

# Transcript | Virtual Tour

## *Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled*

### The Peale, Baltimore

Devin Allen:

All right. So, uh, in the middle of the floor, when I started building out this show, um, the show is called, "Spaces of the Un-Entitled." And the goal of the show was to talk about, um, lost history, um, of the city, and I'm talking about like gentrification and the poverty, without so much focusing so much on the people, but also about the landscape by the city.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

So, what we did was, I documented a lot of the city, I went in and documented inside of the houses, but to bring, I wanted to bring people into this house.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

I wanted people to feel like they were standing inside of a vacant... To give it more emotion. I wanted to bring emotion in and really... Feeling to these spaces. When a lot of us look at buildings, like we're just seeing these like soulless things, but a lot of these places have a lot of energy left behind. So, we went in to the house and basically we're pulling out relics and i- items and artifacts from multiple different houses. So, some houses in East Baltimore, some houses in West Baltimore. So, when I- this was a fire, when I went into a house, there was things that I know if I was evicted or I had to move, that I wouldn't wanna leave behind. So, you know, it's like going into time- back in time kind of.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

And, I went in the house, and then of course you see like big hands, and crack vials and you might see drug needles and all these other things, but amongst other things, I start finding, you know, old footballs, you know, they talk about the history of, um, Baltimore's, like, City-Poly, the Huff game that was in 1988.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

# Transcript | Virtual Tour

## *Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled*

### The Peale, Baltimore

Um, I found like old things from "The City That Reads" campaign, that- well, when Kurt Schmoke was in office, you know. So you really going back in time, you know. Old buttons that say, "Save Our Children", that they used to give out back in the day when the murder rate was, was, was spiking.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

You'd also, you find dolls and shoes and, uh, old hats that say "The City That Reads", and coffee mugs. But then a little bit deeper you start finding a lot of personality, and you feel you can kind of connect to the person, this house that you're in. And you start seeing, like, clothing, you know, like a lot of different shoes, old records and CD players. And then, um, even deeper, when you dive in deeper, I start finding family albums. So I found all these family photo books with, like, from vacations, and family portraits and prom pictures. And you gotta really think about that, like, how hard did you, like how, like how could you leave those things behind?

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

So I really wanted to like make you feel like you were connecting to this person and all the items that I brought in. I started finding report cards, and old books, and old, like, cassette tapes, and VHS's, you know. And toys. And you when you look at these things and you feel these things, you can feel the energy, like, this used to belong to this person that lived in this house, and now this house is now set for demolition. It makes you wonder where all these people, what happened.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

And I really didn't dive into their history. I probably could have dived in to the archives in the city, the archive would probably found out who these people were. But it was more so about, for me, just making you wanna feel and connect to the people, and also think that, "We might of lost them".

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Awesome. Cool.

Devin Allen:

# Transcript | Virtual Tour

## *Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled*

### The Peale, Baltimore

Cool. So, um, while photograph-, though in photography, just looking at land, the landscape of Baltimore, a lot of people will just take pictures of vacant homes 'cause they, they all beautiful in a sense. You know, it's missing some things, but, I don't, I didn't just want to take pictures of just, you know, boarded up homes, I wanted to dive in, like I said, and get more emotion. And so I was really looking for inanimate objects. So, um-

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

Like this image in front of me is an image of like, it's a side shot of a street, of a boarded up house. And you can see the cars and stuff, but it's like this, uh, real neatly cut out milk carton at the bottom, was cut out, so you can play basketball.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

And that's very, you know, something that I believe is, goes on in every hood if you can't, you know, have a basketball court or a rec center. You know, you use what you can get your hands on, so it's like a beautiful black and white shot, um, which black and white is my favorite, you know, but this is my first color show, and I wanted to, you know, move into other spaces. So, like, every shot, you know, um, is just about finding the object and tying it to the human experience.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

So, for this, it's like, you think about basketball, and like kids nailing it up, 'cause of like, of like, you know, nowhere to play basketball at.

Robin Marquis:

Yeah.

Devin Allen:

You know, even, um, the image that's across from it is another image of like a, a boarded up door, you know. And I, and when I shoot stuff, I like, I'm very authentic, I don't like to change anything. So it's like a shot with like a, a clean crutch kind of leaned up against the wall next to the boarded up door. And I

# Transcript | Virtual Tour

## *Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled*

### The Peale, Baltimore

thought that was super interesting, because like, who leaves a crutch behind, because you probably did need it at one point in time.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

So like, not to think that the person couldn't take it with them, or he left it there. But I just, it was just super interesting because it ties back to a lot of people have broken something, ended up on crutches, you know.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

This is one of my favorite images. It's like a very big piece with basically, with an overgrown house, where you can still see like the drapes in the door, and see some of the blinds. But then you can see where nature took it back.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

And you can see the, the, the greenery and the trees growing through the house now.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

Which is like, beautiful but sad and the same time.

Robin Marquis:

Mmm. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

Um. This is another favorite. Uh, this black and white shot. Super interesting. It's like this, the house is over-grown with vines, all over, windows busted out, boarded up doors. Even, some of the windows

# Transcript | Virtual Tour

## *Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled*

### The Peale, Baltimore

even actually seeing in to them, but the interesting thing, back to the human experience, at the boarded up defeat, at the boarded up door, it's like three car seats that were just thrown and left there. So, then you gotta think about it like, back to the human experience tied to we all were in car seats at one point in time.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

But also it's just the fact that like who left them there? Why were they there? Why didn't they take them with them? And it's like a small booster seat. You gotta think, you could have donated these, or anything, you know. But I just, it ties back to the human experience and just gives more depth to, uh, the vacant house, not just looking at the building.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

Um. This is like everybody's favorite shot. It's a-

Robin Marquis:

(laughs).

Devin Allen:

It's a (laughs). It's a boarded, it's a boarded up, um, vacant house with a sign that says, "Sell me, a house for cash. Quick Close." With a phone number. And it says, um, "Vacance to value for sale." But on the door, the boarded up door says, "Starbucks here", which hints to like, gentrification, you know, like, when you think about gentrification, I always think about Starbucks and like Chipotle. And, you know, it's like, once you see those things in your community, or you see a Whole Foods, it's like, the gentrification is basically done.

Robin Marquis:

Right.

Devin Allen:

You know. It's coming. You know. So like to see Starbucks here, with a question mark, you know, because of all the gentrification going on in Baltimore, and so many other places, um, in this, in the

# Transcript | Virtual Tour

## *Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled*

### The Peale, Baltimore

United States are going through the same thing with Corporations come in and they have the money to fix up these places, but they need to completely change them to fit their demographic, for their sales.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

You know, it's like, um, I'm slightly color blind, but certain, I can see certain hues, certain hues stick out to me. And green is one of those hues. It's like, um, I can't tell the difference sometimes between greens, but I can actually see green. So sometimes I will think things like, I can put on two different greens and won't even notice. It's weird.

Robin Marquis:

(laughs).

Devin Allen:

But, um, I love how nature always takes something back, so this is like a shot of like a, this tree growing through like this, this house, you gotta really think about how long has this house been vacant for a whole tree to come out the window and then bust through the bust through the top of the house?

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

Um. This is actually a first piece, this is the, uh, the first piece so, of the whole show. And it's, uh, these beautiful, these are tulips, right?

Robin Marquis:

I think so.

Devin Allen:

Think so, yeah. But there's these beautiful tulips, I don't know, they look a little red to me? I believe so, but, it's like a backyard of a boarded up house, but you have, where once again nature is taking it back, but it's like, these like, beautiful tulips are popping up out of nowhere.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

# Transcript | Virtual Tour

## *Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled*

### The Peale, Baltimore

Devin Allen:

And it's like one that's leaning forward that you can look into with a whole bunch of like daisies around it.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

Which I thought was super beautiful. Hints to, uh, rebirth and, uh, being reborn again, I guess.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

You know, trying to, once again, find the beauty in a struggle.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

Um. There's another shot where like someone, you know, once again tying them to the human, human experience. You see, uh, board, two boarded up windows and a door, and one of the mailboxes on the door says, "Safe Streets". Its says, "Stop Shooting," you know. It says, "Stop Shooting, Start Living." But right next to it someone was, you can tell it's an old beat up mailbox, that says that, but someone was murdered there, so it's, it's a guy here in Baltimore, well every-, I think everybody does it now. Wherever there's a murder, people spray paint "No Shoot Zone" at that person, at the scene of a crime.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

So now you got this old mailbox that say, "Safe Streets," but a brand new, you know, uh, graffiti tag that says, uh, "No Shoot Zone," which hence to someone was just murdered there within the year.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

# Transcript | Virtual Tour

## *Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled*

### The Peale, Baltimore

Devin Allen:

But in front of it you see, like, these old speakers, an old, like, entertainment center that's beat up and been thrown out. And an old TV with the big back, which also just hints back to like entertainment, the human experience, and tying it to, it was someone's, these are someone's objects.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

Um. This is like one of my favorites, super interesting (laughs).

Robin Marquis:

Mm.

Devin Allen:

Once again, uh, a shot of, you know, nature taking back over, um, something that we built. But my favorite part of the shot is you can look through the window and you can see a sheet kind of like hung up where people was trying to like, I, hang it up so you couldn't see in there. But, and you look all the way through the back, you can see the, the back window of the house, which is super dope to me.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

And I love the brick.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

And everything about it. The different color bricks and the different tones and the greenery.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

# Transcript | Virtual Tour

## *Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled*

### The Peale, Baltimore

Um. And then, right next to that we've got, uh, everywhere I go, you know, if you have a car, and you can't afford to get it fixed, um, it's, it's, um, you always would go to like, guys in the alley.

Devin Allen:

So a lot of times guys in the alley, you know, and some, some of them might be, um, junkies, heroin addicts, or down on their luck. But a lot of those guys, from back in the day, had a, knew how to work with cars. They knew how to work with their hands. So like instead of going to like a Jiffy Lube, you go to a guy in the alley, they can change your tires, or change your battery, or change your, change your brakes. So like a lot of times, they discard a lot of that, the old tires and the old batteries and brakes, they just throw them in the alley, or in an old vacant house.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

Which I believe a lot of those are the reason why some, there's a lot that catch on fire.

Robin Marquis:

Yeah.

Devin Allen:

Um. This, this is like one of my favorites, too. It's an amazing shot. Um, I believe these buildings might have been torn down, but it's like, when shooting this, I went back to this site multiple times, because of house the sun sets. So I needed to like see how the sun sets. So I have this amazing glare from the sun, where, uh, over top this couch, this love seat that's been thrown out with so many other objects. You know, I just love the tones of it so much like.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

You can see like how, how beautiful the sky is, and the glare just adds lik a lot of character to it.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

# Transcript | Virtual Tour

## *Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled*

### The Peale, Baltimore

Um. This is probably like the most haunting of all the shots. People are very haunted by it. Um, cause it's like a vacant house, but then you have like this doll laying there, this naked doll, with a whole bunch of objects. Hints to like, like did a kid live here? Did they get evicted? Did they get throwed out? You know, no kid wants to leave a doll behind.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

So were they evicted or anything? You can actually see like part of the house imploding from the top. It got like a little book bag there and some other objects. But of a lot of people, uh, hate to love this image, but they gotta love it. And I put this image in like the most destructive part of the day exhibition with, the, the submit is completely exposed.

Devin Allen:

And I went into a house and I found, um, old wiring and old bricks, and its crazy when you think about it, but no one even builds houses like that no more. When they actually work for the metal through the brick to give it more stability. Now they just put like cheap walls up.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

And then, um, another shot. Um, black and white shot from, from, from a, the backyard of a, a vacant. And the most ... the reason why I took this shot, I love it, back to like the human interaction and focus in, and, and on objects is like this teddy bear, with no body. It's just like completely beheaded and it's just sitting there with like piercing eyes and it's super haunting, too, when it's like it's looking. When I saw it, it just stuck out to me and I just like fell in love with it.

Robin Marquis:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Allen:

And I believe this house has been demolished, too.

Devin Allen:

Cool. And then when you walk into the second room of the exhibition, it's a smaller room, it's a room of collaboration between me and artist Chris Wilson. And when you first walk into the room, you see like

# Transcript | Virtual Tour

## *Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled*

### The Peale, Baltimore

this, this Cadillac, um, kid's Cadillac, you know, which is super awesome, like a purple Escalade that like kids ride around, that I found in an alley. And sits behind it is, uh, the classic Baltimore's bench that says they've reached the greatest city in America. Um, I took, I was super happy that it was donated to the, to the show, but um ....

Devin Allen:

So the collaboration with Chris Wilson, our works are totally different. Whereas his medium is painting, and I'm a photographer. Well more so started as photography, now moving into like installation art and performance art. But, um, his style is completely different from mine's where he works with very bright and vibrant colors, and I work more with more gritty, darker, black and white, moody tones.

Devin Allen:

So it was a collaboration between me and him where he would paint on top of my, um, paint people into my landscape shots. Like the first shot, um, is a shot of, uh, the Baltimore, uh, the greatest city in America bench, but due to, uh, he was inspired by the opioid crisis and everything that's going on with fentanyl. He painted, um, guys nodding out on a bench, with, um, a real pop in this like weird looking blue like white swirls, into their jeans, because they have on jeans. And they're kind of like nodding out on this bench and that he painted into the scene. Um, which is kinda, kinda dark and sad. But then it gets a little more beautiful where it's a old vacant house, you know, and it has like Ninja Turtle sheets in the window and um, blinds falling down.

Devin Allen:

But he painted, um, the painting, the painting is called "Young Queens," and he painted like a mom sitting on the stoop, and they, uh, with her daughters dancing with, with, uh, like ballerina attire on, which is super awesome. We give them a different vibe. Making it more positive. And then another shot of a vacant house, um, it's like a bright, bright, red, and um, you had, he painted in dirt bike that's actually wheeling and doing tricks, riding past the house, you know, which I thought was super dope 'cause, you know, Baltimore is really big and iconic for the dirt bike scene and the Twelve O'Clock Boys and everything else, so that was super iconic to paint them in.

Devin Allen:

And then one of my, my favorite of the collaboration is, uh, a vacant house and he actually painted police officers, you know, doing a raid on the house where they were like busting into the house if someone has a warrant where they let, somebody is wanted. And, um, it's super like a hint to, you know, this, this piece is called "Provocative Art," but it hints to like the drug gang. You know police are famous for like busting in your door five and four in the morning, catching you off guard, if you have a warrant or anything, to arrest you.

Devin Allen:

# Transcript | Virtual Tour

## *Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled*

### The Peale, Baltimore

And we have another shot that's, uh, black and white shot, with his popping color style. More guys, uh, riding dirt bikes, and it hints to, you know, they got like, the gold, hints of gold on their mouth, the hint of gold teeth, and, uh, this piece is called "Rave it up Sundays". And then Summer time on Sundays, you know, all the dirt bikers come out when the weather is nice. You're talking about fifty to a hundred, maybe two hundred people.

Devin Allen:

Um, and then, uh, this, this is another piece that, uh, really touches me. It's called "Trap Stars". So you have like three dope boys and a young lady, you know, um, standing out front of a vacant houses, you know, and I, and it ties back to a little bit of my past of like us sitting on the stoop, hitting sales and selling drugs. And then, you know, you always have a, have a pretty young lady (laughs)-

Robin Marquis:

(laughs).

Devin Allen:

You know, with you. So, you know, it just ties back to like, this, everybody being outside, and like everybody just being in the trap, and being on the corner. And that's where everybody would congregate at. You know, everybody would have on like the fly gear, your post up. Then it's like everybody'd chill, we had drink, you know, some people would pop pills, we'd just smoke our weed and just chill. Definitely on like a Friday in the hood, we just all post up on the stoop.

Devin Allen:

And then on the last one it's, uh, it's, uh, it's a dope one, too. It's a vacant house, uh, with a, with a mural of a, a dandelion, you know, coming out of the, the ground on the side of the building. But it's called "Baltimore Footwork". And bottom was also, they always talk about New Jersey, then about their club music, but New Jersey get their sound from Baltimore.

Robin Marquis:

(laughs).

Devin Allen:

'Cause we been dancing and making this club music for a long time. So, it's a nod to iconic places. When you think of like the Hammerjacks and the Paradox, well we all used to go and club dance as kids and do our footwork and all that stuff in the club.

Devin Allen:

## Transcript | Virtual Tour

### *Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled*

#### The Peale, Baltimore

And this is a collab-, once again this is a collaboration between, uh, Chris Wilson, who is originally from DC, but, you know, spent a lot, had life in jail, and then after I believe, uh, more, a little bit over a decade, he was, uh, released. And he relocated to Baltimore and been here ever since. So it's kind of like, um, with "Spaces of the Un-Entitled", whereas though DC has already been gentrified to a T. You know, and Baltimore going through the changes now. Though I thought it was super important for me to collaborate with a person originally from DC because he has, went back to his community and it looks totally different than what it was.