

SUSTAIN - A - CITY:

A VISION FOR A THRIVING, RESILIENT DETROIT

An Environmental Art Exhibition Curated by Asia Hamilton



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INTRODUCTION



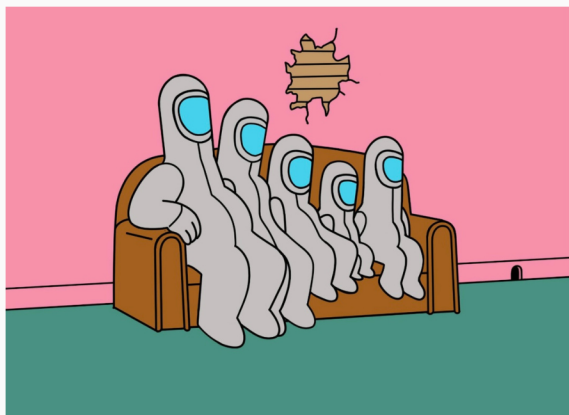
SustainACity: A Vision for a Thriving, Resilient Detroit—a groundbreaking public art initiative curated by Asia Hamilton, Climate Resilience Program Manager for the City of Detroit Office of Sustainability and Founder of Norwest Gallery of Art.

This powerful exhibition transforms the city into an open-air art gallery, using visual storytelling to educate, inspire, and spark dialogue around climate action, environmental justice, and community resilience. SustainACity showcases compelling works by local and national artists on billboards throughout Detroit. These artworks offer powerful visions of a resilient and sustainable future for the city.

“Our goal is to center art as a tool to envision our city at its best—a thriving, environmentally friendly ecosystem,” said curator Asia Hamilton. “By placing these messages in public view, we empower Detroiters to see sustainability as something accessible, urgent, and community-driven.”

ALLEN CREARY

NUCLEAR FAMILY



FEATURED BILLBOARD ARTIST

Nuclear Family depicts a family seated on their couch in hazmat suits, a haunting metaphor for life in Detroit's most heavily burdened neighborhoods. In communities near factories, highways, and industrial corridors, families breathe some of the most polluted air in the country. Asthma, cancer, and other health risks are not abstract fears but daily realities. By placing this family inside their living room, the work underscores how air pollution is not confined to the outside world, it seeps into the home, shaping the most intimate moments of family life. The hazmat suits become symbols of survival in a city where environmental injustice has long fallen hardest on Black and working-class residents.

ANTHEA CALHOUN

KEEP DETROIT CLEAN



FEATURED BILLBOARD ARTIST

Digital Painting
11 X 17
\$100

This work calls attention to the urgent need for environmental care in Detroit. It reminds us that the health of our city and its people is inseparable from the health of the land, water, and air we share. By protecting and restoring our environment today, we ensure that both humanity and nature can thrive together — creating a more just, vibrant, and sustainable future for generations to come.

B F O R B A R B E R

7 B O W S T O T H E S U N (R A I N B O W)



Oil on Cardboard
52 X 76 X 2
NFS

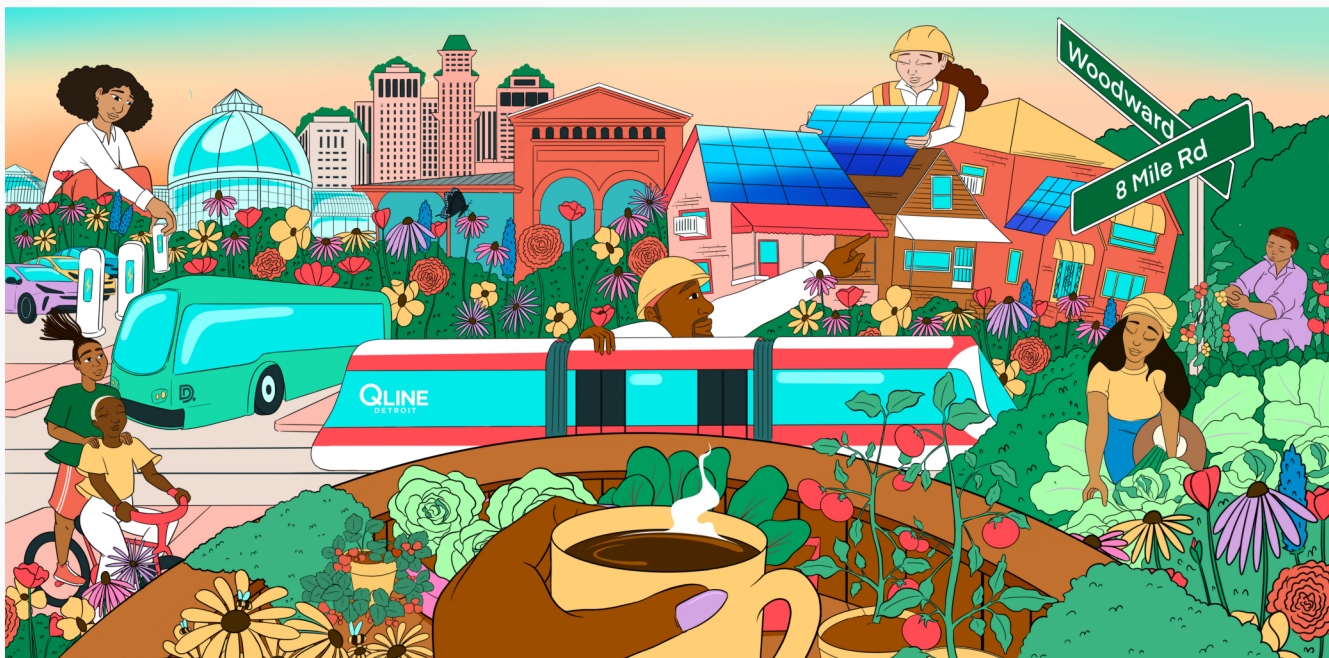
My painting process, inspired by upcycling, is both creative and environmental. I work with found objects, archival adhesives, and pigments to create layered, textured compositions. This approach allows me to collaborate with the materials themselves, many of which I pull directly from the streets I walk. Specifically, Rainbow was created on double-corrugated cardboard originally used as shipping material.

This resourcefulness, shaped by growing up in Detroit, is more than aesthetic—it's an act of cultural reverence and environmental care. I repurpose to honor what has been discarded by elevating it into nobility, giving it new life, and resisting the cycle of overproduction and consumption.

My practice is in direct conversation with Black culture and Mother Earth.

DAIZYDOODLES

IN MY BACKYARD



FEATURED BILLBOARD ARTIST
Digital Illustration
Limited Prints Available

My initial thought of sustainability in Detroit was gardens, plants, food, but it's more than that. Its transportation, sustainable energy, accessibility for all citizens. Through this illustration I highlight some of the things I believe would have huge impacts on the city. The Qline expanding to Woodward and 8 mile, people being able to grow food in their own backyard, and installing solar panels on houses. There is so much potential for us to create a space for everyone to flourish.

DAJANIERE RICE

SACRED

CONVERSATIONS



FEATURED BILLBOARD ARTIST

Oil on Canvas

27 X 30

NFS

Sacred Conversations captures the intimate bond between two Black women, one cutting the other's hair, surrounded by vibrant zinnias and set against a serene water backdrop. Inspired by the artist and her friend's personal experience, being two of the three Black women in their college graphic design program, the painting reflects the deep connection and mutual support they forged amidst shared challenges. This painting not only symbolizes their enduring friendship but also echoes the long history of Black women creating safe spaces, such as beauty salons, as a place of solace and support. Sacred Conversations honors the resilience, strength, and solidarity inherent in sisterhood, while also paying tribute to the broader struggle and triumphs of Black women navigating similar challenges across generations. The presence of flowers and water also speaks to how nature's beauty uplifts the spirit, eases the mind, and nurtures mental well-being.

DELON “DDDMPEG”

ROBINSON

R E D L I N E D E T R O I T



FEATURED BILLBOARD ARTIST

Digital Print

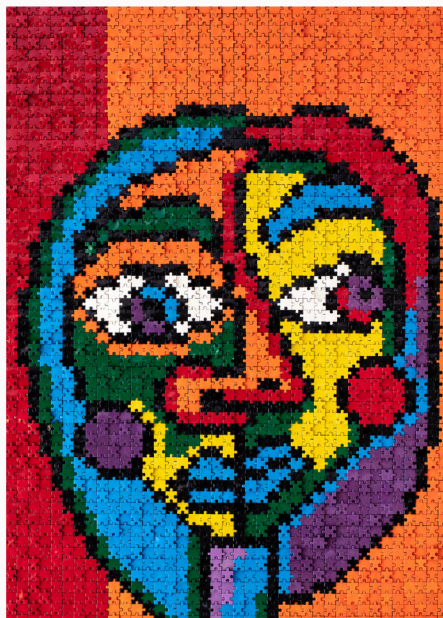
20 X 24

\$250

Inspired by one of my favorite childhood show CAPTAIN PLANET. Remind us (The Planetes) "The power is yours!" reminding us to protect Mother Earth and focuses on issues that are still relevant going on in our city today! From illegal dumping and systematic neighbourhood pollution!

DENZEL PALM

L A D Y I N T H E S U N D R E S S



Crayola Crayon on Wood

24 X 30

\$1300

I upcycle Crayola crayons as a way to stay connected to my inner child and approach art with curiosity, honesty, and play. These familiar tools carry the textures and colors of early creativity — imperfect, bold, and unfiltered. By embracing a medium often dismissed as childish, I challenge the idea that maturity requires distance from simplicity. My work explores nostalgia and vulnerability through vibrant marks that refuse to be polished. In doing so, I invite others to rediscover the power of wonder.

DOUGLAS JONES

THE MAROON SERIES



FEATURED BILLBOARD ARTIST
Limited Edition Single Color
Black Print 1/100
11 X 17
\$400

My Maroon series reflects on the earliest histories of Black life in Michigan—where freedom meant survival in untamed landscapes. These works look to the wild as refuge and resistance, asking how we might reimagine our relationship with land and water today. In a time of climate crisis, Detroit reminds us that survival and imagination are inseparable.

HADASSAH GREENSKY

MIKINAAK ODE Γ ρ à ь ▷ U
- HEART OF THE TURTLE



FEATURED BILLBOARD ARTIST

Canvas Print

8 X 24 X 2

NFS

Mikinaak Ode, Heart Of The Turtle in the Mackinaw Straits, this is Hadassah's tribe and specifically clan territory. This site is the current location of Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline, which is foretold to the Anishinaabek people as a black snake poisoning our waters.

HALIMA AFI CASSELLS & SHANNA MEROLA

W A T E R S O N G



FEATURED BILLBOARD ARTIST

Analogue Collage

17 X 48

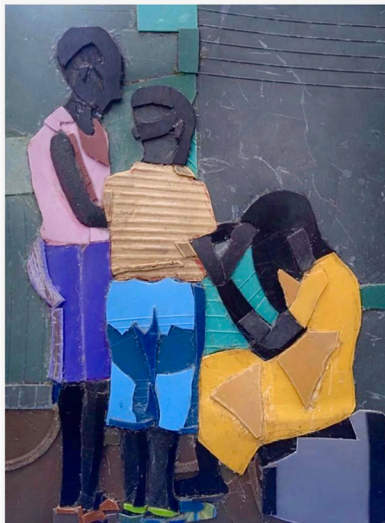
NFS

The concept for this piece is two-fold. On one hand, it demonstrates the slow violence of extraction, deregulation, and austerity measures burdening predominantly Black cities across the U.S. like Detroit and Flint, MI. Simultaneously, it honors the legacy of resistance, collective liberation, and care that reverberate through our city streets and neighborhoods along networks of mutual aid. With women and mothers as the backbone of these movements we have witnessed visionary models of organizing for environmental justice, housing, and water rights as a response to these recent attacks on longtime residents and working-class families.

In this piece we see women and mothers interconnected throughout the ecosystem as stewards of the land - protecting and nurturing each other and future generations. One figure keeps watch from the base of the Flint water tower, while hands throw an offering of flowers into the Detroit River on Belle Isle. There is tenderness, protection, worry, and joy as these figures bear witness to history and shape its course along the water's edge.

JAMES BUABENG

BRAIDING & TOGETHERNES S



Discarded Plastic on Canvas
11 X 15
\$600

Through my art, I aim to challenge the viewer's perception of plastic as a disposable and worthless material. By collecting, cleaning, and reassembling discarded plastics, I create intricate and complex forms that not only showcase the aesthetic potential of this material but also highlight the urgent need for sustainability and environmental responsibility.

JEFFREY FISCHER

PLAYING UNDER SMOKE

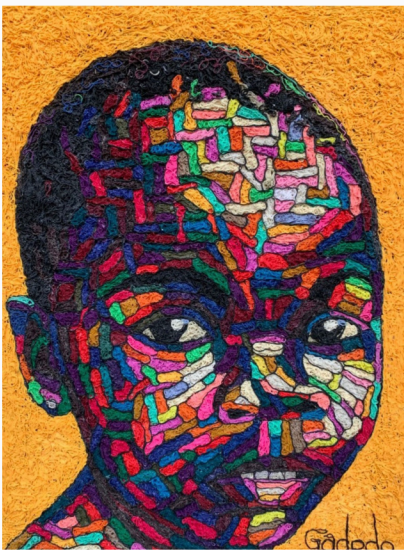


These photographs confront the stark contrast between industry and everyday life in Detroit. One image captures factory chimneys releasing thick smoke into the sky above a neighborhood, while another shows children playing freely on the beach beneath the same plume of pollution. Together, they reveal the uneasy coexistence of joy, innocence, and environmental harm.

The work speaks to the reality that many Detroit families live, work, and raise their children in the shadow of heavy industry. Pollution is not an abstract threat, it is the air breathed while playing, the backdrop of home, the constant companion to daily life.

KOFI GADEDE

THE CHILD IN ME



Crochet Yarns on Canvas
36 X 48
\$3000

I seek to capture the fleeting and uncertain nature of human emotion and the world around us through the medium of cotton crochet threads glued onto canvas. By layering and manipulating these humble materials, I aim to create a sensory experience that reflects the fragility and transience of our subjective realities.

MAC AKWASI

THE NATURAL WOMAN 1 & 2



Discarded Wood
\$500



Discarded Wood
\$500

Mac Akwasi master wood sculptor and artist, whose creative genius has been shaping the world of art for decades. With a career spanning over two decades, Mac's passion for art has only grown stronger with time. Born with a creative spark, Mac's artistic journey began at a young age. Today, his stunning wood sculptures and artworks are a testament to his dedication, skill, and innovative spirit.

As a seasoned artist, Mac's work is a beautiful blend of traditional techniques and modern flair. His creations are not only visually striking but also tell stories that evoke emotions and spark imagination.

MANDISA SMITH

FOR GILDA SNOWDEN



Wet Felted Merino Wool
42 X 32
\$1,200

Mandisa Smith is a fiber artist whose practice is rooted in sustainability. Her primary medium, wet felting, is a zero-waste process in which every wisp of wool finds its place. In her eco-dyeing work, she uses plant materials to infuse fabric with natural color, creating both wearable art and luminous silk that she often incorporates into her felted pieces. She is the founder of AKOMA Art House & Dye Garden at Oakland Avenue Urban Farm in Detroit's North End, where she is cultivating both a dye garden and a sanctuary—a place of beauty, serenity, and sensory delight.

QIANA DAVIS

S O N R I S E U P

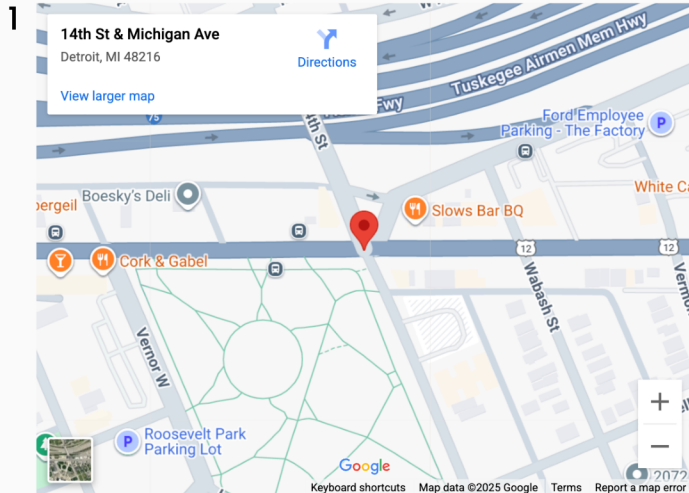


Acrylic, Oil & Mixed Media on
Canvas
24 X 30
NFS

Like the sunshine, the son or sonshine is the "light of the world" as symbolized by Christ. The little boy brings warmth, joy and sometimes fiery defiance to his parent's lives much like the solar flares radiating bold brush strokes of deep blues, vibrant orange and yellow hues behind him.

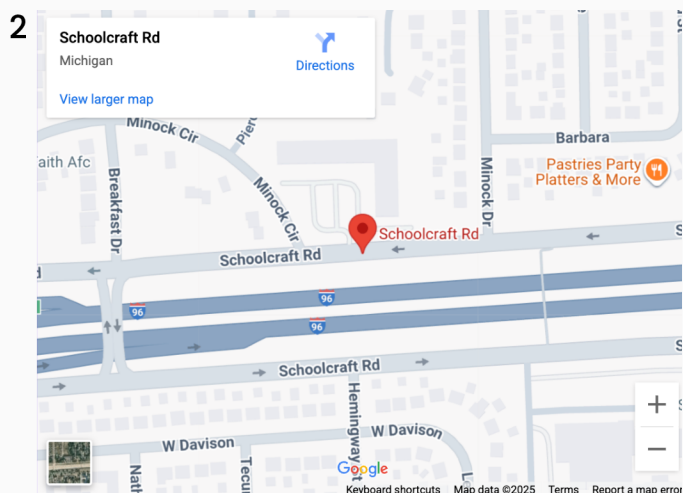
"Son, Rise Up" is not just a mixed media piece blending acrylic with oil with great detail, it's a call to action. Although we see the solar eclipse in his eye, casting a shadow of darkness and doubt, still he rises as a symbol of hope and resilience. He is the next generation of young boys on the verge of realizing their greatness and illuminating the world.

BILLBOARD MAPS



The digital billboard at 14th St & Michigan Ave will showcase works by the following artists:

- Allen Creary
- Anthea Calhoun
- Daizydoodles
- Dajaniere Rice
- Delon "DDDMPEG" Robinson
- Douglas Jones
- Hadassah Greensky
- Halima Afi Cassells
- Shanna Merola



This static billboard located at Schoolcraft & Grandmont features artist Daizydoodles. Her work, In My Backyard, will be on display throughout the month.

The Digital Billboard is on view from September 8th – September 14th
The Static Billboard is on view from September 8th – October 8th



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