

## The New York Times

By [Gia Kourlas](#) Sept. 18, 2016

It might seem all too obvious. Two young black men sit on a sofa watching the awful news of recent events — police shootings, the Orlando massacre — before venturing outside, where they are ignored, shunned and eventually shot. But in the lushly hypnotic video “[Color of Reality](#),” a quick tale told through movement and visual art, these men are dancers and their message is not just about social justice. It’s also about their art.

Just as dance needs to be taken more seriously, the merging of dance and film needs an upgrade. “It doesn’t have to just be setting up a tripod and dancing to the hottest new song that just came out to try to go viral,” said Jon Boogz, who directed and conceived the video. It’s about having something to say.

“[Color of Reality](#)” features Boogz and Lil Buck, the jookin dancer (the two share the choreography credit), along with an important third presence: the art of [Alexa Meade](#). Her specialty is painting bodies, rendering three-dimensional people into something resembling two-dimensional beings. Here, she places her painted men in a living room awash with colorful brush strokes. Think of it as a van Gogh — that is, if one of his paintings were brought to life as a performative protest.

So far, the video has more than 72,000 views on YouTube. And in Los Angeles, it has a more public presence: Throughout this month, its trailer is shown at the top of each hour on a StandardVision screen at the JW Marriott at 901 West Olympic Boulevard.

For Boogz and Buck, both 28, it’s not just a one-off. They have formed Movement Art Is, a nonprofit organization in which dance will be used to inspire positive change and empower dancers to stretch themselves artistically. There will be, in other words, more videos.

What follows are edited excerpts from a recent discussion about their characters in the video, the power of dance and what it’s like to perform while covered in paint. (It’s tighter than a unitard.)

### How did the story come to you?

**JON BOOGZ** The whole TV thing came about when I was looking at Alexa’s Instagram. She had a picture up of a guy watching TV, and I noticed every time I turned on my TV, I was seeing news clips from police shootings and then, ding! This light bulb went off: Buck and I can be sitting there watching TV and these clips of all these things that are happening. I made sure I had sound bites from the massacre that happened in Orlando. It’s not just about police brutality.

### What was it like to dance with the paint?

**LIL BUCK** The way the paint dries, it feels like you’re going to crack it if you break character — like if you smile when you’re not supposed to. It’s like putting on a mask. It helped us get more into the world.

**BOOGZ** When we went outside, some of our paint started to crack a little bit. It was good because as we slowly broke out into the real world, that beautiful, comforting space that we were so used to — the painting world — slowly started dissolving because we were getting a dose of reality: the real human experience.