

Art as an Opening

A note to counselors, therapists, and mental health professionals

WHY I MAKE THIS WORK

I make photographs because some things are too heavy to say out loud — at least at first. Images can reach into a person in ways that conversation sometimes can't. They don't demand that you name what you're feeling. They simply ask you to stand with it, to recognize something you may have carried quietly for a very long time.

THE EXHIBITIONS

Treading Water is a photographic series exploring the quiet, sustained experience of depression, grief, and emotional struggle — not the dramatic breaking point, but the long, invisible effort of simply staying afloat. Soft figures drift at the edges of visibility through frosted acrylic, arms reaching, identities obscured. Blue dominates — the color of melancholy, of depth, of the blues in both the musical and psychological sense. The work does not offer resolution. It offers recognition.

Exposed to Joy holds the other side — portraits of genuine, unposed happiness, submitted by the people in them, printed through cyanotype. Together, these bodies of work hold the full range of what it means to be a person: the grief and the joy, the weight and the light.

ART AS A DOORWAY

In the African-American community, where asking for help has too often been framed as weakness, and where generational grief and systemic pressure run deep, art can create the conditions for a different kind of conversation. A person who cannot yet say "I am depressed" may be able to point to an image and say, "That's what it feels like." That quiet moment of recognition can be the first step toward the larger conversation you are trained to hold.

EXHIBITION PROGRAMMING

Confirmed for the exhibition is a public conversation between myself and Dr. Teresa L. Jackson — clinical psychologist and artist — on mental health, resilience, and healing in the African-American community. Thursday, Oct. 15. 6:30 PM. I am also offering private tours and artist talks designed specifically for mental health professionals. I warmly invite your participation in any form that feels right.

Arthur Fields, www.arthurfields.net

Represented by Pencil on Paper Gallery