 50" x 84"*



ACT, 2023, Graphic Text, 50" x 84"

# INTERVIEW WITH JACOB SUTTON

Conducted by Rachel Manlubatan

---

**Rachel Manlubatan:** How did you first start using filmmaking and photography to connect with others? Have you always gravitated towards documentaries, or has your style fluctuated with each project?

**Jacob Sutton:** It wasn't until the beginning of last year (2022) that I realized how my photography work informs my filmmaking. Before then, I kept the two creative processes completely separate from one another. In my photography work, my predominant focus has always been on portraiture, an art form that allows me to delve into the depths of human expression and identity. I am inspired by the power of the human face to convey a myriad of emotions and stories, which prompted a natural progression towards documentary filmmaking. Documentary filmmaking allows me to expand my canvas of portraiture and tell stories that are real, unscripted, and deeply human.

While I have primarily gravitated towards documentary filmmaking in recent times, my artistic evolution is an ongoing journey. There are many aspects of filmmaking that excite me outside of documentary, such as experimental, dance/movement, and music video filmmaking. I want to try a little bit of everything.

**RM:** Can you speak about the pre-production process for your videos? How do you come up with ideas and use your identity to inform your planning? How do the specific shots and compositions engage with your message?

**JS:** My pre-production differs for every project, depending on the genre/style. However, often my ideas begin from a song, photograph, painting, or book. In the case of my recent project, *NATURAL*, the idea blossomed from a poem of the same name by Ted Joans. I discovered this poem in a collection of Black

poetry called "My Name is Black: An Anthology of Black Poets," which I found in a record/vintage store in my hometown. After I have my initial idea, I begin to create a visual moodboard on Pinterest and PowerPoint. Creating playlists with music similar to my themes/message also helps during the conceptualization process. During the pre-production process for *NATURAL*, I spent a lot of time researching Black poetry, jazz, and the "Black is Beautiful" movement. Research allows me to go into a project with a decisive point-of-view to ensure the message I want to convey is clear to the audience.

The most important part of my creative process is the conceptualization of the film's coverage and visual style (composition, color, editing). In *NATURAL*, the primary composition I use is a tight close-up of each subject, "The Jenkins Shot." This is an homage to one of my favorite filmmakers, Barry Jenkins. This style of close-up creates an illusion that the subject and the audience are staring directly at one another. I wanted to use it in this project to establish a deeper relationship between the subject on screen and the audience, to allow a better sense of understanding of each person's stories.

**RM:** Why do you choose to use warmer and grainer color palettes within this exhibition? What other aesthetic choices do you carry throughout your art, and what do they add to your pieces?

**JS:** Personally, I just think warmer and grainer palettes compliment Black complexions. I wanted the work in this exhibition to be lively, in the moment, and vibrant. This exhibition is a celebration of our radiance, our resilience, and our power to shine brightly even in the face of adversity.



## INTERVIEW CONTINUED

---

Another aesthetic choice I carry throughout my art is the use of bold text – both in the film projections and prints. Inspired by French New Wave filmmakers, Jean Luc Godard and Med Hondo, the text allows me to reinforce the themes of the film and the profound words in the poetry by Ted Joans.

**RM:** What impacts do you envision your art has on your audience? What different meanings do you think viewers take away from your varying mediums (photography, filmography, poetry, graphic text, etc.)?

**JS:** For my Black audience: I hope that this project provides you with a sense of comfort, pride, and reassurance. The stories told in this project are narratives that resonate deeply within our shared experiences. This project aims to inspire others to be our unapologetic, natural selves. Rock that afro. Talk how you want. Wear whatever you want to wear. Work where you want to work. Be who you want to be.

I envision viewers from all backgrounds gaining a deeper understanding of the multifaceted Black experience through this project. I hope it fosters empathy, educates, and breaks down stereotypes. For those outside the Black community, I want this project to ignite a curiosity to learn more, to engage in meaningful dialogue, and to stand in solidarity with us as we strive for equality, justice, and liberty.



## THE DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

The DEPS Artist Profile Series presented by Columbia College Chicago's Department of Exhibitions, Performance and Student Spaces (DEPS), is a virtual publication on select artists involved with the DEPS Galleries and the Columbia College Chicago community. Our goal with this series is to connect artist and viewer on a deeper level, and to highlight the amazing works and thoughts of our featured artists through interviews, artist biographies, and catalogs of work. Art has always been a way to connect with others, no matter where one may physically be. We hope by presenting the creativity and insights of the people involved in the DEPS Artist Profile Series that viewers may have one more way to stay in touch with and support the arts community. The DEPS Artist Profile Series and graphic design is managed by DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Rachel Manlubatan. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

**Learn more at:** [colum.edu/deps](http://colum.edu/deps)

**Contact information:** Mark Porter, [mporter@colum.edu](mailto:mporter@colum.edu) / 312.369.6643

Follow us on [Instagram!](#)

Like us on [Facebook!](#)

---

**C33 Gallery:** 33 E. Ida B. Wells Dr., First Floor, Chicago, IL 60605

**Gallery Hours:** Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.