

ThriveOn King Artists



Deva Houston

Fall Port de Bras, 2023-24

Hand-painted oil & digitally enhanced/embellished painting; printed on Chromaluxe HD metal

[4devahouston](https://www.instagram.com/4devahouston)

www.devahouston.com



- Multi-disciplinary artist whose major areas of focus are dance arts and education, resin and digital art, web-design and interactive media as well as poetry, short story and playwriting.
- Formally trained dancer/ performance artist — late mother, Vernetta Houston, put her in dance classes at City Ballet Theatre with Lee Palmer and Linda Lacy Jones.
- Framed by Fred Robinson Jr. from Greenwood Park Gallery and Framing.

"Fall Port De Bras features a woman standing, facing to the left in a flowing dress with her arms outstretched. She is a dancer and the portrait depicts her Port de Bras, the carriage of her arms, that presents as a frame to her dress. Fall Port de Bras represents the fall colors — the many facets of the diverse dance community that I was raised in. They are represented in the leaves as they lift to become one within me. I am Fall Port de Bras as I lift my arms to embrace the youth, the next generation of dancers in Milwaukee and abroad, in the 'carriage of my arms.'"



Bolanle O. Awosika (b. 1983)

Prosperous Generations, 2023

Acrylic on canvas

[artistbolanle](https://www.instagram.com/artistbolanle)

www.missionartgallery.com



- Milwaukee visual artist with specialty in acrylic painting.
- Attended Vincent High School, IAP Career College, and various fine art classes.
- Many of her works are inspired by Bible scriptures.
- "Through the combination of colors and symbols Bolanle creates paintings that express messages of love, hope, joy and peace which helps to administer healing for the soul."



LIV (b. 1993)

Music on the streets of Bronzeville, 2023-2024

Acrylic paint, felt fabric, pipe cleaners, pom poms, printed photograph

[livmke](https://www.instagram.com/livmke/)

www.livmke.com

- Olivia 'LIV' Burks is a self-taught artist born in Mesa, Arizona and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- In her paintings, she confronts the social expectations placed upon black individuals to embody strength and resilience, while also highlighting the profound vulnerability that lies beneath the surface.



"I want people to look at this piece and understand that there's a future ahead of us. It is within us. We are creative, we're taking this creative spirit, and we are running with it. I want everyone to look at it and be inspired and just feel this legacy that is happening."



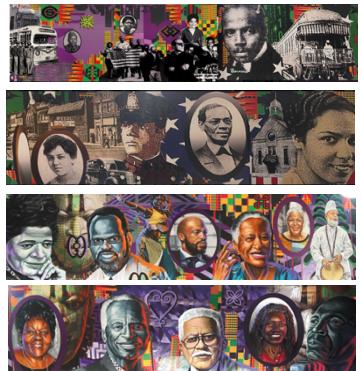
Brad Anthony Bernard (b. 1967)

Perseverance of Legacy: Milwaukee Bronzeville and Beyond, 2023-2024

Mural design digitally printed on wall vinyl with acrylic hand-painted images

[bernardartstudio](https://www.bernardartstudio.com)

www.bernardartstudio.com



- Brad Anthony Bernard is an artist, muralist, painter, and associate professor at Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design (MIAD), his alma mater in 1993 (BFA in painting).
- MFA from the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi in 2003.
- Also created mural across from ThriveOn King on Lloyd St and at Gallery 507.

"I believe that my role as an artist is to bridge an understanding between people. My artistic impulse is rooted in the desire to bring people together — across cultures or ideologies...It is my responsibility as an artist to document the history, tell the stories, inspire insight and preserve the truths that education and society disregard and neglect to teach."



Fondé Bridges

Healthy Words Orchard of Inspiration, 2024

Digital design inspired by the artist's proprietary work, printed on wall vinyl



[healthwordsfonde](https://www.instagram.com/healthwordsfonde)

www.healthwordschef.com

- Fondé Bridges is an artist, lecturer, author and father who began his art career in Milwaukee in 1995, when he led a poetry workshop for one of his former teachers at Riverside High School.
- His Healthy Words Project stemmed in part from a walk of inspiration initiative in Bronzeville in the early 2000s during which he realized that students lacked positive vocabulary.
- Core idea is that positive, nutritious, healthy words lead to healthy minds, healthy bodies, and healthy people.
- Son of Evelyn Patricia Terry.



Rozalia Hernandez-Singh, Reynaldo Hernandez

Reflections, 2024

Still I Thrive, 2024

Artists' acrylic colors and acrylic latex paints

[rozaliasingh](https://www.instagram.com/rozaliasingh)

[reynaldohernandez59](https://www.instagram.com/reynaldohernandez59)

www.artsbyaya.com



- Reynaldo is one of Milwaukee's most prolific muralists — created "Mural of Peace" on the Esperanza Unida building and the mural on the former Inner City Arts Council Building (6th and North).
- Rozalia, Reynaldo's daughter, is a muralist, caricaturist, painter, art teacher and graphic illustrator.
- Rozalia's husband made a large protractor tool for the circles in *Reflections*, and her nephew assisted with *Still I Thrive*.
- They also painted the mural of Dr. King on the corner of King Drive and North Ave.

"I do a lot of work in schools and residencies, working with students. It's good, because a lot of them don't think that there are role models — people of color, people that are males. Especially in elementary schools, you see a lot of little kids that say, 'Wow, I want to be an artist when I grow up.'" – Reynaldo Hernandez

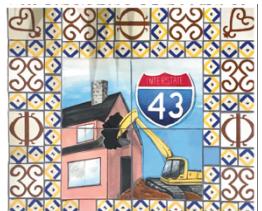


La Familia de Arte, Inc. (Incorporated 2017)

Bronzeville: Remembering the Past, Living the Present, and Visioning the Future, 2024

Glazed ceramics

[lafamiliadearte](https://www.instagram.com/lafamiliadearte/)
 www.familiadearte.com



- La Familia de Arte is a grassroots organization dedicated to creating meaningful change in the Milwaukee area through collaborative, community-based projects, and public artwork for all.
- Often invite everyday neighborhood residents to be artists and contributors.

"Two large planters capture moments of Bronzeville's cultural legacy, and three hexagons hold ceramic circles portraying everyday life in Bronzeville. Months of interviewing elders and current residents opened up a world of personal stories, and discussions with youth across the north side captured their dreams for renewal. These tell the story of 'Bronzeville: Remembering the Past, Honoring the Present, Envisioning the Future.'



Mutòpe J. Johnson

Destination: Bronzeville MKE, 2020

Acrylic and mixed media collage

[mutopejj](https://www.instagram.com/mutopejj/)
 www.mutopejjohnson.blogspot.com



- Grew up in Milwaukee, BFA from UW-Whitewater, MFA from Peck School of the Arts at UWM. He taught at UW-Whitewater and is now the director of creative engagement and partnerships for Bronzeville Center for the Arts.
- Work connected to African American history and its influence on popular culture.
- Explores the use of blue pigment as a way to connect to symbolic meaning: blue as royalty, indigo as a cash crop, the Blues as an artform, race as color.

"As long as we can tap into our higher selves, better selves, angelic selves, and share with others, you'll be amazed how we can help change humanity. We often think 'I'm just one person, what can I do.'... When you talk to kids, they want to change the world. They have no limitations...We should tap into our young ambitions of wanting to right the wrong and not place limitations on ourselves or others...I believe in the power of one. There is so much we have to contribute to humanity...We have a superpower and don't know it."



Rosy Petri (b. 1986)

Vel 'n' Em, 2020

Commercial cotton batiks, vintage fabric, hand carved linoleum prints, thread over canvas

[thisisparadisehome](https://www.instagram.com/thisisparadisehome/)

www.thisisparadisehome.com

- Self-taught fiber artist fusing printmaking, photography, and multimedia storytelling.
- Grew up in Racine, both of her grandmothers were quilters.
- First woman of color to be artist in residence at the Pfister Hotel.
- *Vel 'n' Em* depicts four members of the NAACP Youth Council Commandos carrying then-Alderwoman Vel Phillips on their shoulders as Father James Groppi speaks. It also includes hand-carved block prints of houses in the neighborhood, as well as the Harambee neighborhood symbol.



"I think that it is significant and important to tap into the local artist resource to tell our stories, to represent ourselves and to remind the folks that come into the building that they belong, too."



Evelyn Patricia Terry (b. 1946)

The Black Flag, 1970

Intaglio print, ink on rag paper

America's Favor: Guests Who Came to Dinner (and Stayed), 2024

An installation, George Ray McCormick, Sr. Sankofa Bird sculpture, wood, steel, found objects

www.evelynpatriciaterry.com



- Grew up in Lindsay Heights, attended North Division High School and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (BFA and MS in visual arts), MFA from School of the Art Institute of Chicago.
- *The Black Flag* was exhibited at a show Contemporary Black Artists in America at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1971, a show that received national attention and critique.
- *America's Favor: Guests Who Came to Dinner (and Stayed)*
 - 70 dolls in native costumes with magnets holding them in place; 26 white dinner plates, each holding a single vegetable and a wise statement — "Each message has a word with 13 letters because I want to counter the superstition about the number 13 as unlucky."



- Shear Wilson assembled the table based on Evelyn's design. She bought table legs from thrift shops and secondhand stores, and the attached spiral wood pieces were former Pfister Hotel curtain rods from ReStore.
- Evelyn's son Fondé Bridges created the vegetable sculptures. The vegetables are made of air-dried clay with gauze, gesso and acrylic paint.

Indoor side:

"This side of my table, called America's Favor, offers another perspective on America's relationship with African Americans. Through adversity, many are forced to strive and grow. Adversity seems to be a part of life, and many must keep their minds on success in any area of life to have even a chance to attain it. I'm always working on how people feel about being in America. The sometimes accepted view is that America did nothing for African Americans and did very little for anyone except the super-rich people. I do not like that view."

Street side:

"The theme on this side of the table notes how and why various ethnic groups arrived in America. The Sankofa bird centerpiece, sculpted from metal, represents what historians have written that Africa is the cradle of civilization or where all nations and ethnic groups originated. My partner, the artist George Ray McCormick Sr, created the Sankofa Bird. He died in 2009."



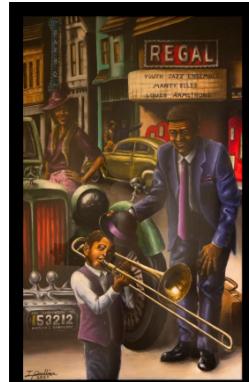
Isaac Pulliam (b. 2001)

A Performance to Remember, 2020

Acrylic on canvas

 ipulliam_studio
 Isaac Pulliam's Studio

- 2024 graduate from Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD) in Fine Art and New Studio Practice.
- Senior thesis was a oil on canvas triptych in a handmade, movable wooden cabinet, showing community members — teachers, parents, athletes — helping children.



"My goal as an artist is to impact the community with positive influence, so to get this opportunity to make a piece of work for a community-oriented space motivates me to continue representing the people surrounding me. After researching the history of the destruction of Bronzeville and the steps they're taking to rejuvenate the area, it's an honor to be able to positively represent the rich history of the area to the community that's been here for generations, and tell their story for the future generations to come."



Reginald Baylor Studio: Reginald Baylor, Melissa Courtney, Montavius Jones

Bronzeville House Quilt, 2024

Print and embroidery on various textiles with fabric adornments

 [reginaldbaylorstudio](https://www.instagram.com/reginaldbaylorstudio/)

 www.reginaldbaylorstudio.com



- Reginald Baylor was born November 1966 in Milwaukee; attended UW-Oshkosh and majored in sculpture. Worked in trucking until 2007, when he decided to pursue a full-time career in fine art. Has an open studio in the Historic Third Ward, where he creates his signature large-scale paintings featuring bright colors and intersecting shapes.
- Melissa Courtney is a MIAD graduate (class of 1998) with over 20 years of experience in the creative industry, including developing arts curriculum, exhibiting and selling work, arts consulting, and creative directing.
- Montavius Jones is a developer and urban planner and the head of Navarte Development.

"A lot of the subjects in my work are about my community and where I live, what I'm doing at the time, and how I'm responding to current culture. It's customary as an artist to stay in their studio and make art. A community-facing artist has to get out of their studio and into the community then determine how they're going to make art. So, it really just gets me into a lot of new neighborhoods and meeting new people, and build relationships by doing selfless creations." – Reginald Baylor



John Kowalczyk (b. 1988)

Red Winged Protectors, 2024

Acrylic paint, cement, fabric, foam, latex paint

 [johnkowalczyk](https://www.instagram.com/johnkowalczyk/)

 www.johnkowalczykart.com



- Born in Chicago, MIAD graduate (class of 2010), then completed a three-year residency with RedLine Milwaukee, where he curated gallery shows and taught workshops.
- Currently program director for Artists Working in Education, where he facilitates and oversees large scale community and public art projects throughout the city of Milwaukee.

"I settled on red-winged blackbirds because they are fierce protectors of their nests and their neighborhoods and their communities. Some people might think of them as almost aggressive or fierce, but I think of them as lovingly protecting their nests and their families and their homes.

I'm so excited that this first floor will be a community center hub, and people will be able to interact and see the art every day. My biggest hope is that one young person sees it and then it stays with them forever, and they feel the need to become an artist as well."



Kristine Hinrichs **Photography (b. 1952)**

They are Essential, 2023-2024

Photographs of ThriveOn King construction staff while working, printed on metal



 [kristinemarie](https://www.instagram.com/kristinemarie)

 www.kristinehinrichsphotography.com

- Milwaukee photographer who has shot and posted a photo every day for 14 years.
- Projects include "Essential, Invisible" — photos of community workers who don't get much recognition. "They are Essential" follows a similar approach, with portraits of seven members of the ThriveOn King construction staff.

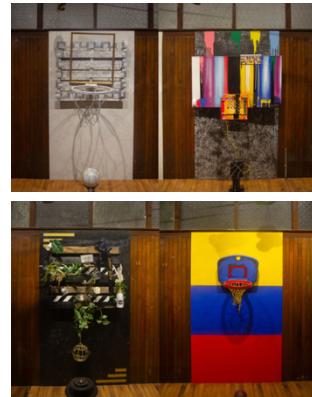
"I am drawn to those "essential" workers who don't get much notice — the invisible workers taking the bus to work in the dark, those cleaning our restaurants before they open, the delivery people — even the "street people" who clean the cans and [recycling] from our streets."



Vedale Hill, Vedale's Art Studio (b. 1988)

Hoop Dreams / Colorful Courts / On the Line, 2023-2024

Found objects & acrylic paint, plastic, wood, metal, nylon, acrylic paint, oil base spray paint, vinyl, rubber



 [vedalehills_artstudio_mke](https://www.instagram.com/vedalehills_artstudio_mke)

 www.vedalesartstudio.com

- Milwaukee fine artist who draws inspiration from his personal perspective of an impoverished urban upbringing. BFA in Integrated Studio Arts from MIAD (class of 2011).
- Has served as youngest member of the Milwaukee Arts Board, board member for numerous community organizations, including the Milwaukee Artist Resource Network and The Jazz Gallery.
- Created Jazale's Art Studio, a non-profit arts education community youth studio, as well as an artist and residency program for artists of color in Milwaukee, and HomeWorks Bronzeville, a cultural development project.

"I grew up below the poverty line here in Milwaukee so the idea for me was, [art] was an escape. It was an expression and for me, it was my own thing. There was no wrong answer to what I created."



Rakim Wil (b. 1999)

*Through Your Eyez, 2020
Rumble Young Men, Rumble,
2018*

*Digital photographs printed on fine art
paper*

[time__still](#)



- Rakim Wil is a self-taught interdisciplinary designer, musician, and photographer who lives and works in Milwaukee's north side.
- "Growing up, Ra was immediately influenced by the trauma and beauty of his environment, forced to question his role and what to do with and/or about it. He began taking photographs of the environment and himself as a means to freeze time and understand our world as we pass by it so easily. Induced by classic Black images in his culture, Ra found a love for portraits of others and pronouncing their stories. Today, he is driven by cultural sonics and textures, imagery and feng shui. Rakim Wil cherishes the day."



RazitoZuluArtz (b. 1988)

Cloud Boy, 2022

*Illustrated digitally with Procreate, printed on enhanced
matte paper with archival ink*

[razitozulu](#)



- Mene Muhammad, who uses the name RazitoZulu for his art, is a self-taught Milwaukee artist who specializes in digital illustrations. He attended Riverside High School and Concordia University.

"What an amazing ribbon cutting ceremony event and congrats to all the artists involved. I truly believe ThriveOn King will be a pivotal piece for the surrounding community and Milwaukee as a whole."



Nehemiah Edwards (b. 1990)

Together We Thrive, 2024

Primary Artwork - Latex and plaster on wood canvas; TV display - Latex and plaster on plywood, LED TV; Hanging shapes, floor decor - Latex on cardboard, 30-gauge iron wire, yarn



 [nemogreater](https://www.instagram.com/nemogreater/)

 www.lovexnemo.com

- Nehemiah R. Edwards is a self-taught contemporary artist born and raised in Milwaukee.
- He attended UW-Madison and graduated with a degree in electrical engineering in 2015. After entering the workforce, he decided to start his career as a painter in 2017.
- Nehemiah's ultimate goal is to educate and assist as many people as possible in knowing what it means to experience true Love and to find inner peace — despite one's circumstances.
- Edwards invited over 50 children to help cover a 6x15-foot canvas with paint and plaster, as well as paint cutouts of shapes.

"I thought it was important for anyone to be able to feel like they can connect to art in a way where they don't feel like they need some skill to participate...Your creative outlet is a thing that you do that allows you to be free in that moment."



Ras 'Ammar Nsoroma (b. 1967), Adjuwa Nsoroma (b. 1999)

Bronze Unfolding, 2024

Paint on Polytab

 [ammarnsoroma](https://www.instagram.com/ammarnsoroma/)

 [adjuansoroma](https://www.instagram.com/adjuansoroma/)



- Ras 'Ammar Nsoroma was born Kevin Wayne Tate in Milwaukee. As a teenager, he was inspired by muralist Reynaldo Hernandez. He attended the Milwaukee High School of the Arts, MIAD, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He returned to Wisconsin and has created over 100 murals in Milwaukee, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis and Washington DC. He is a 2019 Nohl Fellowship winner and was honored with the City of Milwaukee Arts Board 2020 Mildred R Harpole Artist of the Year award. He lives in Lindsay Heights.
- Adjuwa Nsoroma is a Milwaukee-based visual artist who attended Milwaukee High School of the Arts and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is a multimedia artist, and her work includes murals, paintings, textiles, and tattoos. She is Ammar's daughter.

"For the Black community, art serves a purpose. So, as an artist, you have a social responsibility to not only make art that is aesthetically pleasing but art that means something. My artwork is about the beauty of being Black and feeling all right about it. I draw from the philosophies of the diverse religions of the African Diaspora, like Ifa, Vodou, Rastafari and ancient Kemetic traditions. They express the strength, inner peace and beauty of the path to enlightenment." – Ras 'Ammar Nsoroma

"As a BIPOC woman, my art reflects the intersectionality of my identity and experiences. I draw inspiration from nature and the natural world, as well as embracing femininity and black culture. Through my work in painting and textile design, I aim to create pieces that showcase the beauty and resilience of marginalized communities, while also challenging societal norms and stereotypes. I believe that art has the power to inspire change and promote understanding, and I strive to use my art as a tool for social and political activism." – Adjua Nsoroma