



OMG
studios



Minnesota
Humanities
Center



THE MAKING OF AMERICA

JUNE 28

Art Catalog

THE MAKING OF AMERICA OFFICIAL PREMIERE

June 28, 2026

Time: 12noon - 4:00pm

Official Film Premiere

Featuring:

- **1:00pm - 1:30pm:** Pre-Screening Performance by Innovation Music Lab Cultural Drummers
- **1:30pm - 2:00pm:** The Making of America Film
- **2:00pm - 3:00pm:** Post-screening discussion

PRESENTED BY



Minnesota
Humanities
Center

Reconstruction 2.0:

Allegories of a Better World Art Exhibit

- **12noon - 1:00pm:** Reception
- **12:00noon - 4:00pm:** Art Exhibition

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Minnesota
Humanities
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m COUNCIL FOR MINNESOTANS
OF AFRICAN HERITAGE



Public Art Humanities Contribution

The Making of America film and Reconstruction 2.0: Allegories of a Better World Art Showcase is designed to engage broad public audiences through screenings, facilitated discussions, exhibitions and educational materials.

By making visible the intellectual foundations of slavery and settler colonialism, *The Making of America* encourages critical reflection on how historical knowledge continues to shape contemporary thought and institutions.

The film and art showcase supports philanthropic priorities by fostering humanities-based inquiry, promoting inclusive historical narratives, and connecting scholarly research to public understanding.

Monique Linder, Film Director



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Our work is centered around building cultural sustainability and community, where music and art are essential to human survival and development. We are driven by love for humanity and a desire to empower, nurture, and improve the health and wellness of youth and families in under-invested communities.

OMG Studios and the Minnesota Humanities Center are pleased to announce the community premiere of their latest documentary film, *The Making of America*, on June 28, 2026, in the Pillsbury auditorium at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia). In tandem with the film screening and a post-show panel discussion, the event will feature a community art showcase organized and produced by OMG Studios. The afternoon's centerpiece is the premiere of *The Making of America*, a documentary directed by Monique Linder and produced by OMG Studios in partnership with the Minnesota Humanities Center. The film explores how Enlightenment-era systems of knowledge—including art, science, architecture, and cartography—produced enduring frameworks for racial slavery, territorial extraction, and Indigenous dispossession in what became the United States of America.

About *The Making of America* Film

The afternoon's centerpiece is the premiere of *The Making of America*, a documentary directed by Monique Linder and produced by OMG Studios in partnership with the Minnesota Humanities Center. The film explores how Enlightenment-era systems of knowledge—including art, science, architecture, and cartography—produced enduring frameworks for racial slavery, territorial extraction, and Indigenous dispossession in what became the United States of America.

“After our last film about Reconstruction, I felt it was important that the next film go back to the very beginning, the making of America. This film really helps tie all the pieces in the Juneteenth Reckoning with Slavery film series together in a significant way. I'm looking forward to sharing it with others.”

— Monique Linder, Film Director

Allegory of the Planets & Continents by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1752)



Image courtesy of New York Metropolitan Museum of Art

About David Pullins

New York Metropolitan Museum of Art European Paintings
Curator

David Pullins is responsible for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French, Italian and Spanish painting at The Met, where he arrived in 2019 from The Frick Collection. He studied art history at Columbia University (BA), the Courtauld Institute of Art (MA), and Harvard University (PhD). Recent projects include *Juan de Pareja: Afro-Hispanic Painter in the Age of Velázquez* (2023) and the forty-five reinstalled permanent collection galleries that constitute *Look Again: European Paintings, 1300–1800* (2023). His monograph *The Mobile Image from Watteau to Boucher* (Getty Research Institute: 2024) examines how an ideological privileging of painting above other media in eighteenth-century Paris continues to shape art history.



Source: *NY Metropolitan Museum of Art, April 3–July 16, 2023,*
Previously on view at The Met Fifth Avenue

Juan de Pareja by Diego Velasquez (1652)
The Calling of Saint Matthew by Juan de Pareja (1661)
Images courtesy of New York Metropolitan Museum of Art



Largely known today as the subject of The Met’s iconic portrait by Diego Velázquez, Pareja—who was born in Antequera, Spain—was enslaved in Velázquez’s studio for over two decades before becoming an artist in his own right. This presentation is the first to tell his story and examine the ways in which enslaved artisanal labor and a multiracial society are inextricably linked with the art and material culture of Spain’s “Golden Age.”

Juan de Pareja: Afro-Hispanic Painter in the Age of Velázquez
by David Pullins (Author), Vanessa K. Valdés (Author), Luis Mendez
Rodríguez (Contributor), Erin Kathleen Rowe

Representations of Spain’s Black and Morisco populations in works by Francisco de Zurbarán, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, and Velázquez join works that chart the ubiquity of enslaved labor across media, from sculpture to silver. The Met’s portrait, executed by Velázquez in Rome in 1650, is contextualized by his other portraits from this period and the original document whereby Pareja was freed upon return to Madrid. The exhibition culminates in the first gathering of Pareja’s rarely seen paintings, some of enormous scale, which engage with the canons of Western art while reverberating throughout the African diaspora.

Harlem Renaissance collector and scholar Arturo Schomburg was vital to the recovery of Pareja’s work and serves as a thread connecting seventeenth-century Spain with twentieth-century New York, providing a lens through which to view the multiple histories that have been written about Pareja.



View of Fort Snelling, c. 1850 Edward K. Thomas

Edward Thomas's View of Fort Snelling exemplifies frontier images in which Dakota tipis, houses of the families associated with the American Fur Company, and the military fort exist side by side. Such depictions served as accurate topographical representations and, also as visual records of a landscape already in transition.

- Edward Thomas was a soldier stationed at Fort Snelling - Euro American Artist
- Dakota and inhabitants of the fort.
- Interesting: South Mendota looking towards the fort.
- Dominion in mastery and possession.

Edward K Thomas

Source: Minneapolis Institute of Art

Although the upper reaches of the Mississippi River were sparsely settled in the 1850s, a surprising number of artists sought out the northern landscapes.

Edward Thomas's View of Fort Snelling exemplifies frontier images in which Dakota tipis, houses of the families associated with the American Fur Company, and the military fort exist side by side. Such depictions served as accurate topographical representations and also as visual records of a landscape already in transition.

Conservation of this picture was made possible by a generous contribution from Al and Dena Naylor through the Art Champions program.

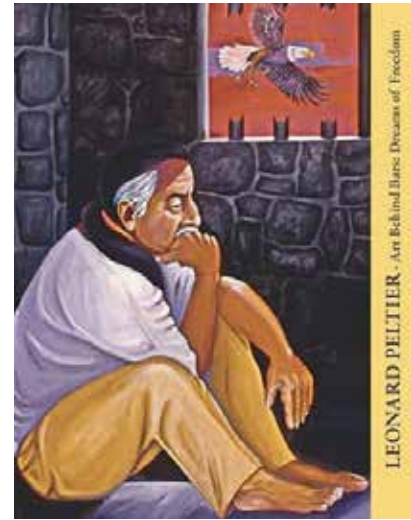
About Artist Leonard Peltier

Leonard Peltier's art reflects his Native American heritage and activism. Using symbols of Indigenous identity, spirituality, and social struggles, his paintings express resilience, and the fight for Native rights, offering culturally significant work that invites engagement with Indigenous stories and histories.



Breaking Loose by Leonard Peltier, 2005 16 x 20 oil on canvas Painted at Leavensworth, KS

After spending 50 years incarcerated, Leonard Peltier has finally returned home. His release marks the end of a long and arduous chapter defined by a controversial legal battle and decades of imprisonment. Throughout his time behind bars, Peltier remained a symbol of resistance and a voice for indigenous rights, garnering global support and drawing attention to issues of justice and human rights. His homecoming is not only a personal milestone but also a moment of reflection on the complex history surrounding his case and the ongoing struggle for Native American sovereignty and fair treatment within the legal system.

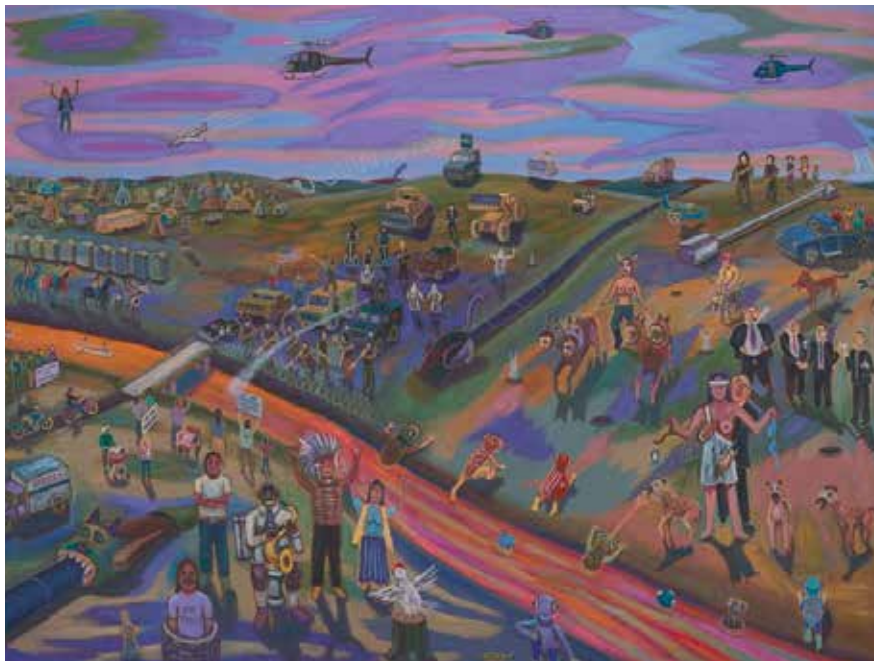


Leonard Peltier - Art Behind Bars: Dreams of Freedom by Leonard Peltier, Tsipi Ben-Haim, et al. | Feb 23, 2022

"I want to feel the sun on my skin..." These were the words of American Indian artist Leonard Peltier, a plea to President Biden after nearly five decades of wrongful imprisonment. On January 20, 2025, that plea was finally heard—his sentence was commuted, bringing an end to an unjust chapter in American history. When I said to him: "I'm sorry your life was stolen" Leonard replied immediately "But not wasted, many changes happened to my people, from the prison cell."

Support the Artist





Standing Rock by Jim Denomie (2016)
Image courtesy of Minneapolis Institute of Art

Jim Denomie (1955–2022) (Ojibwe)

Jim Denomie (1955–2022) (Ojibwe) was a prolific artist, creating vividly hued paintings, works on paper, and sculptures that aimed a critical lens on the history of Indigenous people and their intersections with mainstream culture.

Standing Rock 2016 comes from a series of works (2018-19) that respond to the North Dakota Access Pipeline protests at the Standing Rock Reservation (2016-2017). The painting also encapsulates the heightened anxiety, volatility, and absurdity of the American zeitgeist prior to the COVID pandemic.

Composed of small vignettes, the painting is not a document of historical events so much as it is a raw, cumulative response to what transpired at Standing Rock. Denomie pulls not punches. In the center of the canvas a group of Water Protectors hold signs as one moon's law enforcement. In response, the officers open fire and spray a water canon. Two officers share a congratulatory high-five. The scene juxtaposes stark contrasts, laid bare for all to see.

On View in Gallery 280

RECONSTRUCTION 2.0

ALLEGORIES

— OF A —

BETTER WORLD

— EXHIBIT —



Artist Catalog

Artist Alana Enfinity

Allegories of a Better World
Art Exhibit Curator

Montgomery-based artist Alana Enfinity, born in San Francisco and shaped by Minnesota's Twin Cities, creates art as a vessel for restoration—both personal and cultural.



Rooted in symbolism, intention, and energy work, her creations serve as portals for healing and transformation.

Every color, form, and figure in her work carries meaning, aligning energy to awaken dormant aspects of the soul.



The Energy of Possibility (2026)
Mixed Media on Canvas 13"x19"

Title: *The Energy of Possibility*

Explores imagination, awareness, and collective vision as catalysts for transformation. Birds, figures, plants, symbolic forms, and a central vessel converge within layers of fragmented imagery, suggesting that meaningful change begins in the realm of possibility.

Through processes of deconstruction and reconstruction, the work reflects the interconnected energies that shape personal and collective futures.

Part of the Allegories of a Better World series, the piece invites viewers to imagine and participate in creating new realities.



The Garden Beyond the Ruins (2026)
Mixed Media on Canvas 18"x24"

Title: *The Garden Beyond the Ruins*

Views creation of a more compassionate and connected future.

A tree rises from human hands while golden roots weave through layers of fragmented imagery, symbolizing ancestry, collective responsibility, and renewal. The work reflects the belief that healing, justice, & transformation emerge through community.

The piece asks viewers to imagine not only the world they desire, but the world they are willing to help cultivate.

Artist

Tami Adedayo

Visual Artist, N. Minneapolis, MN



Tami is an emerging artist. She is skilled in painting, drawing, and specializes in beadwork by creating pieces where beauty and love can emerge.

Title: In The Moment

The title of my artwork is called "in the moment" and it represents stillness.

This piece demonstrates a state of being calm, which reflects the way I envision "a better world" having more quiet moments. This work asks for viewers to confront the fact that this world is very fast-paced.

Life is always one thing after another, but often times we forget that we need silent boring moments also. I knew some things about the enlightenment era prior to this project, and that awareness appears in my artwork through me using art for good and not for evil.

This work asks for viewers to confront the fact that this world is very fast-paced.



In The Moment (2026)
Acrylic on Canvas 24"x36"

Artist

Teni Adedayo

Visual Artist, N. Minneapolis, MN



Teni is an emerging artist. He is 12 years old and specializes in writing poetry, drumming, and is just starting to get into painting.



Beauty of Life (2026), Acrylic on Canvas 24"x36"

Title: Beauty of Life

The title of my artwork is "Beauty Of Life." I named it this because the tree, which represents life is beautiful at least I think so. This piece of art was made in my mind, and crafted and perfected there. Your mind can hold the key to beauty as you see it. It reflects my vision of a better world for when you make a change for the better in your life. It asks them to confront themselves and the path they are on in life.

Artist Ella Beard

Visual Artist, Minneapolis, MN



15 year old Ella founded "VIBE Art," which stands for "Visual Inspiration by Ella," with a mission to inspire others through her creative talents.

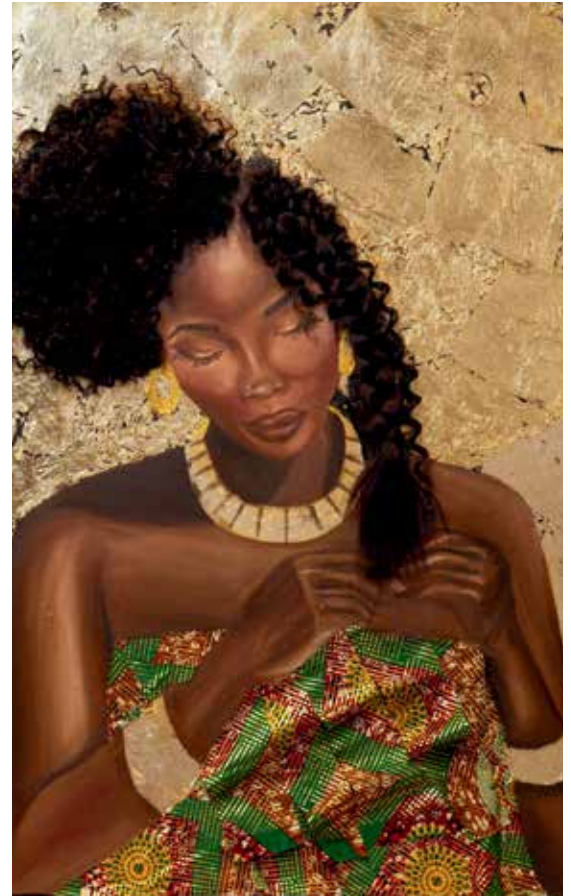
Since 2021, she's been creating inspirational and colorful canvas paintings. She hopes to inspire other youth and show her peers that business ownership isn't just for adults.

www.vibeartbyella.com

Title: Heritage in Her Hands

My artwork is titled "Heritage in Her Hands." It represents how Black women use hair and creativity to express beauty, culture, and confidence. My piece shows a world with peace, no discrimination, and more appreciation for beauty and diversity. It asks viewers to see Black women as strong, powerful, creative, and beautiful. Yes, I know some Enlightenment art reinforced the slave trade. My artwork challenges that history by showing freedom, pride, and Black women in a powerful and positive way.

My piece shows a world with peace, no discrimination, and more appreciation for beauty and diversity.



Heritage in Her Hands (2025)
Oil on Canvas 24"x36

Artist

LaKelle Brawley

Multidisciplinary Artist, Decatur, AL



LaKelle Brawley is a mixed media artist and painter whose work explores softness, healing, femininity, and the emotional depth of Black womanhood. Through acrylic paint, textured materials, and beaded elements, she creates expressive works that celebrate vulnerability, resilience, and self nurturing.

Title: Ujoma & Amani

The title of my submitted work is "Umoja & Amani". It represents the emotional and spiritual complexity of Black womanhood, centering softness, healing, and becoming. Through floral symbolism and layered mixed media, the work honors Black women as both resilient and tender, reclaiming space for vulnerability and care.

It represents the emotional and spiritual complexity of Black womanhood, centering softness, healing, and becoming.



Ujoma & Amani (2026)
Mixed Media on Canvas 30"x30"

Artist

Daphne Burgess

Interdisciplinary Art, Sacramento, CA



Daphne Burgess was born and raised in Sacramento, CA, but has deep roots in the South, with both parents born and raised in Alabama and spending every summer there as a child.

www.dburgessart.com

Title: Tune Up

Depicts a reclining woman, represented by a personified bass instrument, in a state of relaxation. My goal was to capture an experience, specifically a Black woman's experience – a fully reclined, self-care moment and a calm state of reflection that often eludes us as Black women, the members of marginalized groups – being Black and female.



Tune Up (2011)
Acrylic on Canvas, 24"x36"

This intersectionality is on full display as she lies on her bed, tuning up yet appearing at rest. I address these identities through personification because I believe a person's personality and character can be conveyed without the use of representational images. I challenge the viewer to explore that same idea by imagining themselves in active stillness. Though the painting is not a self-portrait or a literal depiction of another Black female figure, I still refer to the instrument as a Black woman; the narrative about individuality and identity without seeing a "face." She is in the moment, unbothered by the Eurocentric gaze, male sexualization, or judgment for taking time for herself as she lies on layers of bedding, reminiscent of fabrics seen in other reclining-figure paintings. This is my vision of a better world – where Black women can be comfortable just being themselves.

Artist

Giovanni Caprice

Multidisciplinary Art, N. Minneapolis, MN



Giovanni Caprice is a multidisciplinary artist, collector of stories, and architect of improbable encounters.

Working across collage, sculpture, installation, performance, and social interventions, Caprice creates environments that blur the boundaries between memory, mythology, luxury, migration, and aspiration.



Caprice's Garden: Fragments for a Future Civilization (2025)
Digital Canvas 24"x18"

Title: Caprice's Garden: Fragments for a Future Civilization

The work proposes a visual ecosystem where African knowledge systems, represented through Adinkra-inspired forms and symbols, occupy the same space as abstraction, design, architecture, mathematics, ornament, and speculative futures. Rather than positioning European intellectual traditions as the sole source of modernity, the composition suggests multiple centers of knowledge and cultural production. The work challenges viewers to imagine a world in which African philosophies, symbols, and ways of knowing are not peripheral to history but central to shaping our collective future.

Artist Zaria Dunn

Visual Artist, Wetumpka, Alabama



Zaria Dunn is a self-taught portrait artist from Montgomery, Alabama.

Originally a colored pencil portrait artist, Zaria has expanded her practice with acrylic markers and acrylic paints, to create room for her to develop her skills.

Through her art, she seeks create images that draw attention to details.

Title: Galatians 2:20

My art piece is called Galatians 2:20 which states, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." The dove in the work represents the holy spirit and the hummingbird represents myself. This piece is a reminder for me to remember and have faith in Christ in every situation I face. I think the message of peace can definitely reflect a vision of a better world because no matter what's going on in the world, it's a reminder to have faith.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
— Hebrews 11:1.



Galatians 2:20 (2025)
Acrylic on Canvas, 10"x10"

This piece is a reminder for me to remember and have faith in Christ in every situation I face.

Artist Carly Noel

Visual Artist, Minneapolis, MN

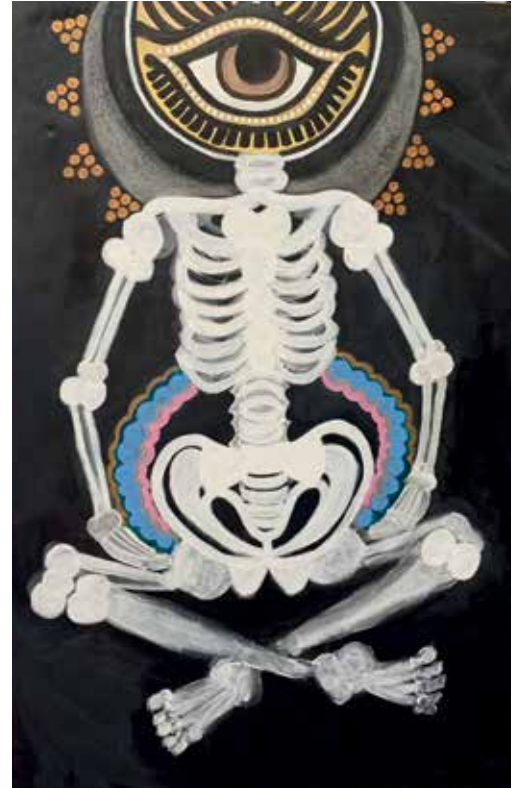


A visual artist, healer using art as therapy and meditation. Carly is an advocate for children with autism and loves her little doggies.

Title: ORIGIN

"Origin" features our ancestral connection through the sacred womb. We are all united beneath physical identity and share the same human structure. Interconnectedness across generations. How well do you know yourself through the lens of your ancestors? Can you think of anything that your ancestors have not touched or influenced you in any way. This piece is meant to honor yourself, your ancestors, and your connection to everything. From the womb, we come. As one, we become. Within one, we become.

This piece is meant to honor yourself, your ancestors, and your connection to everything.



Origin (2026)
Acrylic on Canvas 24"x36"

Artist Avi Noelle

Multidisciplinary Artist, Saint Paul, MN



Avi is a multidisciplinary artist based in St. Paul, Minnesota and has recently completed her B.A. in Studio Art and Psychology at Grinnell College.

She is drawn to observing habits, bodily responses, social interactions, and moments of discomfort as a way of understanding both herself and others.

www.aviationscreations.squarespace.com



Why Me? (2025)
Oil on Canvas, 22" x 15"

Title: Why Me?

Depicts a self-portrait caught inside a comparative loop: visibly alive, visibly thriving, yet still somehow questioning worth. The voice of comparison does not care what is actually true.



Serenity (2026)
Oil on Canvas, 21.5" x 28.5"

Title: Serenity

Serenity works as the resolution. The painting is a therapeutic approach to silencing these thoughts through process and color. The colors radiate a beautiful harmony that eases my mind.

The voice of comparison does not care
what is actually true.

Artist Joseph Ra Cole

Visual Artist, Saint Paul, MN



Brother Ra is an artist that uses history, poetry, and painting to empower his community and tell the story of his ancestors.

He has been in OMG Studio Innovation Lab for 4 years and is striving to connect young people in the Afrikan Diaspora.



As Within (2026)
Acrylic of Canvas 24"x36"

Title: As Within

The art is inspired by the Enlightenment era. No one is coming to save you but yourself. It's suggesting not to wait on anything outside of yourself. To confront who we think we're expecting to save us. All art for the purpose of liberation and empowerment.

Artist Jayla Poe

Visual Artist, Birmingham, AL



Jayla Poe is a painter from Birmingham, Alabama, and a graduate of Alabama State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Her work centers women of color and blends surrealist elements with bold color and symbolism to explore identity, emotion, and personal experience.

Title: Rooted Reflections

My submitted work, *Rooted Reflections*, features a young woman with flowers growing from her face, representing transformation, healing, and growth. To me she is a symbol for a better world, showing how beauty can come through change and vulnerability. The flowers symbolize renewal, while the hidden serpent and sword in her jewelry represent protection, wisdom, and strength. Together, they reflect the balance of softness and power. Through this piece, I aim to show women of color as layered, emotional, and deeply human beyond stereotypes.

The surreal style creates a dreamlike space where she can simply exist and be fully seen. I also understand that the period of Enlightenment art often reflected colonialism and Eurocentric ideals that excluded or misrepresented Black people. My work challenges that by centering a Black woman as beautiful, powerful, and worthy of deep attention and respect.



Rooted Reflections (2026)
Acrylic on Canvas, 24"x24"

To me she is a symbol for a better world ...

Artist Curtis Riley, Jr.

Multidisciplinary Artist, Oakland, CA



My work explores the intersection of memory, ancestry, and cultural resilience within the African American experience. Through painting, illustration, and mixed media, I create visual narratives that examine how history, family, and community shape identity across generations.

Title: The Blue Print 1: Creating A Brand New World

The Blue Print 1: Creating A Brand New World, explores the idea of youth as architects of a reconstructed future. The piece centers young people as master builders of change who are designing systems rooted in liberation, collective growth, and community empowerment.

Through this work, I imagine a world where everyone has access to justice, healthcare, education, housing, wealth creation, STEM opportunities, freedom of speech, and the arts.

The work also asks viewers to reflect on what values we are teaching the next generation and whether those teachings are creating sustainable systems that will uplift future communities. I intentionally utilize a palette inspired by the skin tones of Black people to explore themes of memory, land, identity, and legacy while challenging historical narratives rooted in colonialism and Eurocentric dominance.



The Blue Print 1: Creating A Brand New World (2026)
Oil on Canvas 30" x 24"

Artist Wren Westdal

Visual Artist, Minneapolis, MN



I am a 16 year old student at DeLaSalle and I am always drawn to Vibrant colors.

I love creating and challenging myself with new tips and tricks.



Life In Colors (2026)
Oil on Canvas, 16"x20"

Title: Life In Colors

I loved making this piece and it's one of my more challenging pieces so in my mind, "the more difficult it is, the better the outcome". I used reference photos for the Taj Mahal and Eiffel Tower; then I free styled for the rest of it. I used a stippling method for the flowers. The girl waving is me (because I am hopefully in my ideal world).

Thank you to the Allegories of a Better World Artists . . .

Tami Adedayo	Minneapolis, MN
Teni Adedayo	Minneapolis, MN
Ella Beard	Minneapolis, MN
LaKelle Brawley	Decatur, AL
Daphne Burgess	Sacramento, CA
Giovanni Caprice	Minneapolis, MN
Joseph "Ra" Cole	Saint Paul, MN
Zaria Dunn	Wetumpka, AL
Alana Enfinity	San Francisco, CA
Carly Linder-Roman	Minneapolis, MN
Avi Noelle	Saint Paul, MN
Jayla Poe	Birmingham, AL
Curtis Riley, Jr.	Oakland, CA
Wren Westdal	Minneapolis, MN

