

Tijera Williams Artist Statement

Artwork: "le viol de l'innocence"

The conversation surrounding this piece stems from rape, kidnapping, and sexual assault- or rather, what has to be done to make a conversation about those events to occur to even begin with in today's society. Referencing Bernini's marble sculpture "Ratto di Proserpina" and paintings divulged from the famed Greco-Roman myth, the rape of innocence (the title once translated) is a proud, center-stage moment, where the artist (posing also as the model) reflects with her own battle with her rape, sexual assault and the conversations regarding acceptance of her past. The image is set in a dream-like centrifugally-forced formation, with the aforementioned pose announcing the rape of the protagonist. The surrounding figures all around the stage are illusions in time as the female protagonist fights to either let her attacker steal her flower, or to fight to save herself in all formations in time. This piece challenges modern-day societal traits when responding to sexual assault and rape victims, as they often feel too ashamed to even speak about the occurrence to begin with. This shaming culture about victims is the underlying discussion that is being called to the front. When, where, and no matter how long it takes to bring it to the surface, the response about abuse should not have to amount to such a grandiose delivery to receive a valid reaction or for anyone to take action once it is too late.

Artist Bio

Tijera S. Williams is a multimedia painter, photographer, and design artist born in Long Beach, California in 1996. With great fascinations of the Italian Renaissance throughout the 14th and 16th centuries, a love for vibrant colors, color relations, and an obsession for puzzles and deep thought, this same love motivated Tijera to integrate her personal life into the work that she creates today. Growing up wasn't an easy feat for her throughout her adolescence, being a victim of domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), racial profiling, bullying, and homelessness. Tijera strives to create work that acts as a megaphone of advocacy for victims, inform those who have privilege, and deliver a beautiful yet charged image to represent her cultural significance as a Black woman in America.

Tijera's artwork focuses on repurposing the viewer's gaze to communicate an avant-garde perspective. By utilizing traditional techniques of painting and drawing, and marrying that with strong color relationships and significance in dominant linear qualities, Tijera revises the male-centered Eurocentric worldview of that of a twenty-first-century Afro-diasporic female gaze as her driving communication. Her hybridized style corrects the stigmas and stereotypes that isolate the social titles and recognition of what "Black art" and "art" are by colliding the two. Over the years, Tijera's work has evolved from admiration from a multitude of works in art history classes into hybridizing this inspiration with personal experiences as a Black woman in America, creating an explicitly personal outreach into the mind of an underrepresented perspective. Tijera's

work is recognized by the awe-striking “high effect” that she utilizes as a way to train and test the viewers to read between the lines, even in front of a gobsmacking display of work. With loads of narrative and historical context embedded within her work, Tijera's hybrid style art has final goals of being both beautiful and educational about the Black experience, communicating a known message to the people of her similar background, while also educating those who are ignorant to it.

Tijera is a recent graduate of California State University, Long Beach with a Bachelors of Arts degree in Studio Art with concentrations in painting, photography, and graphic design.

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