

EXHIBIT CATALOG

Angel Allen
ANGEL ALLEN
ARTS

INTERACTIONS WITH THE SELF



CONTENTS



3- The Artist

4- Feeling & Emotion Through Art

5 - Interactions With The Self

6- Exhibited Work

27- Links/Contact



THE ARTIST



ANGEL ALLEN-TARDIVEL

Angel Allen-Tardivel (b. 1995, New Orleans, Louisiana) is an African- American emerging artist living and working in Brittany, France. She is primarily an oil painter, but enjoys creating with other mediums, such as clay and textile, as an extension of her paintings.

Angel uses black people in her work to represent the African diaspora. However, the stories behind each painting can resonate with many.

Angel's art is a visual interpretation of the common man's emotions and thoughts. Her style is characterized by soft hues and strong figurative symbolism to highlight those emotions. She uses minimal elements around the main figure as a way to facilitate the main theme without eyes diverging too far from the main figure.

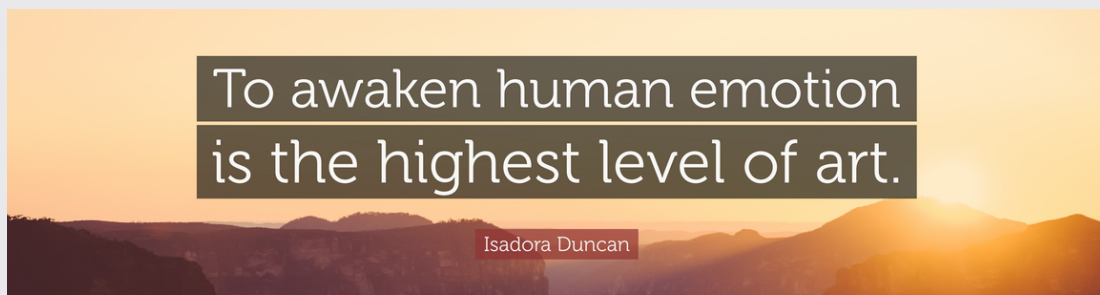
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angel A'.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, possibly reading 'A.A.' or similar.

FEELING & EMOTION THROUGH ART

When I began my journey to becoming an artist, I didn't really know what I wanted to paint. I mean, I painted everything! There were things I knew I loved-- like architecture, nature, animals, people--but at the beginning I felt like there was nothing I was driven to enough, emotionally.

I would like to consider myself someone very in touch with my emotions, and likewise would "like" to consider myself in touch with others' too. The thing is that how one perceives another to be feeling isn't always correct. That is because we all have different emotions, and just one emotion can trigger a plenitude of different feelings. The complexity of the pair is what has driven my work the past couple of years, and now the majority of what I paint is my physical representation of emotions, and people in these moments of human feeling. What I find so powerful about emotion and feeling is the ability to, in most cases, recognize it, connect to it, and then react to it. It's a universal language.



Art is provocative! It begs for a response, and it's often answered by the viewer in the form of an initial (and sometimes subconscious) emotional experience, followed by a conscious feeling. This is what drives me to create what I do--to orchestrate that mental connection between painting and man. It's not an easy task, as my interpretation of one emotion may not be that of another's. However, art is meant to be interpreted, and the fact that there can be different responses to one piece of art is what makes me highly interested and passionate in the work that I do.

INTERACTIONS WITH THE SELF

Interactions With the Self is a journey of emotions. It's a personal interpretation of that which is not always apparent to the eye. It is a delving into what, at the core of us all, makes us human. Feeling. Each painting in the series represents a person, in a moment of deep feeling. Alone. Because at the end of the day, it is ourselves who we must confront and interact with, to understand what we are feeling. It's a snapshot of an instant when one asks "How do I get through this?"

Most of the paintings in this series feature just one person. If it has two, it's a reflection or duplicate of one person. The reason why I did this was to emphasize that moment of "being alone and in our feelings". It also allows the viewer to enter and observe this personal moment in a space that is accompanied by a special level of intimacy. Most of the time, people have others; loved ones there to support them when a feeling is overwhelmingly consuming.

This series of paintings and the theme that connects them all stems from a very difficult event that I went through at the very beginning of 2023. My last art exhibit, I was pregnant with my daughter Enora. That, in combination with my participation in my first physical group show, made that moment in my life, one of the happiest. Despite how extremely difficult my pregnancy was, I was on cloud nine because everything was falling into place—seemingly perfectly.

However, in February of that year I went into premature labor and lost my daughter that very same day. Nothing could have prepared for the wave of extreme emotions that followed that day, and continued for that entire year. For the most part, I felt good in life; I had a fortunate childhood, and had never experienced an unexpected, tragic loss. So, all of these feelings I had inside of me were new. Processing them, facing them, and understanding them was a whole new test of life, and it took time to comprehend.

With a little clarity, I found (or learned) how to heal. I've always been a visual learner; I understand things so much better when I can see it. So I decided I would confront what I felt inside, visually, to break down and dissect my emotions. I did it in a way that I knew best ...by painting!

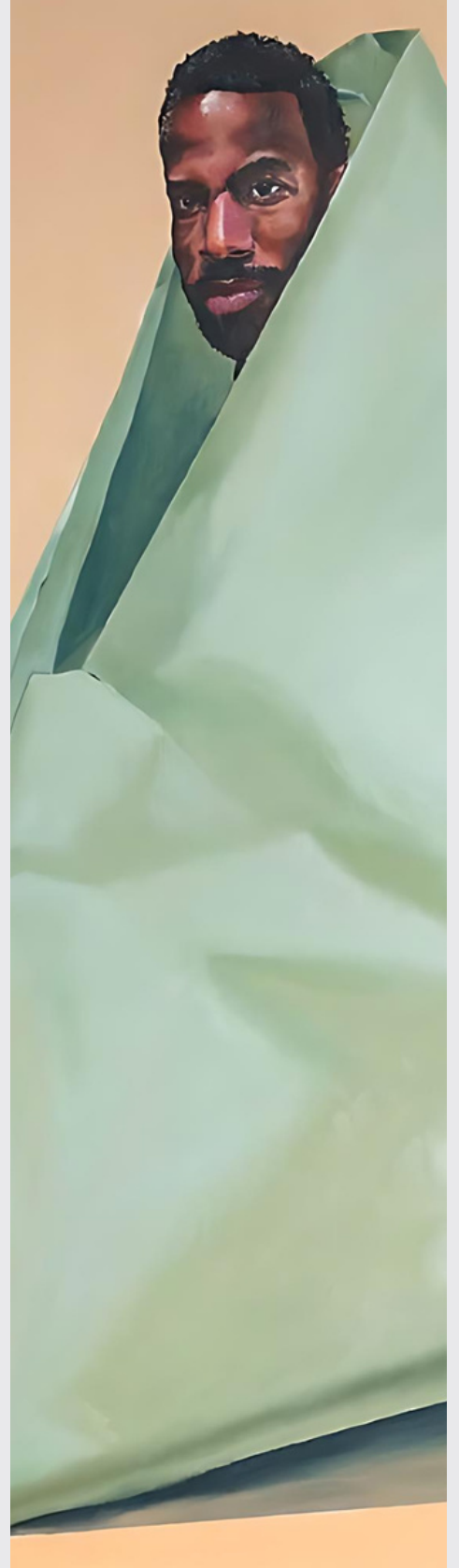
Most of the paintings that are in this series feature other people. There are a few self-portraits, but only one—*Comfort Her—in the *Interactions with the Self* series, and another—*Hanging By Threads*—also in the series, but more of an indirect self-portrait. Why I have few paintings of myself, is not very clear, even to me. Perhaps, I was not ready to take the step of seeing myself experiencing these states of emotion that I only recently have been in. However, what I do know now is that I find it more visually compelling to see a variety of faces because it feels less lonely, and I know that others can relate to having these, or similar experiences.

Although the composition of these pieces have a somber back story, it really is, as a whole, a journey of emotions. A journey, no matter how difficult, bumpy, or unpredictable, is a moment to learn, grow, and discover. My personal journey in 2023 was all of those things, and in the end, I found a new level of appreciation for myself and for life that I had never had before.

*This series is dedicated
to Enora Tardivel*



EXHIBITED WORK



Angel Allen

WHEN LIFE GAVE A LEMON



Oil Paint on Canvas | 45.7 x 28.7in | 116x73cm | Year 2023 | \$2,700

“When Life Gave A Lemon” is truly one of my favorite pieces. The visual idea of this painting marinated in my mind for months before I decided to go ahead and actually begin it (granted, this marination process happens often and sometimes never makes it to a canvas, unfortunately!). This idea that I had sitting in my mind for some time stemmed from a few personal events, as well as social and political affairs happening in the world.

The main emotion I wanted this painting to have was one of despair, but because I am indeed a sucker for happy endings, I also wanted to add symbolic elements to represent hope and joy.

Sadness is one of mankind's primary emotions. So, no matter how fortunate we may be in life, sadness is an emotion we undoubtedly have all had before--and therefore one to which we can all relate. What do we do in moments of sadness...where do we go? What feelings surface from this emotion that can affect our mental and physical well-being? What is it like, and who are we in that moment when life has given us [another] a yellow sour lemon?



The Whole Lemons

The pile of whole lemons, though off to the side, is actually the star of the painting. These are the lemons of misfortune; the lemons that this person in the painting is supposed to turn into something sweeter. There is, however, a twist that I wanted to add to its symbolism. Historically speaking, lemons also represented prosperity, as citrus fruit was once reserved only for the wealthy in the middle ages.

The Orange Cloth

Orange is often associated with energy, enthusiasm, and excitement. But most colors can have less positive significances as well. Here, orange represents both deceit and ignorance. To the person in this painting, life has deceived him. Maybe the life he desired did not come to fruition. However, maybe the man is just ignorant of the possibilities (the pile of lemons) of a joyful and prosperous new beginning.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.A.' or similar, with a stylized flourish.

CACHÉ (HIDDEN)



Oil Paint on Canvas | 39.4x39.4in, (2) 15.7x15.7in | 100x100cm , (2) 40x40cm | Year 2023 | \$4,200

Caché, or *Hidden*, was my first attempt at a triptych. I definitely found that the triptych suited my mental process of composing an art piece, but overall the execution of it was new and complicated. I did not want the pieces to flow into one literal painting, like a normal triptych. Instead, I wanted each part to give its own piece of information to the entirety of the piece.

Balance in this piece was also a concern to me. Given that a traditional triptych is like one painting over three panels which creates its own balance, I had to find a way to add that to my non-traditional attempt. I did what felt best to me, and merely used color to stabilize everything.

Caché represents the desire to function in a community, society, etc., but also feeling disconnected from your true self in the presence of those groups. As humans, we thrive on connections and interactions. So when we feel that we do not identify fully with those with whom we try to connect, we put on a smile, or an outfit, or an attitude, for that moment of interaction...then we retreat to a place where we feel safe and more ourselves.



The Cocoon and Mask

On the largest canvas, there is a man in a green paper cocoon, with a lion mask beside him. The cocoon, a word used to describe a comfy spot, is also a place of rest, transformation, and renewal. The cocoon is also paper, representing the fragility of this place of retreat. The lion's mask represents the face, or personality that the man puts on when he is out in society.

The Closed Cocoon

The closed cocoon simply represents a state of the entire piece. On the first canvas, we see the man and the cocoon is open. Now it is closed. One can imagine the man is inside after retreating from his daily interactions. One can also assume the cocoon is closed because the man has left to commence those interactions.



The Naked Mannequin Head

Representing another state of the entire triptych, there is the mannequin head and stand, with no lion's mask on it. The gentleman has taken his mask for the day, and what remains is a representation of his true identity. A bare mannequin has no personality, no identity, until something is placed on it. Yet, the mannequin also represents the man himself. So could the man be losing his identity while settling into the identity of the lion's mask? That is to one's own interpretation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.A.' with a stylized flourish.



Hanging By Threads | Oil Paint on Canvas | 45.7 x 31.9in | 116 x 81cm | Year 2024 | \$3,000

HANGING BY THREADS



Oil Paint on Canvas | 45.7 x 31.9in | 116 x 81cm | Year 2024 | \$3,000

Perhaps the painting that all encapsulates the inspiration behind the series. The title, *Hanging By Threads*, comes from the commonly used phrase “hanging on by a thread”. Seeing this painting in completion gives me goosebumps! It is so delicate, yet it has a strong message. There are many subtle symbolic elements that I wanted to add to this painting, because from the very beginning, when it was just a concept in my mind, this painting struck my heart.

The woman lays in a fetal like position, with her hands in front of her face, which is covered by a light pink sweater. She appears to be suspended in the air, and by many thin threads.

I wanted the viewer to feel the delicate situation presented here--this image of being in such a vulnerable position, and only having thread like hope holding you up. It makes one question the strength of said hope--the strength of these threads. Is it enough to keep her up? How long has she been hanging, and how much longer does she have? Does she know the possible danger to come?

I treated the delicate tension in this piece as a foreshadowing of what was waiting for me. The scary situation I was in, the unknown amount of time I had before everything was to go south. However, I wanted the image itself to represent what has already happened. The sorrow, the loss, and the feeling of continuing on in life with little hope of ever experiencing the joy I waited for.

Hues of pink take over this painting to represent “girl”. The fetal position--a position we often retreat back to for comfort and security. The sweater over the face is a symbolic element also used in *When Life Gave A Lemon* to represent fear of the possible fate that lies ahead. On the sweater, there is a tag that reads 02-09-23 MIH, an homage to a dear one lost. Lastly, if you look closely, there is a single thread that has begun to split. This represents the emotional weight the woman carries, and the possibility that her hope may not be able to hold her up much longer. Therefore, she must find the courage to recover the hope she has lost to keep her afloat.



INTERROGATION



Oil Paint on Canvas | 39.4 x 24.8in | 100 x 63cm | Year 2024 | \$1,900

The image I wanted to portray in “Interrogation” was the actual reunion of the old self and the new self. In the painting we see two men-- the same man, staring at himself: the left man is the past, and the right man is the present. The self from the past wears a mask, and has a nail in his hand, while the self from the future is holding a dagger in his hand.

The idea of “Interrogation” came about when my husband and I were discussing how we, as individuals, had changed and grown despite how difficult the past year had been. There was a moment in our lives where it seemed like nothing was going the way we wanted, or expected-- and we had changed (both emotionally and physically) as we shifted through this time. We realized there were moments we wish we could go back and do differently, and others that we wouldn’t change for the world.

I often say to myself that I wish I had the mindset I do now, when I was a teen. Or, I wish I could tell my younger self to make x choices instead of y, and so on . I think we can all think back to our youth, or maybe even a few years ago, and see a version of ourselves that was ready for change--ready to leave the old behind. If you could have that past version of yourself in front of you, how would you look or how would you interpret that person? What questions would the old you be asking the present you-- what advice would you be giving to the old you?



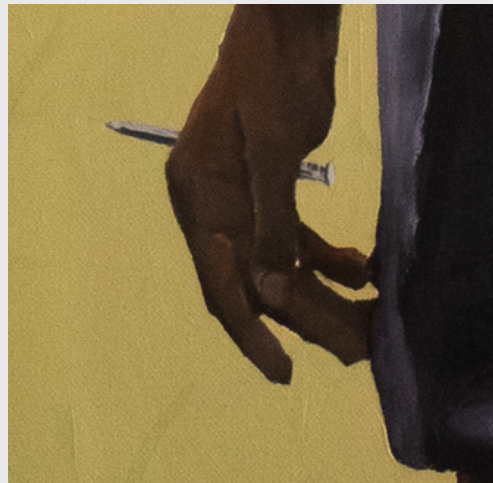


The Mask

The mask worn by the past self represents the present self's interpretation of what he sees. Life and time has changed the man to a point where he does not recognize who he used to be. Therefore, in a way, he views his past self as a stranger...maybe even a threat.

The Nail

The nail in the hand is indeed religiously inspired. Whereas most images of Christ show the holes in his hand to represent that the suffering has been done and is ended, In my painting the man still has the nail. That is to say that the past self still lives in his reality, which until the present, means he still is suffering.



The Dagger

Another object religiously inspired, the dagger ,represents the lesser known Archangel Zadkiel, the supposed angel who prevented Abraham from sacrificing his own son. The dagger, a rather threatening object, is the symbol of Zadkiel. However it's notable to mention this archangel is actually the angel of mercy. Therefore, the present self is representing mercy. forgiving his past self for any mistakes or wrongdoings.



Inside My Own Confusion | Oil Paint on Canvas | 39.4 x 31.9in | 100 x 81cm | Year 2023- 2024 | \$2,400

INSIDE MY OWN CONFUSION



Oil Paint on Canvas | 39.4 x 31.9in | 100 x 81cm | Year 2023- 2024 | \$2,400

This piece, whose title is inspired by the Linkin Park song Lost, represents what it feels like to be catapulted into a situation that is so incomprehensible, you feel as though there is no clarity to be found.

The moving swirls around the man's face is a physical representation of confusion. Confusion often affects how we see and interpret things around us; it hinders vision. Blue was chosen as the color for confusion, although blue can often be a color to signify stability. I wanted this paradox of sorts to represent how stability in life can so quickly change in just a single moment, possibly sending us into a state of panic and uncertainty.

The continuation of the swirls around and down the body of the man is a further representation of the feeling of being entangled, or even more, find oneself in an entanglement.

COMFORT HER



Oil Paint on Canvas | 23.6 x 23.6in | 60 x 60cm | Year 2024 | \$1,150

Comfort Her, the only true self-portrait in the series, was one of the last paintings created, and perhaps for reasons of uncertainty regarding placing myself within this series.

However, I did feel it was appropriate to display an image that represents how I feel today in 2024, in relation to how I felt in 2023. There are a lot of elements in this painting, and many others, that point to the idea of comfort, content, and acceptance: comfy socks, soft fabrics, as well as calming hues.

Comfort Her is an image of the present, but with elements that point to the hope for a bright future.



The Goldfish in the Glass

The goldfish, a popular symbol of good luck, transformation, and abundance in cultures such as Chinese and Native American, is in a wine glass. When an object is in a glass of water, it appears magnified. Thus, this image represents the hope for growth and a positive future.

The Lotuses

The lotus flower has always been linked to rebirth and new beginnings. Also a nod to the future, the lotuses represent the beginning of positive change and a new chapter of life.



The Window

The window is the one symbolic element that, in a way, references the past. The window represents the outside; it exhibits a way out (in this case, out of a situation or state of mind) of closed space and into freedom.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angel Allen Arts'.

VINES



Oil Paint on Canvas | 24 x 24in | 61 x 61cm | Year 2024 | \$1,200



There was a feeling I wanted to portray in a painting and I couldn't think of a more interesting image than an astronaut! It's the feeling of wanting to soar--whether in personal life or professional life--but simultaneously feeling held down by the "now", or tied up in the present. Vines is this very simple yet enticing image because it just seems out of place: an astronaut sitting on a bench next to a vining plant. It came out to be a lovely piece.

The inspiration behind this piece comes from the same era of many of the rest of the pieces in this series, but it's an inner battle with the person of the past and the person of the present. The astronaut is the person of the present who is ready to take off and discover something new and exciting! But it is held down by the vines, which represents the person of the past.

However, vines are known symbolically to be strong and determined.

As I love self-contradicting imagery, the vines are a perfect representation of how our desires and our strengths do not always align. This may be due to present circumstances, or fear.

Typically on an astronaut's suit, there are these blue and red connectors for oxygen and liquids. To play along with what already existed, I connected blue with inspiration, and red with courage--two qualities needed to reach for the stars.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.A.' or similar.



UNION



Oil Paint on Canvas | 24 x 30in | 61 x 76.2cm | Year 2022 | NFS

Union is a painting I painted back in early 2022. To me, it is the piece I consider to be the start of my artistic ID. This painting was completed right after "Programmed Blues", yet the color palette is starkly different. Muted tones make up the majority of the painting, with hints of brighter hues to capture the eye. Now in 2023, this pattern can be regularly identified in my paintings.

Union tells the story of a black man and wife, their union, and what that union entails and represents. The name "Union" was actually the original name of the reference by photographer Kyle Jackson, who gave permission for the recreation of this photo. The name was perfect, and fit right in with what this photo meant to me, and so it remained.

What binds two in a relationship? How, through adversity, does a couple remain strong and hopeful? These are questions that I asked myself throughout my observation of the reference, and with those questions in mind I added my own elements to support the story of this couple.

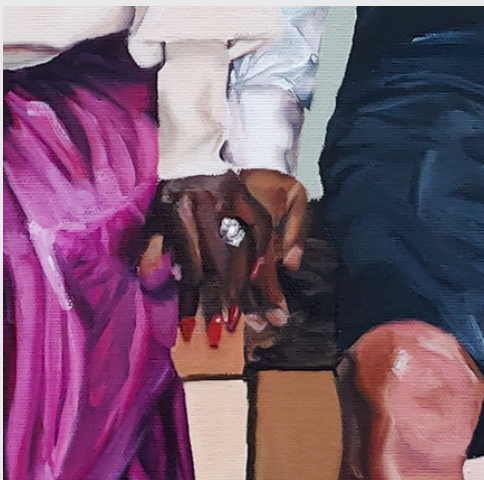


The Cactus

The cactus used in this painting is the Euphorbia Trigona Rubra cactus, a cactus originating from Central Africa. A cactus symbolizes warmth and protection. It also represent courage when faced with adversity. Therefore the cactus represents the prevailing love within the union, despite the forces that try to break it apart.

The Olive Branch

The olive branch is quite symbolic in religion and ancient Greece. The olive branch symbolizes peace and victory. When there are troubling times within a union or outside forces that bring instability, how is peace found, and how does the union triumph over it all?



The Hands

In the painting, the woman's hand is over the males. While visually is a minor detail, it actually is quite significant. I believe black women have found themselves in a position where they must defend and protect their husbands. Men were (and still are) considered the rock of the family, but women surely are what stabilizes that rock,, even on shaky ground.

PROGRAMMED BLUES



Oil Paint on Canvas | 30 x 40in | 61 x 76.2cm | Year 2022 | \$2,450

Before I even made the first brushstroke, I knew, back in 2021, that Programmed Blues was going to be my most treasured piece. I had a sure feeling about it! I had gained so much confidence after my first self-portrait, "The Artist", that I was really ready to do another one.

There is something so profound, vulnerable, and intimate about painting a self-portrait, and I wanted to enhance those feelings by raising the scale of the piece (making it the largest painting I would have ever made) and the technique as well.

The main image I was trying to portray was one of struggle; a struggle with the self and with the outside world. It's a struggle with acceptance and denial, good and bad, right and wrong.

Self-acceptance is something that I think many people struggle with at some point in their life. For me, I love the person I am and the person I have grown into, but that does not exclude me from the influences of everyday propaganda coming from social media, pop culture, the experts, and the gurus.

The beauty of art is that one can express themselves – revealing their voice, showing vulnerability, etc., in a profound and impactful way. I wanted my own image to be the subject of this piece to display a level of vulnerability, and to make the journey of this painting a personal one.



Figure 1: The innocent self

The figure in the middle represents the actual, present self; the one enduring the outside influences. The hands are placed in an innocent, timid fashion, representing a desire to be someone or something else, but being afraid and hesitant to lose the true self. The face tilted towards the power drill symbolizes giving in, but the expression is somewhat neutral, emphasizing her ignorance of the power of these influences.

Figure 2: The pressuring self

The figure on the left really represents the pressure, the power of that pressure, and how it can affect the mind. Hence, the power drill that is in her hand. The drill is pointed toward the head, as if literally trying to drill ideas, slander, and inaccurate standards into the other figure's mind. The expression I wanted this figure to have was one I pondered over for a while. The expression I decided on is one of weird pleasure, an enjoyment that an individual or group may feel from having the power to influence others.



Figure 3: The mocking self

Lastly, the figure at the bottom is simply mocking the figure in the middle. It's as if she's saying "You're such a fool to ever believe these things, how can you allow yourself to be fooled so easily?". Yet, at the same time, she may also be laughing because she knows these influences or ideas that you may begin to believe are true will never change who you truly are. This can be perceived as good or bad, depending on if the thought is actually in toward the figure with the power drill instead of the center figure. In that case, the laughing self at the bottom is mocking the outside world. Switch things around, and then she's mocking me.

NOWHERE TO BE

Oil Paint on Canvas | 30 x 18in | 75 x 45cm | Year 2021 | NFS



I created this piece in what felt like the new wake of police brutality. We've all seen images representing the man in gun's way. Some see innocence and others see guilt. The image holds power to one group of people and weakness to another. I felt a constant struggle of identifying the man whose life depended on a single exerted amount of pressure from a finger to a trigger.

Who is this man? What was he doing? What did he stand for and/or represent? I then began to search for the underlying demand behind the manifestations, riots, and marches, and I discovered that it was a simple but profound desire for two things: Justice and Peace. I imagined a man, who's life suddenly fell in the hands of a stranger police. So, he raises his arms, relaxes his face, and surrenders. Yet, a changed pose can't simply change a person's impression or pre-existing notions of another, especially if that person has no desire to see any differently.

What is it about a black man's appearance that stirs so much fear? Is it the deep tones of color, the strong jaw line and defined features of the face? Is it the posture and the way they use so much expression in speech? What exactly is the misinterpretation?

This thought brought me to how I wanted the man to be standing—his regard and how the rest of the features sat upon his face. I chose a reference of a man with one hand on his hip, another seemingly hanging on the other side of his body. His back slight arched out and neck protruding ever so slightly forward. This, to me, is a pose of that oh so relatable “not again” moment. A pose of tiredness, aggravation...maybe surrender?

A shirt off is a symbol of presence. It catches the eye with its strongly built muscles and striking appearance. However, the shirt off is also a symbol of freedom; may that be freedom from the day, or an inner sense of freedom. This man has no plans today, no appointments or to-dos. So, he takes off his shirt because he is free to relax.

I also wanted to represent peace with the dove and the white poppy. The dove can also represent a new beginning. We see doves fly into the sky for newly weds beginning their life together, and we see doves fly away when a loved one has begun his or her ascension into heaven. The poppy is not only a sign of peace, but is as well a symbol of fragility. We don't often associate men with fragility, as society has painted them to be strong, fearless human beings. But men have feelings and black men especially are acknowledging their vulnerabilities, and exposing to the world emotions and concerns that they, for generations, have kept inside for so long.

THE ARTIST



Oil Paint on Canvas | 30 x 18in | 75 x 45cm | Year 2021 | NFS

A stylized signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.A.' with a flourish.



ANGEL ALLEN
ARTS

PERSONAL WEBSITE: WWW.ANGELALLENARTS.COM

CV: WWW.ANGELALLENARTS.COM/CV

BIO AND STATEMENT: WWW.ANGELALLENARTS.COM

BLACK HERITAGE GALLERY : WWW.BLACKHERITAGEGALLERY.ORG

For purchasing inquiries and other business inquiries:

EMAIL: allen.angel261@gmail.com

WHATSAPP: +33 07 69 17 33 54