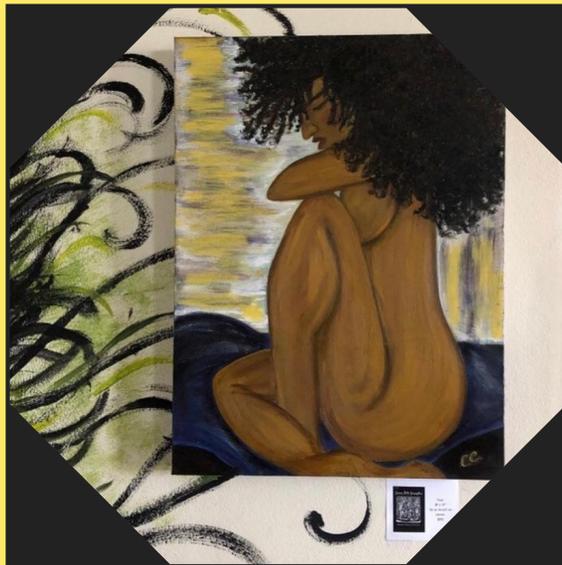


BLACK ART

AN INTERVIEW FACILITATED BY THE JOURNEY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE
[THEJOURNEYNEIGHBOURHOODCENTRE.CA]



ART BY: CARRIE CAMPBELL
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WHO ARE YOU?

I am Carrie Campbell, contemporary artist and wellness workshop facilitator here in Brampton. I also work as an operations Coordinator at Beaux Arts Brampton, and Community Engagement Facilitator at the Journey Neighborhood Centre located in Brampton as well.

WHY ART?

Art is not only where much of my interests lie, it's just honestly what 'm good at and I enjoy it.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE BLACK ART? IS IT JUST ART MADE BY BLACK PEOPLE OR IS IT SOMETHING ELSE?

I think it's both. I think that art that is made with the purpose of, and portrayal of, messages that are specific to the Black experience is Black art. I also think that art which is made to portray universal messages of love culture, family, spirituality, philosophy is also Black art if it is done by a Black artist. I think within the idea of Black art, the most interesting aspect is "Black thoughts, dreams, life experience, Black excellence, Black pride... Black community and positivity.

WHERE DOES BLACK ART STAND TODAY IN YOUR OPINION?

I think Black art is becoming more mainstream and recognized. My favourite living artist is a Black man named Kehinde Wiley, who strives to showcase Black excellence and greatness not only in the precision and skill of his work, but in the choice of his subject matter and message. I think [today] Black artists are more comfortable being just that...BLACK artists. A collective awakening among people of the world, in my opinion, is a part of the paradigm shift- not only in the art world, but in the acceptance of culture and differences amongst us. Black people have always been creators of art and it feels good to see a strength among artists of colour in conjunction with genuine interests from the rest of the world.

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE BUSINESS ASPECT OF ART. YOU RUN THE OUTLET BY CARRIE. TELL US A BIT ABOUT WHAT YOU DO.

The outlet by Carrie is the name of my contemporary itinerant art workshop business. As a certified life coach, I use my own life experiences and knowledge of art techniques to facilitate workshops in which the participants are engaged in pairing an art activity with a popular wellness topic.

WHAT HAS YOUR JOURNEY BEEN LIKE? HOW DID YOUR BUSINESS COME TO BE?

I started as a volunteer teaching art at the Journey Neighborhood Centre, while participating in arts exhibits at Beaux Arts Brampton. After facilitating a particularly successful session at a local Senior Living center in Brampton, I realized a need for my work and the impact that it had on my participants.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN BUSINESS?

After the demand for more of my sessions, I started The Outlet By Carrie in September 2019.

WHAT HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN LIKE BEING A BLACK BUSINESS OWNER?

So far, my experience has been positive. I have really been blessed to have the communal experiences that I have had here in Brampton. Brampton is a city that is currently growing as well, and I can see things around me changing in support of a more diverse community where people of many demographics can be viewed as role models. Though I spent many years building rapport and volunteering to offer art and sessions for the sake of exposure, the demand for my work following those acts, was a huge driver in the ultimate success that I experience now.



IS THE BUSINESS OF BLACK ART PROFITABLE?

I think it is. I think that the business of any art is profitable. Longevity is where speculation comes into play. In art, trends exist just like in music and other art forms. I know that right now, Afrocentric pieces are often revered on many platforms but for me, the longevity and quality of the work, combined with its message will always be what makes it stand out.

HOW HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED YOUR BUSINESS?

Covid-19 has greatly affected my workshop business in many ways. As an artist who also has a job working in the community, I find that I have had less time for leisure painting as the demand for resources in the community has rapidly changed. I reached a point where I thought my workshop business would struggle greatly, especially since the majority of sessions were held in person. It has been much to my surprise that a demand for my sessions on a virtual platform not only exists, but has grown immensely since the onset of the pandemic and the need for community members to have some sort of artistic release from the uncertainty of today's times.

IF YOU WERE TO GIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE VISIBILITY OF BLACK BUSINESSES IN THE ART WORLD, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

I would suggest that Black artists work together more to form more collectives that have common ground, experience and goals in mind. I think that there is much strength in numbers and it is truly important that artists support and encourage each other in varied ways. People are attracted to collective excellence. And positivity begets more positivity.

Carrie's Message to the Community:

“
Do it for yourself, and if not for you, for the people who believe in you
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