

Tight Knit

HARSH COLLECTIVE

Selected Artists



Jenna Arvleo

Arising from an acute need to connect with my inner self, painting self portraits have been the vessel that has embodied and explored the many interpretations of symbols, archetypes, icons, and moments of visual recognition. This act of self portraiture relates to the innate multiplicity of selfhood;

reflecting on Jung's hypothesis of the 'Collective Unconscious Mind.' I am interested in how we, as a collective, build symbolic sight and how this will in time, point to streams of a language that meet and disperse within the collective. This practice grapples with what connects us to forgotten pasts, current events and a rapidly unfolding future. Building from the scattered stories of my ancestors, it's through this work that I can begin to piece together an erased historical understanding beyond western colonization.

of living in a society that aims to break us. They never shy away from the gaze of the viewer; their eyes often adorned with stars, symbolic of the light within that cannot be contained. These images of radical Black peace and Joy serve as a daily reminder that despite its immense hardships, life is meant to be lived freely and without shame.



Ikechukwu Amos Christian

Ikechukwu A. Christian (b. 1997; Lagos, Nigeria) Based in Ikorodu Lagos. I started my career in 2018. schooled in Yaba tech Lagos, Nigeria.

I love to experiment with any kind of material to create beauty out of nature. I learned how to make Art when he was age 12 and also went to an Art school to build up my career. I discovered my talent in my primary school, where I

found myself drawing the brick seven heads on math note, so then I decided to get a special note for the drawing, from then I started falling in love with Art and building it up. I intend to show how important life needs to be represented to every individual, how important the moment of life treats people and involves life itself around the African race.

I'm a mixed media Artist. I use all kinds of materials to create my beautification career such as (oil, Acrylic, Collage, Glitters).

The subject I mostly focus on is the life of every individual who believes in themselves and portrays to others on how to be independent. My creativity process is to generate some things that will call people's attention.

I love to experiment in my own different kind of style, it explores me to a new view of life and nature. I seek my own inspiration from nature and other great old masters painting. Generally my hope for the future is to produce more creative works that inspire the young ones who want to use Art as their profession.

Destiny Branay

Destiny Branay is an emerging oil painter living and working in Baltimore, Maryland. Her work includes images of Black folk, whose eyes are often adorned with stars, living their truth in radical acts of peace and joy.



My art serves as both a refuge from the painful realities of this world, and a love letter to my ancestors for paving my way here. Using oil paint, I do not rush the opportunity given by those before me to show my gratitude; each layer serving as a token of appreciation. The vibrant images of Black folk celebrating life and culture depicted in my work, are a testament to our determination to make the most



Cris LaNiese

As a black contemporary artist, my work focuses on exploring the joy and experiences of being black in America, specifically within the context of

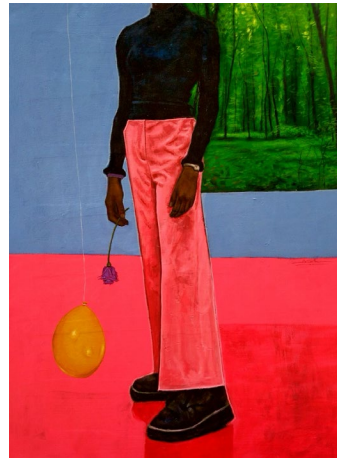
southern black culture. Through my figurative paintings and graphic design and illustration, I aim to celebrate and honor the rich history and traditions of my community. My current collection, Children of the Nile, focuses on the development years and the unique beauty and style found within black culture's childhood, from the fashion to the hair.

I am heavily influenced by the work of Emory Douglas, Faith Ringgold, Kerry James Marshall, Amy Sherald, and others, and I am inspired by their ability to use art as a means of activism and social commentary. My passion for art was ignited at a young age through the influence of my godmother, Carol Alexander, who opened the Ritz Theatre and Lavilla Museum in Jacksonville, Florida. I am also deeply grateful for my education at Bethune Cookman University, a historically black college founded by Mary McLeod Bethune, which has further fueled my passion for black art and its rich history.

I am an artist who is interested in exploring the ways in which our emotions and experiences shape and are shaped by the world around us. Through my work, I aim to create a space for contemplation and introspection, encouraging viewers to think deeply about their own nostalgic feelings and the world around them. My pieces often feature expressive faces, full story details, and vibrant colors, as I believe that art has the power to move us on a deeply emotional level. I am constantly inspired by the beauty and complexity of the black human experience, and I hope that my art can inspire others to look inward and discover the beauty within themselves and their own story.

Rodrick Howard

Rodrick "Rod" Howard is an artist studying Art, Film, and Visual Studies at Harvard with a minor in Computer Science. His artwork is inspired by artists like Caravaggio and Norman Rockwell, and his subject matter often combines modern-day social commentary with classical mythological and philosophical elements.



Paul Oyetunde Ogunlesi

Paul Oyetunde Ogunlesi (b. 1994, Lagos State) is a Lagos-based painter that hails from Ogun state, and a graduate of Yaba College of Technology in Fine Art. In creating his works, he blends newspaper collages, which he uses as metaphor to outlay hidden narratives behind the situation of his subject per time, with acrylics, using the wash and temperal finish technique to arrive at his subtlyly expressive,

textured canvases. Ogunlesi takes a different approach to portraiture in engaging his audience, with the use of truncated, disconcerting compositions. Inspired by life, Yoruba adages, faith, the mundane, the trivial and past experiences, exploring themes such as humanity, romance, kindness and hope with tender tones and natural poses, his works echo the singularities of our individual experiences by offering the viewer multi-layered frames to dive into.

In his "of Life and Animosities" series, Ogunlesi deploys an invasive process to engage his audience, Providing a multiplicity of narratives for his audience to explore, his metaphorical, ambiguous canvases oscillate between a sense of peace and abandonment, Love and hope. Forced into becoming voyeur, the viewer soon becomes the off-screen protagonist of a scene that is left for them to interpret. Ogunlesi carefully frame his compositions to avoid representing faces, he focuses instead on his characters' feet and legs, creating rich evocative "mediums of shared identities". Ogunlesi's works have been exhibited with Cultivate Gallery (London, 2023), Rele Gallery

Bukola Orioye

Bukola Orioye is an artist from Ibadan, Nigeria. Orioye's work is concerned with African spirituality and how it impacts communities focusing on how it engages concepts relating to identity, memories, worship and the wellbeing of a people.



His work is intended to explore the relationship between the past, present and the future. He is interrogating what traits, ideas and understandings about African spirituality taken from bygone cultures existing eons ago which are being carried into the future and to what effect on the present.

Orioye creates this juxtaposition in his works by depicting a futuristic African figure co-existing with an ancient African statue.

His art is informed stylistically by the 1980s particularly the inventive “high top fade” hairstyle. The angular hairstyle was adopted by a range of people including singer Grace Jones, rap artists and everyday people. Orioye sees the hairstyle as a reflection of the hard chiseled surfaces of the African effigies he introduces into his works.

Born 1993, Orioye has been a professional artist since 2019 when he was discovered by the Topfat Art Gallery, Adamasingba, Ibadan where he was working as a studio intern.

He is inspired from societal issues and life demands, beauty, culture and African Spirituality – with focus more of the female gender as a conduit to all else.

His philosophy is about simplicity and determinations without harm to none.

Chaz Outing

Chaz Outing (B. 1998; USA) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Chaz aims to create his own narratives in his work, through various mediums, based on several concepts that have deeply affected his life: Faith, hoodoo, and mythology. His inspirations come directly from not only the many stories throughout history of fantastical figures and events, but also the direct reactions that people have of him as a black man. Faith is explored through symbols, usually the cross, and the teardrop tattoo, to find a place in a system that historically demonized his people.



Christian society has time and time again villainized black skin, through the curse of Cain, yet ironically, Chaz has grown up and been taught within the Church. His work aims to embrace this “demon” that has been historically attributed to himself and others that look like him, while actually showing how holy and blessed our skin really is. Hoodoo ties directly into this, as it is a spiritual movement created from enslaved peoples of North America that mixes traditional African beliefs with Christian spiritualism. First exposed to him by his late grandmother it is the spiritual drive that pushes him to express in his work.

Beverly Y. Smith

I am a mixed-media fiber artist. I choose to express myself through quilts because of their personal connection to my ancestors and Southern roots. Through my subject matter, I explore a new narrative of



equal rights and opportunities for all genders, and specifically giving a voice to women and girls. The female figures in my quilts engage viewers in a direct gaze – an evocation of solidarity – as if to say, “I see you, so I know you see me.” By featuring women and girls in my quilts, I aspire to promote, honor, and celebrate perspectives of women across geographic, racial, and ideological lines, all the while paying homage to those who came before me.

My quilts acknowledge the strength, preciseness, and ingenuity of traditional quilts. I also expand upon these traditions by adding my own aesthetics. The strong correlations I make with African textiles and my grandmother’s quilts certainly impacted my own quilt styles. My grandmother taught me that the smallest piece of fabric can hold generations of truth. Therefore, it is characteristic of my works to contain nostalgic materials, and re-claimed garments.

My choice of fabrics come from vintage feed sacks constructed during the 1930’s and 1940’s from the Great Depression era, repurposed clothing, and upcycled vintage quilts. My quilt surface is layered with machine and hand stitching, paint, indigo dyes, transferred images, and found objects. My signature graphite drawings are rendered on unprimed canvas using various gradations of pencils. I typically use an applique process that is sewn directly to the quilt top. This transforms my figures into ancestors that tell stories from another time.

The women depicted in my works are all family members that lived during the mid- 1700’s until present day. They are my grandparents, aunts, cousins, sisters, nieces, and my mother. Underneath each personality is a collective story, a life, a soul. My faces and figures are not about capturing an exactness of the person. It is about capturing their essence.



Dimithry Victor

Dimithry Victor (b. 2000) has been a dedicated artist from a young age. Inspired by cartoons and comic books, he initially developed a love for character creation, but as he matured, he began to infuse his own experiences and

emotions into his art. This drive for self-expression has solidified his path as a professional artist.

A native of Haiti, Victor relocated to the United States as a child, bringing with him a wealth of cultural experiences from his upbringing in Miami. These experiences continue to inspire and inform his work, which seeks to shed light on the experiences of marginalized communities.

Drawing influence from the great expressionist masters, Victor's work seamlessly blends realism with unique and often humorous content, utilizing a bright color palette and strong narrative to create captivating works of art. Spanning from classical portrait setups to quirkier narrative pieces, his work seamlessly blends elements of portraiture, cartoons, and abstraction to create a visual representation of non-physical emotional states.

Through his attention to detail, texture, and color, he aims to create a sense of visual empathy between the viewers and the painted figures. Victor's works have been showcased globally, with exhibitions in cities such as London, New York, Miami, and more.



Chinedu Victor Uyaelunmo

Chinedu Victor's (b. 1998; Lagos, Nigeria) approach involves showcasing the beauty of being Black, even in the face of media misinformation and misconceptions about Black culture. Chinedu believes that highlighting the

beauty of the black community can help to promote a more accurate and positive understanding of Black culture and identity. His use of bright colors, large sized canvases and signature texture allows the viewer to be immediately drawn into the bold and vibrant world that he creates on the canvas. His choice of colors and the way he applies them with such thick texture gives his work a dynamic and energetic quality, and the large scale of his canvases allows the viewer to fully immerse themselves in the experience. This combination of elements creates a powerful visual impact that is both striking and memorable.

Samuel Semako Vittu

Samuel Semako Vittu (b. 1991), in Badagry, a coastal town of Lagos, believes that the face is laced with diverse stories. His work constantly interrogates the exterior of the face as an entry point into larger issues in society with the use of acrylic, oil and charcoal. He fuses portraiture with anthropomorphism, employing bulgy eyes as windows and zoom lens into the happenings, experiences, thoughts, and crisis that goes on in the mind of his subjects.



Samuel comes from a family where an uncle had studied art, and had given him the basic and formidable training during his formative (artistic) years. Those years could be described as one of concerted exposition. As a trained painter and art educator, he holds a Nigerian Certificate in Education from Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education as well as a Bachelor of Art Education in painting from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. As a practicing artist, Samuel works chiefly across painting and drawing. Working with charcoal, oil, acrylic and canvas has been his chosen media to register and visualize his inspiration, ideas and imaginations. The resulting artworks from his usually mixed-media experimentations are figuratively conceptual, suggestive, evocative and formalistic.

Samuel has participated in exhibitions such as Life in my city, Lagos zone at the National Gallery in (2013), he was also a participating artist in the (2019) group exhibition tagged "DREAM" at Vivid exclusive art gallery. In 2021, he was part of the exhibiting artist at the Refrigerator poetry online exhibition, On Display, Wielding power at Gallery at the Landmark (2021). Samuel is the 2022 Visiting Fellow at the Noldor Residency.