

BIO:

Yetunde Rodriguez is a Nigerian-American Printmaker, Multi-media Artist and Art Educator. Her work celebrates Afrofuturistic themes, dreams sequences, and rich imagination, all wrapped in rich color, pattern and detail. Yetunde holds a Bachelor's Degree in Graphic Design from Hampton University (Go Pirates!)

One of Yetunde's most notable works is the Gem City Market project, where she contributed her dynamic art and design aesthetic to the Market. She was Dayton Metro Library Northwest branch 2018 Artist in Residence. She has been a Teaching Artist for various organizations, such as the 2024 Summer Artist Institute at the Women's Studio Workshops, Kingston NY. She is also a two-time recipient of the Artist Opportunity Grant, funded by the The Montgomery County Arts and Cultural District (MCACD) and administered by Cultureworks.

Yetunde makes art in her home studio on the West-Side of Dayton, Ohio. Her work often unfolds and reveals itself in layers. She aims to keep disappearing down rabbit holes, staying open to new ideas, and always seeking the creative solution.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

My identity, forged between a Nigerian heritage and an American upbringing, exists in the permeable space between two worlds and two ways of being. This constant negotiation and adaptation compel me to seek grounding in the logic and familiarity of patterns, both visible and intuitive.

I treat visual elements much like the tonal nuances of my native **Yoruba language**, where subtle shifts in tone alter the core meaning. I examine how variations in shape, pattern, and mark-making acquire different cultural weights. By layering these diverse connotations and building cross-cultural connections, I create my own visual language that strives to connect seemingly disparate ideas and open new avenues of understanding.

My process is a fluid, rhythmic cycle of exchange of methods. This process often begins with the creation of hand-carved stamps I use for block printing on fabric. The printed scraps are then sometimes incorporated into my paintings, creating a material dialogue between textile and canvas. The physical act of carving the stamp directly informs my highly textured and tactile carved paintings, whereby I carve my image into the surface of the substrate prior to painting. This cycle of exchange in my work allows me the opportunity to explore, while seamlessly incorporating prior knowledge.

Ultimately, my layered use of color, pattern, and texture serves as an invitation to the viewer to look beyond the surface of the recognizable pattern and prompt a shift in perspective, revealing the complexity and confluence of knowledge that lies beneath.

ARTIST'S STORY

My creative foundation was laid early, rooted in the DIY ethic of my Nigerian upbringing, where I learned knitting and crochet and later taught myself to sew by drawing on the subconscious knowledge gained from my Mother and Aunties. In other words, I let my ancestors guide me. This foundation established a belief that acquired skills and materials can only serve to inform and enrich the creative process.

An early period of service in the United States Navy cultivated an indispensable grit and tenacity. While military life eventually gave way to the need for creative freedom, the discipline acquired during that time now anchors my rigorous studio practice.

This transition led me to formally study Graphic Design, where I reconnected with my passion before immersing myself in the Maker Movement of the early 2000s.. There, I taught myself block printing and screenprinting, and quickly recognized that the hands-on process of carving and printing was the most direct path to communicating my vision. This successful entrepreneurial phase—where everything was hand-printed and hand-sewn—solidified my commitment to a full-time art practice.

Today, my work is driven by a passion for varied media, methods, and ideas. I utilize an Abstract Expressionist style to tap into and explore themes from my dreams, viewing my artistic output as a method to imagine a Black future on an alternate timeline. By embracing multi-passion, I draw meaningful links and create connections within the interstitial space—the "in-between"—ensuring my work is a seamless combination of all previous knowledge.