

# HYPERALLERGIC

## Kalup Linzy Bought a House and He's Sharing It With Artists

Queen Rose Art House is newly alive in Tulsa's historic  
Kendall Whittier neighborhood.

by Lyndsay Knecht  
April 10, 2022



Queen Rose Art House and truck (courtesy Queen Rose Art House)

TULSA, OK — The famously well-connected artist Kalup Linzy bought a house with the help of Tulsa Artist Fellowship and turned it into a residency. Queen Rose Art House hosts its first resident in April: Keioui Keijaun Thomas, a Brooklyn-based performance artist who explores “blackness outside of a codependent, binary structure of existence.” Thomas, like Linzy, grew up in Florida, and the mechanisms of embodiment in her work sing alongside the short films and video series that brought Linzy to renown.

“When I saw her work, I was like, this is my daughter! I was like, I totally get it,” he says. “It’s totally in the lineage of artists who came before me, and the ones who are going to come after her,” Linzy says.

Queen Rose is newly alive in the city’s historic Kendall Whittier neighborhood after Linzy secured an Arts Integration Award from Tulsa Artist Fellowship and bought the house in August 2021. Passers-through will know the house by its facade, painted with vivid motifs from Linzy’s early works on paper. Fans of his soap opera video art series *As Da Art World Might Turn* will recognize the playfully stark red, black, and white from clothing made popular by the character Katonya, an artist and mother who finds support from relatives — bloodwise and heartwise — on her journey. The music notes and figures, set in dramas of need and repair, also appear on a truck in the Queen Rose Art House driveway, the first impression visiting artists will have when Linzy picks them up from the airport.

“I want to take them to Bentonville, Oklahoma City, maybe Stillwater — to make the art house not just local but a regional thing as well. I know ‘regional’ goes beyond Oklahoma and Arkansas, but that’s as far as I wanted to drive my truck,” laughs Linzy.

As a Creative Capital grantee and a one-time Guggenheim fellow, Linzy made the rounds to meet success and testifies with the brilliant humor of his work to all the striving around him. A gallerist in *As Da Art World Might Turn* pauses before snapping a photo to announce, “We have to capture this moment and put it on our social media pages.” A lover offers a studio “critique” of an artist’s sexual performance amid the act; the artist

storms out, incensed. There are warring families, long-kept secrets, and many, many telephone confessionals. Linzy writes and plays most of the characters. The ones he doesn't embody lip-sync to his voice, opening each hilariously true interaction to a dimension outside assumed frameworks of race and gender. With Linzy as omniscient narrator, the art world loses all its boring veils. More than anything, in these soap operas lives a family tree of all his selves who make a mess (and art) while seeking one another. It is difficult to imagine a more fun residency host for no-bullshit-style artists who need the game of survival to mean something real.

Linzy has been granted about a dozen residencies throughout his career as an artist. The self-actualizing experience of being held by funds and space has been a subject of his work. Supported by an Alumni Awards Residency in 2012, he filmed the majority of his feature *Romantic Loner* at Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito, California, where artists drive the rugged Pacific coastline in provided cars and eat free meals in a common space.

The main character in *Romantic Loner* is Linzy's tender alter-ego Kaye. He's a video artist and soul singer who wrestles with his situation of abundance over too many glasses of wine at an artist's residency, journaling alone in his room after a series of failed relationships. "I need to love me too ... I've gotta stop being psycho about it, baby!" Kaye sings as he pulls up the gravel driveway to his gifted artist housing.

Headlands was where Linzy says he first started thinking about hosting his own program. It was a residency he did at Fountainhead in his home state of Florida, though, that helped Linzy recognize his vision. The artists each have their own room in a 1950s modern home close to Biscayne Bay and negotiate the living room and the kitchen for studio space. Fountainhead's founders live right across the street and make personal introductions between the resident artists and decision makers in the Miami art scene. Linzy's time there was in 2016; the next year, he says, David Castillo called, and Linzy has been represented by his Miami gallery ever since.

So when Linzy completed two years of the Tulsa Artist Fellowship and was eligible for the new Arts Integration Award, he saw an opportunity to create a spot between the two coasts where he could take emerging artists under his wing in a meaningful way. Instead of making a high-profile feature film, he decided to find a house. And he wanted to share it.

“I know how filmmaking works. And even TV shows — can put all your time and energy into this thing. And then like, not many people care. You could have a great film, but then it could literally disappear ... and I was also thinking about my own legacy at this point. I want to leave something behind, I want to have an impact. I know my work has impacted some people, but you can never be sure about that. You know what I mean? Most of my work I create is kind of to save myself, you know, it’s for me first, and then I always hope that it will translate and resonate with like minds. But you can’t always be sure how your work is going to resonate with the audience, you can project and imagine, and sometimes you hit the mark — you might hit the mark with this person, but not that person.”

The mentor role is one Linzy is already comfortable filling. Jake Troyli will be the Queen Rose Art House resident in May; Linzy was his mentor at the University of South Florida. (For now, Linzy invites participating artists to Queen Rose Art House himself. Later, he says, the selection process will change.)

The space itself will undergo renovations during these first two residencies. Thomas and Troyli will have access to a space in downtown Tulsa for living purposes and can use the house for studio work. Linzy says the downstairs garage is going to be a multi-purpose space for community-facing exhibitions and performances. Later, Linzy plans to build a privacy fence and commission artists for murals to mark it.

Spring will afford new rituals and plans for the program, as it will be shaped by the initial residents. Linzy’s dream is for champions of his own work, like Cindy Sherman,

who was on the board of the first grant he ever received, to visit Tulsa and engage with artists at the Queen Rose Art House.

“If you happen to be friends with a famous artist, a well-known artist, you get introduced to people through them. So that’s kind of the plan — they’ll be introduced to higher-ups in the art world who will at least take a closer look at their work.”