

# CARRBILL

The Carr Center Gallery • 15 E. Kirby Street • Detroit

March 15 – April 22, 2023

## AS I SEE ME Artists Under 30



# MEET *The Curator*



**TIA NICHOLS**

**As I See Me**, an exhibition at the Carr Center, features a generational study of self portraiture Curated by Tia Nichols & Lina Stephens.

**As I See Me** is a generational series of exhibitions that will focus on self-portraits, reflecting how artists at varying stages of their lives see themselves. This fascinating, multi-media exhibition has been curated by Lina Stephens & Tia Nichols. Part one of a year long series, Artists Under 30, will feature the juried work of early career artists, ages 30 and under.

**Self-portraiture** often portrays how an artist views themselves, with hopes to allow viewers to gain insight on what is personal to the creator. As I See Me | Artists Under 30 is the first of this 3- part series focusing on the artists perceptions of themselves through the demarcation of age. Upcoming exhibitions, focusing on work from mid-career artists and senior artists, will open in the Gallery later this year.



# MEET *the Artists*



**KATE AREN**

b. 2003

I am a student at College for Creative Studies in the Communication Design Program.

## **Artist Statement**

This painting is about my life with ADD, Attention Deficit Disorder. This condition has changed the way I live, in good and bad ways. The top half of the painting represents my experience with focus and disassociation. The blue static is representative of what I constantly hear because I have a hard time filtering sound. I feel like I'm always in the static or underwater and have to consciously focus to see through and function. The only good thing about having ADD and dyslexia is that through the struggle, I do see things differently than other people do and this can create a fresh perspective.

# MEET *the Artists*



**KAILEIGH BLEVINS**

b. 2000

Kaleigh Blevins (b. Detroit) is an artist living and working in Detroit, whose work examines the way Black identity is shaped in America, and the effects of this experience. In her work, familiar images are distorted to illustrate the state of uncertainty and isolation many Black people exist in. She recently received her BFA in Painting from Wayne State University. Her work has been exhibited across Metro Detroit and in New American Paintings magazine.

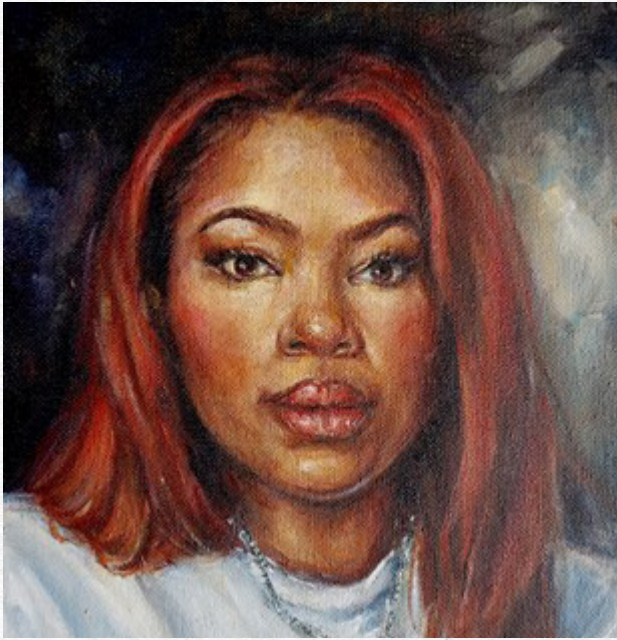
## **Artist Statement**

My work explores uncertainty and Black subjectivity. Loneliness, voyeurism, and self-image are themes I explore often. The subjects



of my paintings appear as fully realized figures existing in skewed, empty, and sometimes concealed environments to reflect an incompatibility between Black people and the world around them. These settings, often domestic spaces, are carefully staged to appear sterile and artificially intimate. My paintings include common symbols and images to create a sense of familiarity that is twisted when they are represented outside of their original context. Through references to art history, mythology, and TV and film, I reflect on the exchange that happens between people and their environments to construct collective and individual identities. I mix my personal history with general shared experiences to create images that feel like false memories. This recontextualization is done to examine Black contemporary aspirations as they conflict with unspoken standards set in place.

# MEET *the Artists*



**SHERELL CHILLIK**

b. 1993

Sherell Chillik was born in Detroit, Michigan. She currently lives and works in Flint, Michigan. She received her BFA, in painting, at College For Creative Studies in 2018. She's participated in the AICAD Residency in Dumbo, Brooklyn, New York, Rogers Art Loft Residency, and Ox-Bow School of Art and Residency in Saugatuck MI. From 2012 to 2015 she volunteered to create murals around the Brightmoor community of Detroit. Chillik began teaching through Paint and Sip parties in 2019 and developed a stronger connection to the growth and development of young artists through those classes. She teaches private art classes in Flint MI and participates in local art events and fairs to engage with her community. Her most



recent shows include "Rose Colored Glasses" at Core Art Space in Colorado, a solo show "Redeemable" at Roger's Studio Gallery in Las Vegas NV, and a solo show at The Congregation in Detroit MI titled " For Righteousness' Sake".

### **Artist Statement**

Sherell Chillik's work explores portraiture and biblical texts' relationship with postmodern times. Through portraiture, she navigates through the natural world with a spiritual lens. She uses family and social media acquaintances as references. Chillik's narratives are created from biographical stories surrounding her Christian spiritual journey. She explores themes of loneliness, isolation, pain, messages hidden in plain sight, blackness, and violence within church culture. Her painting palette is inspired by traditional oil painters from the Renaissance but, with a modern twist. She uses a dark and saturated traditional palette, to emphasize the dichotomy of warmth and coldness. The realistically rendered human figure is represented through a warm palette and the physical natural world. Cool colors are used to signify spirituality. Spirituality is expressed through heavily textured mark-making or the collaging of images. She illustrates purity and defilement through mediums such as oil, acrylic, and collage.

# MEET *the Artists*



**CAILYN DAWSON**

b. 1999

Cailyn Dawson (b. 1999, Detroit, Michigan) is a figurative painter whose work explores issues of identity subjectivity, the psychology of navigating an evolving self, and themes of how separation and displacement affect racial identity. Dawson has exhibited at the College for Creative Studies, Detroit Artist Market, Annex Gallery, M Contemporary, Buckham Gallery, and at the Andy Performing Arts Center. She received her BFA from the College for Creative Studies in 2021 and lives and works in metro Detroit.

## **Artist Statement**

With these self-portraits, I aim to capture a moment in time thus creating a timeline of growth. I use portraiture as a way to document



myself and to really understand who I am. Through painting, I am able to show a viewer how I view myself and give them an insight into my life. I'm relatively new to painting so I'm still developing how I use the medium to express my personal growth. While I'm painting an interesting parallel is being created, as I'm learning new things about the medium, I am also learning new things about myself. During the painting process, I spend hours reflecting and re-living the moments I'm recreating. I am forced to really look at myself and dig deep into the small things that make me, me. My paintings directly reflect my journey of self-discovery and turn that journey into a tangible object that exists outside my mind.

# MEET *the Artists*



## **BRIA ERBY**

b. 21995

Bria Erby is a figurative painter from Saginaw, MI. In 2018, Bria received a BFA in Drawing with a minor in African American Studies from Eastern Michigan University. As a figurative painter, Bria uses herself as a muse to depict individuality and self expression. She has shown in galleries all around the United States including Detroit, MI; Chicago, IL; Charlotte, NC; and New York, New York.

## **Artist Statement**

"I am my own muse. I am my first canvas." I often depict myself in my work as a way of keeping time. My work reflects a visual expression of what I am learning and going through as person and creative. My portraits are great studies of what lessons I am learning at specific ages. Paint allows me to express my emotions concretely and vividly.



# MEET *the Artists*



## SHANELLE HARRISON

b. 1997

Shanelle Harrison (Columbia, MD) is an African-American narrative artist, printmaker, researcher, educator, and author. Working at the intersection of storytelling, audio installation, assemblage, print, and sculpture; her practice explores themes of memory, psychology, race, identity, spirituality, eternal life, and romance. Shanelle is currently commemorating personal events and rituals in her life through experimental, restorative narrative. Shanelle Harrison is a recipient of the 2021 Independent Artist Award from the Maryland State Arts Council. Recently, Shanelle exhibited work for her solo show “Transition” at Motor House Gallery in Baltimore, MD, The Cumberland Valley Artists’ juried exhibition at The Washington County Museum of Fine Arts in Hagerstown, Maryland, The Charles H. Wright Muse-

um in Detroit, Michigan, and The American Hungarian Foundation in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Shanelle received her B.A. from Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD in 2019. Shanelle is a current MFA candidate at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, MI.

## Artist Statement

I believe in exploring history through my work. Real history. The stories I believe are untold and erased. It feels restorative to me. As a storyteller and research-based artist, I focus on the functionality of beads as commemoration, ornamentation, and utility in modern day rituals. Commemoration specifically for bodies of displaced, missing, deceased, and of living individuals as well. I explore the representation of “the body” without using the distressed human imagery I've explored in my previous works. This idea manifests into the use of plants or “plant bodies” as the human body, creating ceremonial sculptures, prints, installations, assemblage, and wreaths, which explore themes of memory, psychology, race, identity, spirituality, eternal life, and romance. I incorporate the tools of printmaking in my process by painting with inks and wood carving. Growing up with a florist as a mother, I don't hesitate to experiment with materials used to make floral presentations. I am exploring how far I can push these materials outside of their conventional use. I am currently commemorating personal events and rituals in my life through experimental, restorative narrative.



# MEET *the Artists*



## MIRIAM HULL

b. 1997

Emerging Detroit based acrylic painter, Miriam Hull, focuses on various themes of the Black experience in her art. The way in which Miriam describes her work is “love letters to Black people”, where she wants her work to feel like home to viewers that come from these familiar experiences. The goal is to give the viewers the experience of being seen. Bringing to life themes of family, religion, black excellence and more with her realism paintings, Miriam is inspired solely by the culture. Within just the two short years of her journey, Miriam has curated two shows. “The Black Woman is Art” and “SALUD”, a solo and a group show that has brought together the community as well as continues to help Miriam evolve in her artistry.

## Artist Statement

As an artist, creating has done nothing but made me feel good. The process, the emotions and just being able to paint and give life to memories and experiences strengthens me. Introspection, retrospection and authenticity are very important parts of my process. When it's just me, the canvas and the paint, that's when I feel my most free. Free to think, free to feel, free to explore. With art being an emotional vessel for me, it's what I bring to canvas. My love for Black people is never ending and that's the imprint I want my work to leave. Especially with the climate in which we are often treated, I want to inspire my family, community and whoever my art continues to reach. The message behind my art is love.



# MEET *the Artists*



## **PRECIOUS-ANGEL JENNINGS**

b. 1995

Precious-Angel Jennings is an Contemporary Artist who was born in 1995 and raised in Detroit, MI. Her practice focus on exalting Black and the Queer communities while acknowledging the fundamentals of spiritual healing through creative lenses. She constructs figurative, narrative images through the lens of love, self-awareness, angst and emotion. Jennings received her high school diploma at Fitzgerald High school and its currently studying at College for Creative Studies majoring in Art Practice (Fine Arts). Her work is represented in the Collections of the Sasha Center (Sexual assault Services for Holistic Healing and Awareness) and College for Creative Studies. Precious-Angel Jennings was awarded James Blanton Endowment Scholarship and Matilda Wilson Fine Art Scholarship.

## Artist Statement

When I was younger, art became more than a project, it became my voice, my creative expression and the source to project my inner world into reality. Art has given me the opportunity and the freedom to reframe my own narrative on healing and what it is to be a Black queer woman. I create moments in time that's reflective of nature and spirituality while creating figurative images that provoke emotion and depth. My technique is truly intuitive as I allow my brush and/or tool to be the beacon of my subconscious. To create and allow the rhythmic notions of colors, textures and nature to be the reminiscent of my story. Today, my work reflect queer spaces as well as emotional depths of self-healing to create crafted projects with care. I continue to use reference of personal, vulnerable self realizations to create connections about one's self-worth and self-awareness through the lens of creative expression . I've used my art on my own personal platforms to open the doorways to talk about mental health, hardships and the essence of self through paintings, digital art, sculpture and performance. I want my art to serve as a reminder of one's journey of self-worth and perseverance. As well as a continued illustration to the universe that our own lives, our own forms of art is the best masterpiece of all.



# MEET *The Artists*



**JACK ANDREW JONES**

b. 1993

Jack is a Detroit based artist who deal in drawing painting, and digital work. They started drawing when they were young, choosing to doodle in the empty pages of their notebook during class. They studied at the Detroit School of arts, graduating with a visual arts degree, and went on to obtain their bachelor's degree at Oakland University, majoring in studio art with a focus in drawing. Partway through their studies, they began painting and discovered that they enjoyed the process, choosing to use it as the basis for their senior thesis and entering their work into exhibitions at their school. They continue to pick up new skills and hone their craft at home, taking inspiration from pop culture, the news and music, while also turning inwards and exploring themselves as the subject in their works.

## Artist Statement

I create my paintings based on interactions with myself and the world around me. The choice to use oil in all of my works is because it dries slowly, so you can put all of your feelings into a piece a little at a time, and your brush strokes display your emotions as you go. Sometimes my thoughts and feelings are more intense than I can handle alone, so I turn to the canvas, and I try to convey that when I start my pieces. I can be more objective later when I try to add details.



# MEET *the Artists*



**JEN KESLER**

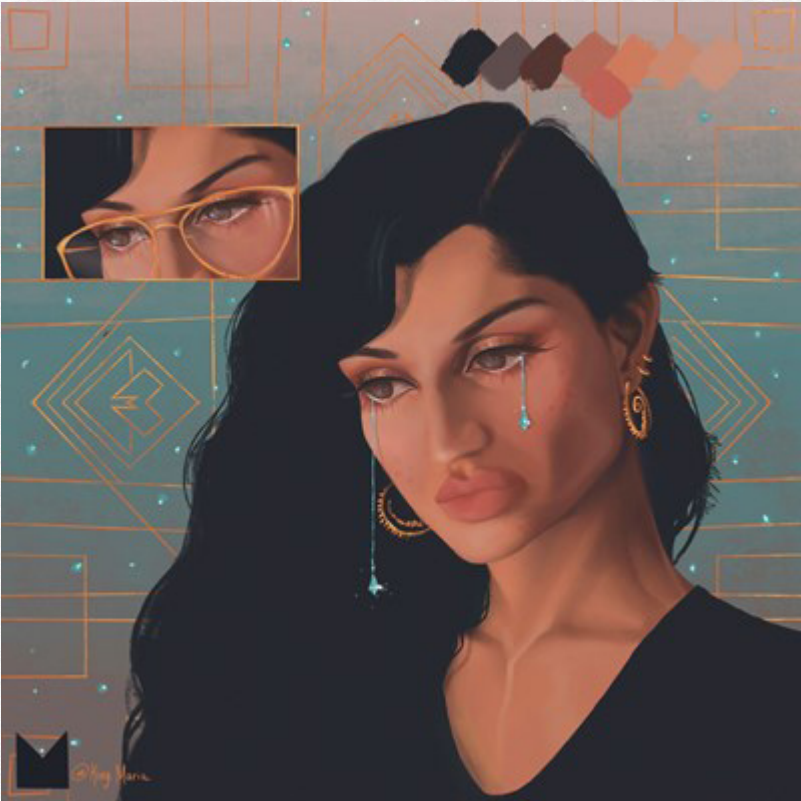
b. 1998

Jen is an artist with Autism. She has been drawing for as long as she can remember.

## **Artist Statement**

Having fun with shapes and colors since 2004.

# MEET *the Artists*



## MARIA MALIK

b. 1995

Maria Malik is a human being that is currently living and observing life. She was most likely created to view metaphysical patterns and translate them to images that explain the story of the body she occupies. Beyond this and the journey to break out of the physical realm, Maria is just not here."

## Artist Statement

I am a human being living life and obtaining skills for the purpose of I have nothing better to do.



# MEET *the Artists*



**SIERRA McCANTS**

b. 2000

I am a current college student studying Psychology at The University of Michigan Ann Arbor. I have a passion for all-things-creativity, and my experience ranges from both performing and visual arts. My art tends to focus on femininity, specifically black femininity and changing the narrative around what it means to be a black woman.

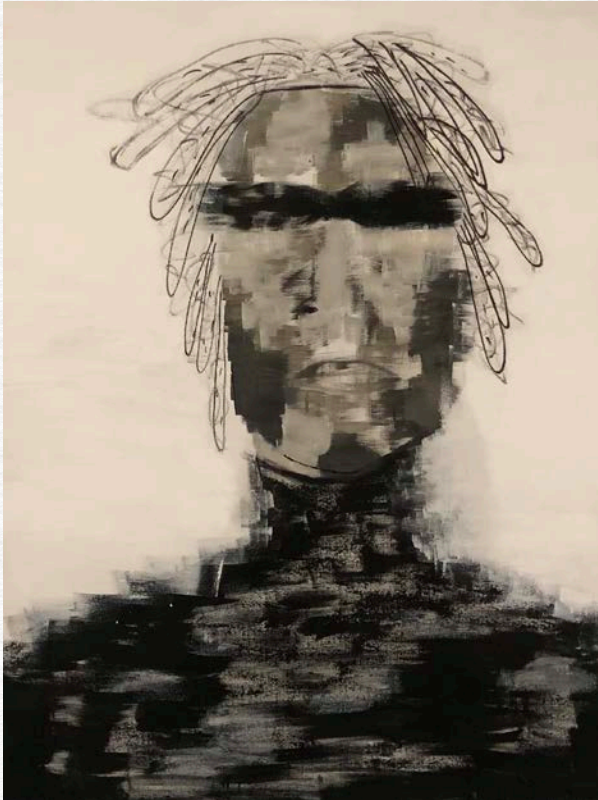
## **Artist Statement**

I use various mediums, primarily acrylic paint to create paintings that personify various characteristics I've found in the women that

have had an incredible impact on me and my life. I seek to embody traits like boldness, confidence, and also serenity, as that is not a temperament typically associated with African American Women. Her Peace inspired by my grandmother who has instilled in me the importance of maintaining inner peace, and recognizing that peace is something only I have the power to maintain, and that is one of the greatest forms of self love. Her Glow is how I'd like to someday view myself; confident, creative, and interacting with a radiance that captivates, or so I hope.



# MEET *the Artists*



**SEYDEHWON NAGBE**

b. 2003

Born in Detroit MI, Seydehwon Nagbe (20) is a self-taught artist focused on using his skills to not only inspire creativity but to also build a path for other artists to follow. Seydehwon started painting at a young age and used the earth as his canvas, in turn developing a reality based on creativity. His existential outlook on life made it hard for Seydehwon to express himself and he felt as if he never truly fit in among the people around him. Seydehwon would often rely on art to help express his thoughts and feelings. Seydehwon

works from his Metro-Detroit based art studio located in Oak Park, MI. Seydehwon is close to his family and shares creative space with his mother who owns her own hairdressing business. Seydehwon's mother is a major supporter of his work and his dreams. Her support and guidance taught Seydehwon many valuable lessons about perseverance and hard work. Seydehwon is very devoted to his Jewish faith and finds solace in the ability to express his beliefs through art without diminishing other religious beliefs. Seydehwon has very ambitious dreams. His infectious personality and relentless work ethic enables him to realize of his goals. Coming from a West African family and growing up in a low socioeconomic area, Seydehwon was encouraged to excel. Seydehwon dreams of taking his work international and eventually mentoring people from a similar background. Renowned, Detroit based artist Judy Bowmen has taken Seydehwon under her wing as a mentee. We look forward to seeing how Seydehwon develops as an artist under her guidance.

### **Artist Statement**

"I believe creation is the basis for everything, life is about creating and making something out of nothing." Many of Seydehwon's influences come from pop culture and abstract ideas. His environment plays a major role in his work and the mediums Seydehwon uses layers his perspective showcasing the unique and remarkable skills this young Artis has. Seydehwon is working on several projects and plans to announce his next solo show soon.



# MEET *the Artists*



**TIA NICHOLS**

b. 1997

Tia Nichols is from Newport News, Virginia. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art with a concentration in Printmaking and a minor in American Sign Language & Deaf Studies from the University of Virginia (UVA), December 2018. She completed her Master's in Fine Arts in Art and Art History: Printmaking, from Wayne State University in Detroit, May 2022.

In Michigan, Nichols has exhibited at the Scarab Club, Detroit Artist Market (DAM), Art Mile, East End Gallery of Marshall, Norwest Gallery, The Gallery at Brewery Park, Gutman Gallery of Ann Arbor, the Carr Center, Live Coal, the Gallery at Stone and Spoon, Reyes | Finn, Downriver Council for the Arts, and Michigan Legislature in Lansing. Nationally, she has shown with Manhattan Graphics Center

(MGC), Downing Gross Cultural Arts Center of Newport News, VA, and Ruffin Gallery at UVA. She has work apart of Jacksonville State University's permanent collection.

Currently, she is the Gallery Manager of the Carr Center of Detroit, Chief Curator at Mack Alive, on the Exhibitions Committee at Swords Into Plowshares of Detroit, and Membership Committee at the Scarab Club. For a season, Nichols has worked with Wayne State Galleries, Live Coal, New City Arts Initiative of Charlottesville, Virginia, Felle's Gallery in Ferndale, and BULK Space Detroit. Recently she has been awarded to serve as the Graduate Curatorial Assistant at the Southern Graphics Council International (SGCI) Puertografico conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico 2025 and received the Awagami Paper Award with SGCI for the Madison, Wisconsin conference of 2022.

In the future, Nichols hopes to continue servicing youth and young adults through mentorship as well as continue to pursue curatorial gallery management. She plans to launch a fine, culinary, and performing arts center for underrepresented members of her community.

### **Artist Statement**

I have become interested in breaking down the language and processes of printmaking and papermaking. My exploration has grown into an understanding of how to deteriorate substances with hopes to increase sustainability. Though these materials may not have much longevity, and the question of archival stability may arise, my goal is simply to create. I am choosing to work with materials that raise awareness of substance abuse, comfort, and my



intersectional background.

My recent work focuses on the continued development of my interests in supporting our environment, how we impact the environment, and how we occupy and develop in environments. I also bring to life some stories on those who are living with mental challenges associated with post traumatic slave syndrome. Finally, I am curious about endangerment. To live, but only as though there were no tomorrow. Endangered species are “anyone or anything whose continued existence is threatened.” Society has normalized the dwindling population of chickens, various bird species, pigs, and cows for mass consumer culture. However, media desensitization to the dwindling population of black bodies for God knows what, will always leave pits of stomachs palpitant. My work often compares studies of endangered animal species to populations of targeted minorities. I focus on the identities of Black women and our battle regarding mental health, triggers, coping mechanisms, African myths, Black religion, effects of war, beauty standards, and being a “strong Black woman”. However, I also focus on the identities of Black men and women experiencing Black joy. A form of resistance designed to combat trauma and guarantee a glimpse of hope.

# MEET *the Artists*



**MARTENYA SHAWAN**

b. 1994

I am a Black Visual Artist and Graphic Designer, born and raised in Detroit MI. Art has always been a big part of my life. Art carried me through life and will always. Portrait art is my main focus.

## **Artist Statement**

I use different shades of Cool Greys and Warm Tones using Prismacolor markers in my artwork to portray what I think is Beautiful and Unique in style. Color has also been a big thing to me I would add just a little pop of color to bring some of my portraits to life. I've come a long way and I will continue to challenge myself, learn, and continue to achieve "Black Girl Magic".



# MEET *the Artists*



## WYATT THIRY

b. 2003

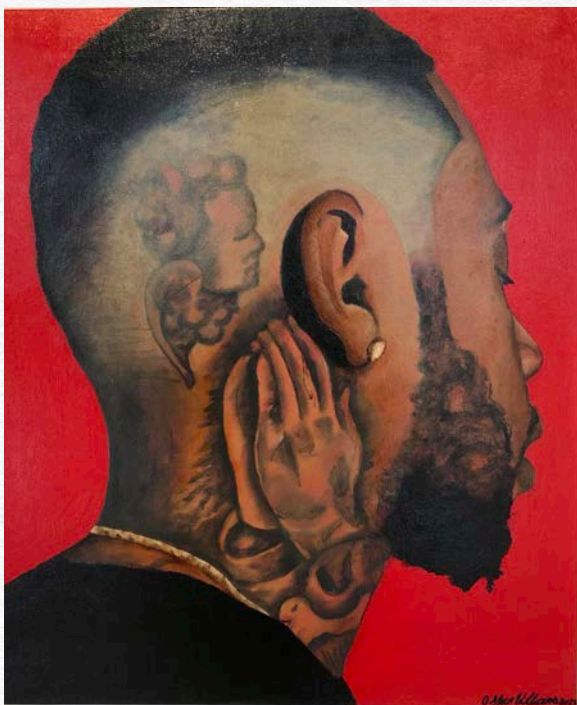
Hello! My name is Wyatt Thiry. I am 20 years old and currently live in Midtown Detroit. I grew up in Milan, a small farming town in south east Michigan, near the Ohio border. I attended Milan High School and graduated in 2021. After high school, I attended Wayne State University as a music major with a concentration in 'jazz studies'. After my second semester, I switched majors to metalsmithing with a minor in blacksmithing, under the instruction of Evan Larson Voltz and Wade Buck. I am currently on track to graduate from the program in 2025. Thank you for your consideration!

## Artist Statement

The pursuit of expression through endeavored experimentation has developed at the same rate that I have grown as a human. The medium of expression changes, as does the person who expresses, but art in its rawest form has been a part of my life for nearly as long as I have been alive. This expression is at the heart of my practice, as an artist and as a human. In a world that increasingly centers on the de-privatization of the self, my goal is to express the ideas that our modern world seemingly forces us to make public: ideas of sexuality, identity, trauma, and beauty, all principles that are deeply personal, but in our consumption-based existence, seem to have lost their flavor. My goal, as it stands in February of 2023, is to express these deeply human ideas in as human of a way as possible. There is beauty in the never-ending pain that is the human experience, and I will search for it in whatever medium draws me in. This expression is achieved through experimentation fueled by conviction, love, and the pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake. I use the word 'endeavored' because my experimentation is not a hammer swung in the dark or a horn blown with no air. I will dedicate myself to learning with my own two hands and will look towards the future without forsaking the practices that have come before me. Thank you.



# MEET *the Artists*



**OSHUN WILLIAMS**

b. 1993

Named after the popular Yoruba goddess, OShun Williams was born and raised in Pontiac, MI. He is a self-taught emerging artist rapidly flourishing in the Metro-Detroit arts community. Known for his unique complementary style, Williams applies his own chenille patches to his works of art to add a mixed media touch to his pieces. He paints with acrylic on canvas and occasionally uses newspaper to perceive texture throughout his pieces. He is a dedicated father who admires painting gratifying images of his two beloved daughters. Williams states that he paints to generate as many assets as possible to create a legacy to his children because of his strong belief in sustaining generational wealth.

## Artist Statement

When I create art, It provides me with an appreciation of fulfillment. It grants me a sense of purpose. A life without purpose has no meaning. My ambition is to captivate the comprehension of others by composing distinguished works of arts. I generate art by applying acrylic on canvas. I use different mediums such as chenille patches, fabrics, and newspapers to bring diversity into my paintings. Being from the mitten shaped state I apply mittens in my paintings to remind individuals to always commit to conventional actions and not misleading discord. My paintings are an indication of the past, present, and imminent plans for my life.