

ART TALK

The NCLAC Gallery opens inaugural show 'Flavors'

The North Central Louisiana Arts Council is proud to announce the opening of The NCLAC Gallery, an online art gallery space for rotating solo and group exhibitions. The NCLAC Gallery was created as an effort to support area artists, give exposure to the arts, and keep patrons safe. Re/Max Results Realty of Ruston has made the project possible through their sponsorship. Owner Brandon Crume said he was excited by the opportunity to welcome viewers into a virtual space since the limits of COVID-19 have kept most art patrons from visiting physical spaces.

"Flavors" is the inaugural show of The NCLAC Gallery. The term "flavors" is used to espouse the different backgrounds of the selected minority North Louisiana artists and their various methods of artistic expression.

North Louisiana is full of artists and creatives with diverse backgrounds from various parts of the world who have made their home here or attend college here. From photographers, painters, vocalists, blues performers, to Bollywood dancing, these artists use art to inform the viewer of their culture and provide commentary on how the events that are happening in the world affect them.

"Flavors" is a group exhibition of 16 artists curated by Felicia Burse, a native of north Louisiana. Burse graduated with a bachelor's degree in general studies with a concentration in arts and a minor in



Courtesy photo
Felicia Burse is curator of the "Flavors" show at The NCLAC Gallery.

psychology from Louisiana Tech University in 2013, and a Master of Arts in museum studies from Southern University in New Orleans (SUNO) in 2018. She has interned with NCLAC and Louisiana Tech's Special Collections, Manuscripts, and Archives (SCMA) department. She helped curate the Rites of Passage: Africa exhibit at SUNO's library in 2017, and re-imagined The Camp Ruston Collection exhibit at SCMA. Her artwork has been exhibited in a selection of shows and exhibitions.

The online show highlights one work from each creator and a short bio about their process or inspiration. Brenda Wimberly, vocalist from Shreveport, is classically trained, performs folk, popular, jazz, and traditional gospel styles. She has performed all over the U.S. and internationally. Camellia Jiles creates digital drawings of characters that reflect her same face, body type, and skin tones that she finds missing in mainstream media. She seeks to motivate individuals to connect

with others beyond what physically separates them.

Chlese Jiles uses illustration and character design to share her passion of storytelling to depict diverse characters and imagine stories that have remained untold. Drek Davis is a mixed media artist working in collage, fabric assemblage, and painting. His piece "Diaspora (Ogoun's in Isolation)" invokes ideas of freedom, liberation, identity, and self-actualization. Evie Hinojosa uses her own body as in instrument to paint canvases that express the female experience; showing how women are often viewed as a collection of parts rather than a whole person.

Jamarrion Cotton listens to music as his inspiration to paint, letting the sounds choose the colors and shapes. The song by California hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar inspired his piece "Momma." Katrina Harris is a portrait photographer who captures the expressions, moods, and inner thoughts of her subjects through careful styling, lighting, and wardrobe choices. Khalilah Maryam is a creator at heart. She uses photography, painting, digital drawing, writing, and design as ways to share her beliefs, her childhood, and her story as a way for others to learn something about themselves.

Lisandra Di Liberto Torres draws on subjects from her hometown Hatillo, Puerto Rico, known as a cen-

ter for milk production. Her paintings of red cows with wings merge representation and fantasy to illustrate homesickness for her home country. Maryam El-Awadi uses oil paints to create narratives and communicate ideas through color. She creates vibrant, dreamlike work where characters are in a fantastical environment.

Pankita Patel is an MFA Graphic Design student at Louisiana Tech. She uses her experience as an international student to create the piece "Language Barrier" which invites immigrants to write their experience with

language differences on a luggage tag.

Phillip LeBlanc started "Hashtag Office Portraits" as a series born from a love of light, portraiture, and people. The series aims to capture the human moments of everyday life through photography with the intention of sparking human interaction. Robert Finley is a nationally-known blues and soul singer-songwriter from Bernice. Music, for him, is a gift.

He says, "that's what I try to do with my music; say something positive and do something positive." Shane Greer's painting "Fall of Man" explores the concepts of death and vulnerability. He addresses issues such as poaching of endangered animals

and relates them to personal loss.

Sylvia Shultz continues her passion for performing by celebrating her Indian culture. She performed "India Nite" in 2019 with a Bollywood dance to a medley of songs from the 50s and 60s inspired by Indian cinema. Wei-Shu Tsai is a visiting assistant professor in the voice area at Louisiana Tech. His baritone vocal range brings strength and power to his performances sung in six different language all over the U.S. and abroad.

"Flavors" is now on display at The NCLAC Gallery by visiting nclacgallery.org.

Madeline Marak is executive director of NCLAC.



By
Madeline Marak



Courtesy photo
Pictured is a digital drawing by Camellia Jiles titled "Black People Are Beautiful."