

Marcella Hayes Muhammad

Artist Statement

"I can still remember my first painting in Kindergarten. I knew then that I loved to paint. I enjoy working predominately with oil on canvas and tend to use a warm colorful pallet. Many of my inspirations come from my surroundings, curious research of my ancestral culture, conversations with friends, news, dreams, and special requests from clients. As a retired educator, I find myself working on images that tend to teach and inform. I have a scientific mind and base a large amount of my works on information gained through research and exploration. It is through my art that I am able to share knowledge.

Plastic Space is my favorite style of painting. It is a signature style that I created influenced by Pablo Picasso and his cubism. Instead of dissecting the subject into visual planes as in cubism, I go beyond flat linear planes and explore the curvature of light around an object from a three dimensional perspective. The fluid use of light, shadow and balance captivate and engage the eye as if moving at light speed around three dimensional objects. Using this style, I am able to marry the heritage and traditions of the past and the beauty of the present into contemporary images that transcend time and culture.

My Maruvian Mask series is closest to my heart and one that began in earnest in 2000. The painting "Ashé" represented my thanks to the ancestors for all the artistic talents forwarded to my culture including sculpture and masks. I got a very unusual reaction from some well meaning observers when they confided that I should not use African masks in my work because they were really bad things to use. This inspired me to do extensive research on African masks. I concentrated on the positive, uplifting nature that they represented. Ashé III is a result of applying my observation of common threads in the designs of some Native American, African, Eskimo, Asian, and Pacific Island masks. I often incorporate the mask and portions of masks to enhance other *Plastic Space* images creating a sense of ancestral connection."

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