

KESTIN CORNWALL

Artist Statement

My unconventional mixed-media visual work incorporates classic portraiture and classical references with new-age hybrid art image creation. I use a varied method of combining beautiful hand drawings, strong digital image-making, and screen-printing. I bring this together with skilled acrylic and aerosol painting on wood and other canvases.

In the 21st century, everything is affected by digital media and the Internet. Most works of art created today will be seen on digital devices more times than in person. I create art to encourage interactions—physically and digitally.

My work aims to ask questions regarding equality, immigration and what it means to be Black in Canada. I use images to explore the notion that culture, entertainment including film and other media, shape the mass public perception of black people and people of colour in North American culture. I create art to document this with compositions brimming with references to media, popular culture, music, and art history. The work aims to add beauty to the world while invoking the unending social responsibility to capture thought. As Black people, Indigenous people and people of colour we are not accustomed to seeing nuanced reflections of ourselves in contemporary visual culture. I create work featuring many of these faces, and issues we encounter, in an attempt to be accurately represented in popular contemporary culture.

I like happy mistakes in art, such as ink bleeds. As well as artwork affected by age, sun, rain and natural elements, which creates areas that are worn away or lifted. I think some mistakes, simplicity, and chance are beautiful fundamentals of creating.

I am truly captivated by the development process of taking a simple idea from nothing and watching it grow into a completed project that can not only be seen but also touched, interpreted and enjoyed by the viewer. Images allow me to share an idea or evoke an emotional response almost instantly. I channel this emotion and energy into creating, inspiring new work and exploring new ideas.

Lives and works in Toronto.

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