

Splitting Image, the final album from Supastition

By Nikolai Barrickman
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North Carolina-based rapper Kam Moye, or Supastition as he has been known throughout much of his career, recently made the difficult to decision to stop making music professionally. In a statement on his official web site, Moye writes, “Although I’ll always write and record music, I have no interest in pursuing it professionally.”

The rapper describes a career situation in which his art was continually placed on the back burner while marketing concerns occupied most of his time. “I know some people will wonder why can’t I still just make music,” writes Moye. “The truth is that I have never ‘just made music’ because most of my career I have managed myself (until recently), booked my most of my own shows & tours, found my own record deals, found my own producers, and most recently recorded my own music. That takes a toll on you and your personal life after awhile. Out of all those duties, I spent the least amount of time rapping and recording music. With music being technically free nowadays, that’s way too much effort for the results I’ve seen.”

Moye’s final album, *Splitting Image*, is the only full-length album the rapper has released under his real name. The album sees an artist sobering up to the declining prospects of a career in music and, more generally, the harsh realities of social life in the US where the potential of so many is never given an opportunity to be fulfilled.

Moye has been making music for more than a decade, working in that time with such notable hip hop musicians as KRS-One, Royce Da 5’9 and Elzhi from Slum Village. *Splitting Images* itself features collaborations with rappers Baba Zhumbi (formerly Zion of the group Zion I), One Be Lo and producers Illmind, Jake-One and M-Phazes. The participation of these mostly serious-minded musicians speaks to the

respect the rapper has garnered during his career.

Although a particularly witty battle rapper, Moye’s real strength is his ability to discuss the often difficult circumstances of his life in succinct yet vivid terms. The artist’s willingness to address serious social questions too often ignored in hip hop music is also to his credit.

On the song “Do What It Takes,” Moye offers a tribute to those struggling with unemployment. “It’s hard to hold hope with folks poor and jobless, trying not to make being broke so obvious,” he raps. In the song’s opening verse, Moye raps about the hardships of going “from two weeks of paid days off to straight laid off.” Later in the song, the rapper turns his attention toward those just released from prison “about to come home to a future unknown and a world quick to judge.” Their time in prison is like a “scarlet letter,” says Moye, preventing them from finding employment upon their release.

Moye’s compassion and sensitivity toward millions of struggling, unemployed workers makes a strong impression and he is one of the only hip hop musicians to have even addressed the employment crisis in the US. Undercutting the song’s impact, however, are the calls for himself and others to simply “persevere and get through it.” This theme persists throughout the work. “It’s not about having what you want, but wanting what you have,” raps Moye on the album’s title track.

A lack of class perspective takes its toll on the rapper’s work. In addressing the social and economic crisis in the US, Moye blames what he sees as widespread consumerism and apathy among virtually the entire population. On the song “MK-ULTRA,” Moye raps “We forkin’ over cash for SUV’s and fast cars till this bad economy gave us a crash course.” In

another line he raps, “To some of us, going shopping’s like oxygen.” “It’s a damn shame how we turn our nose when the truth is told,” he says later.

In these moments, Moye is accepting as fact the notion that the US is awash in abundance and its population is spoiled and overindulged. In this work, the habits of a well-to-do upper middle class layer, frankly, are ascribed to the entire population. The reality is something else altogether.

Millions of workers are not turning up their noses at “the truth,” but are confronted with the harsh realities of life in the US every day. They don’t need Kam Moye to “wake them up” to this truth. However, they do require an art that illuminates the features of social life in the US and internationally in the fullest way possible. Moye stops short of that. While there may be worthy moments contained in this or that song, *Splitting Image* ultimately contains more anger (of a kind) than insight and obscures rather than illuminates.

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