

The Face of Justice

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF WEST HARLEM WOMEN ARTISTS



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October 2 - 31, 2023

Presented by:



The Kota Alliance is an umbrella organization elevating collaboration across borders for women-centered nonprofits, social enterprises and entrepreneurs.

We offer a hub where women can gather for community events and programs provided in collaboration with our local partners.

By sharing ideas, networking, advocating, and working together, we advance gender equity and promote women's empowerment, both locally and globally.

<https://www.kota-alliance.org/>

The Face of Justice

Curated by Yael Ben-Zion

Participating Artists:

Cathleen Campbell
Lisa Candela
Mx. Enigma
Wilhelmina Grant-Cooper
Ronah Harris
Maggie Hernandez
Junny Hibbert
Julia Justo
Jana Leo
Rafaela Luna
Cathleen Luo
Naivy Pérez
Bonnie Phillips
Labdhi Shah

Introduction:

The Face of Justice - the inaugural exhibition at The Kota Alliance headquarters - brings together fourteen artists whose diverse work exemplifies the richness of both the community of West Harlem and womanhood. By looking inwards at themselves and outwards at the world we live in, the artists in this exhibit critically examine the personal, social, political, and historical factors that shape our identity.

The artwork presented varies by media (it includes painting, drawing, photography, printmaking, embroidery, sculpture, installation, and assemblage) and materials - ranging from painted canvas to repurposed and found objects. The genre of the work and its style are equally diverse: abstract and figurative, surreal and realistic, conceptual and perceptual, political and personal. And the artists themselves come from different backgrounds, belong to different generations, and identify as part of different social groups.

And yet - when put together, the works don't conflict with each other but rather complement and enhance one another, creating harmony. Not a quiet and comfortable harmony, but a thought-provoking and challenging one. That is, by creating a common space where the artists' personal experience and diverse perspectives can live and interact, the exhibition invites the viewers, as well as the artists, to engage in fresh and eye-opening conversations.

A number of themes run through the artwork in the exhibition: the female/femme body in relation to social constructs that repress its existence; (in) visibility and resilience of women of color and immigrants; and perception of gender, race and self.

Some artists consider these themes by creating imaginative figures and environments (Cathleen Luo, Lisa Candela, Junny Hibbert, and Maggie Hernandez). Others portray contemporary women, including themselves, or reference trailblazing women, in order to bring to the forefront race, class, and gender realities and their historical roots (Julia Justo, Rafaela Luna, Mx.Enigma, Leo Jana, Wilhelmina Grant-Cooper, Bonnie Phillips, and Cathleen Campbell). Still other artists focus on the fluidity of our identities and our experience as human beings, and reflect on the concepts of freedom and self-imposed boundaries (Labdhi Shah, Ronah Harris and Naivy Pérez).¹

What is common to all of the artworks in the show is their refusal to accept social norms and embedded injustices as constant and inevitable. The artists use various techniques -

color, shape, patterns, symbolism, performance, direct gaze, poetic expression, and even humor - as means of defiance and persistence. Looking at the work as a whole one comes to the realization that women don't need to change, society does.

By acknowledging historical and present wrongs while reclaiming their just place, the artists in the exhibit create space for contemplation, reimagination and community building, and show us the power and potential of social change.

—Yael Ben-Zion,
Curator

¹ Note that this categorization does not fully encompass the full range of ideas behind the individual artworks and is merely meant to outline how they refer to the themes mentioned.

Cathleen Campbell

cccpix.com

Instagram [@cathleencampbellpix](https://www.instagram.com/cathleencampbellpix)



Queen Elder
of 125th
Street,
Archival
Digital Print,
11"x14",
2017



Mrs. Bowen, Archival Digital
Print, 14"x11", 2017



Mother Country, Archival Digital Print, 14"x11", 2019

Lisa Candela

www.lisacandela.org

Instagram: [@lisa_candela_art](https://www.instagram.com/lisa_candela_art)



Unflowering 1, Oil on fabric, 48"x36", 2023

Opposite Page:
Night Imprint, Charcoal on fabric, 12"x12", 2023



*The Agony of Anarcha
Westcott, 3/5 Human,
Found Object Assemblage
25"x86", 2010*



*Maternal Mortality,
Found Object Assemblage
23"x50", 2010*

Wilhelmina Grant-Cooper

sistaah.org

Instagram [@sistaahstudio](https://www.instagram.com/sistaahstudio)

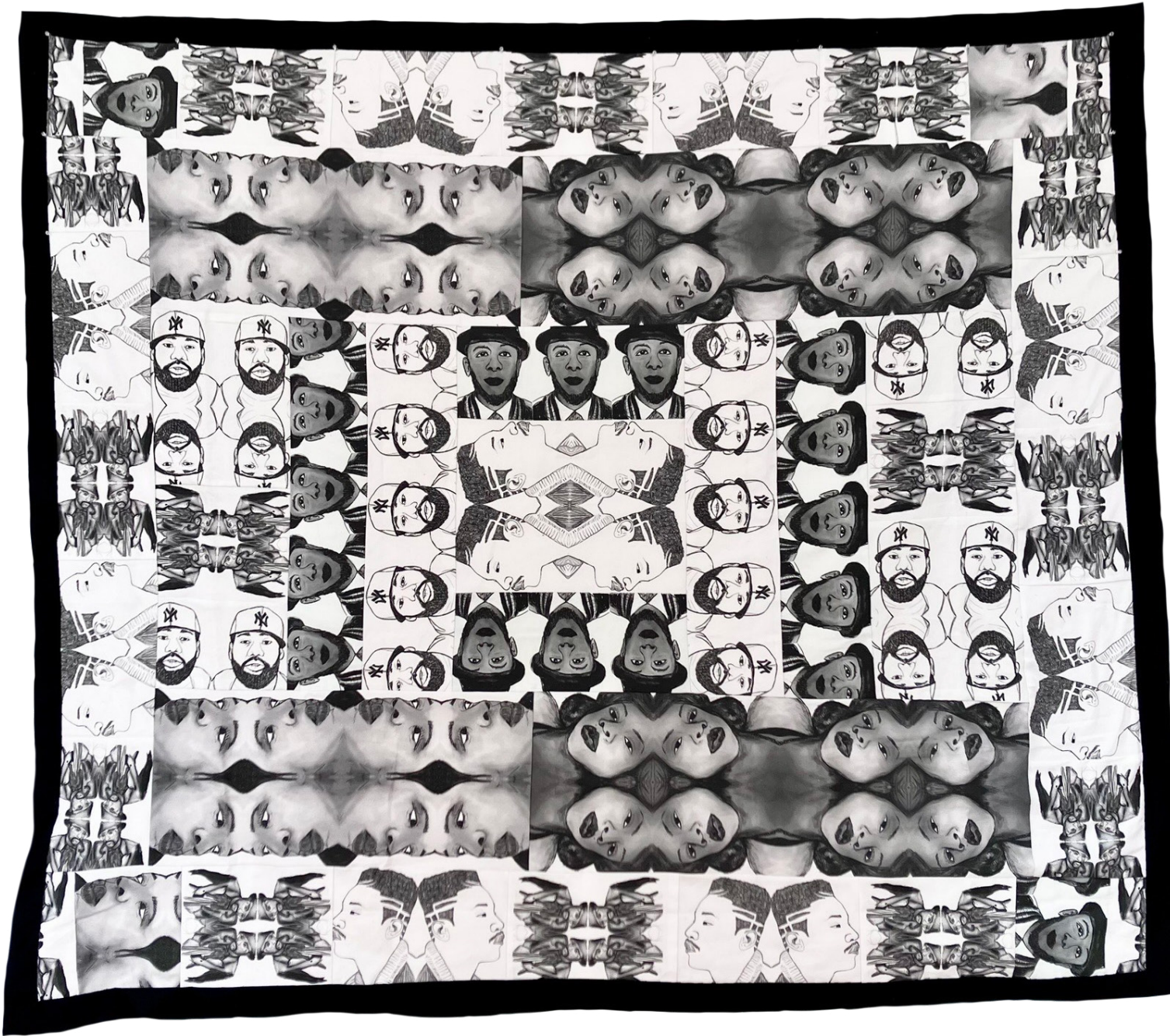


*She Knows the Hotcomb(3) Found Object
Assemblage, 12"x17", 2023*

Ronah Harris

www.ronahharris.com

*It was all a dream,
Fiber, thread, beads
36"x56", 2023*





Mx.Enigma

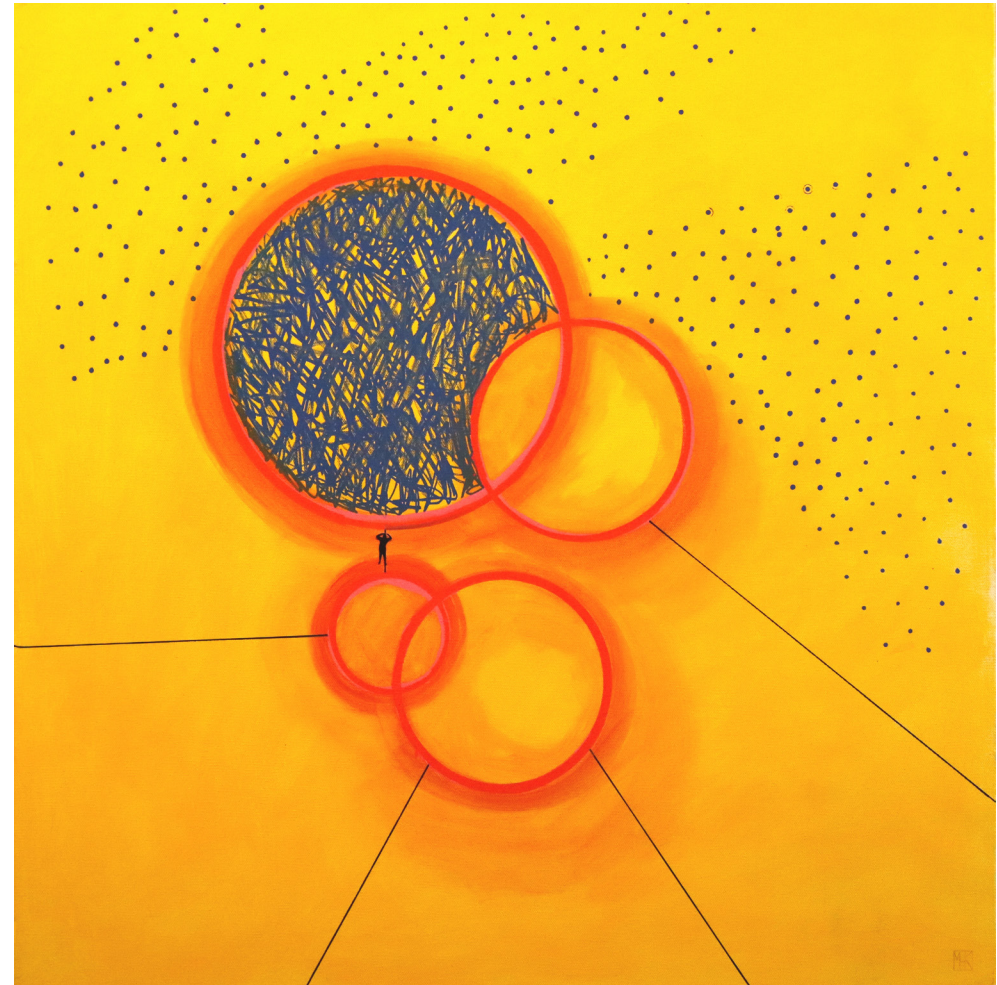
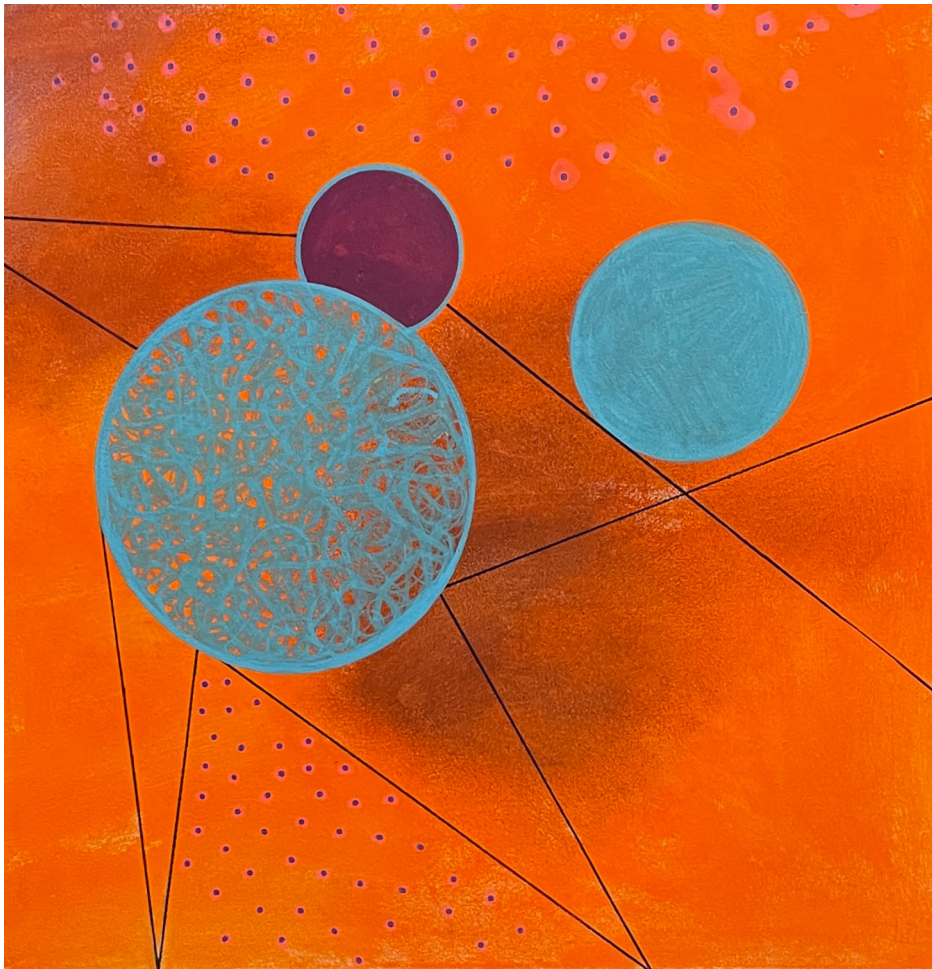
www.behance.net/MxEnigma
Instagram [@Mx.Enigma](https://www.instagram.com/Mx.Enigma)

Fine, Fresh, Feminine & CUNtY,
Self-portrait,
Woodcut / laser printing,
8"x11", 2022

Maggie Hernandez

www.maggiehernandez.com

Instagram [@maggiehernandezart](https://www.instagram.com/maggiehernandezart)



Transmission Rings II, 30"x30"
Acrylic on Canvas, 2023

Opposite page:
Marbles & Lace, 30"x30"
Acrylic on Canvas, 2023

Junny Hibbert

junny.nyc

Instagram [@junny_nyc](https://www.instagram.com/junny_nyc)



Seen yet unseen, African prints and repurposed locally sourced wooden beads on 22" styrofoam head, laser printed poem on wood, 2023



Julia Justo

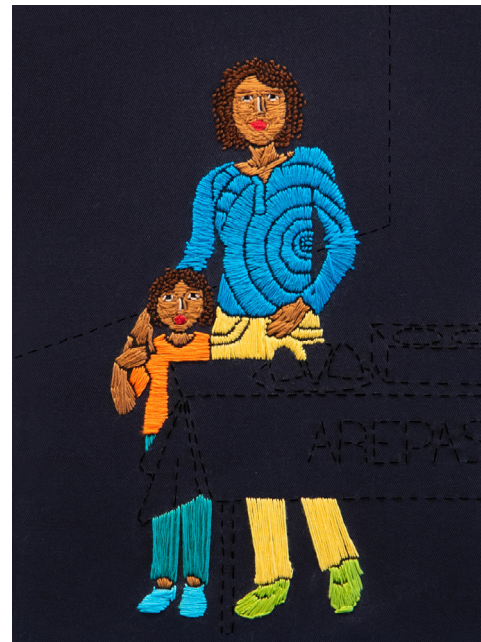
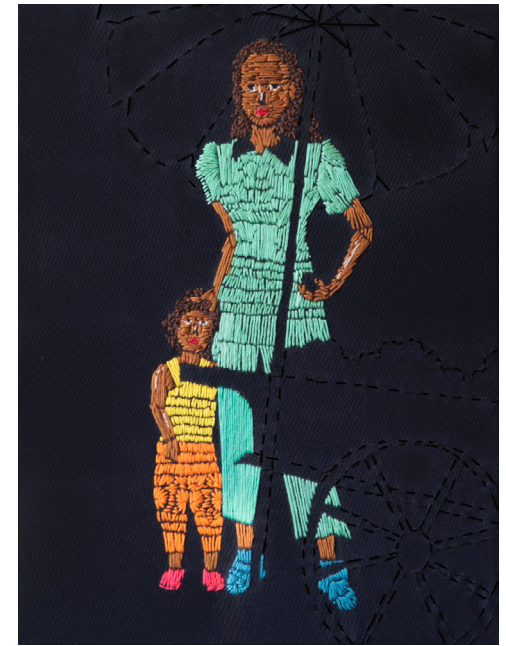
www.juliajusto.com

Instagram [@juliajustoart](https://www.instagram.com/juliajustoart) | Facebook: [juliajustoart](https://www.facebook.com/juliajustoart)



Romina and Emily, Tamale Vendors
Embroidery, 9"x11", 2022

*Maria and Anita,
Fruit Vendors,*
Embroidery, 9"x11",
2022



*Carmen and Megan,
Arepa Vendors,*
Embroidery, 9"x11",
2022

Jana Leo

janaleo.com



Self Isolation, Analog photography with large format camera, B/W Negative 8"x10", 2012

This image acts as a mirror in which I confront the way I live. I am presumably free and at the same time locked in a bubble—a chair, a laptop, and me. I spend my life in front of a screen. Years after the AIDS and COVID crisis, fear of the other is still ingrained in my culture. And if the world is on the web, what's the point of breaking out? If communication can happen online, what's the point of facing relationships? This image was created years before the use of Zoom and virtual living became widespread. It was a vision of the future.

Blinded by comfort and improvements, I forget what is really important to me. With Prime, everything is accessible, I can get items in my house from one day to the next. I stop seeing what exists beyond Amazon and The New York Times. After a brief moment of joy, I feel like an object. For me this is a reminder of how I consume myself.

The Good Life, Analog photography with large format camera. B/W Negative 8"x10", 2022



I went to a house to do a job. It was during the COVID pandemic. The woman I was going to work for was not wearing a mask. I asked her if she could wear a mask, and she replied that because she was in her own home she did not need to wear one. Yet her home was my workplace. She is my age and lives in SoHo. I was introduced to this woman by an acquaintance who had categorized her as "class-conscious."

Class-Consciousness, Analog photography with medium format camera. B/W Negative 6"x7", 2022

Rafaela Luna

www.Rafaelaluna.com

Instagram [@rafaelalunar1](https://www.instagram.com/rafaelalunar1)



Rethinking The Way I Feel About Myself,
Mixed Media on Canvas, 50"x40", 2021



Rethinking the way I Feel About Myself IV Series,
Mixed Media/ Canvas, 22"x28", 2021

Cathleen Luo

cathleenluo.myportfolio.com

IG: [@catluo27.art](https://www.instagram.com/catluo27.art)



Ghost Devil Offering Protection, ceramics, 8"x8"x24", 2023



By the Fire Pit
(figure), ceramics,
16"x16"x16",
2023



In my room, Acrylic and oil on canvas, 36"x24", 2023

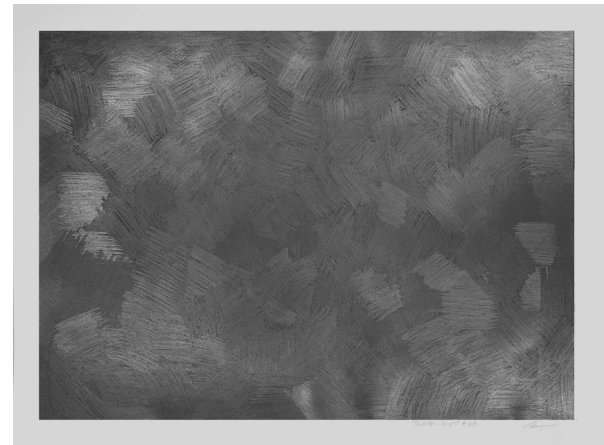
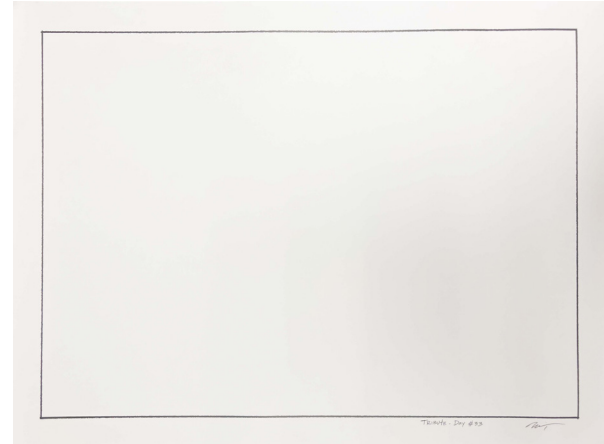
Naivy Pérez

naivyperez.art

Instagram [@naivypj](https://www.instagram.com/naivypj)



Koan, Object/Installation (Iron Cage, Key, Padlock), 19"x11.7"x11.7", 2017



Tribute Day & Night # 33 (Diptych: 40 Days / 40 Nights Series), Graphite on paper, 18"x24", 2013

Bonnie Phillips

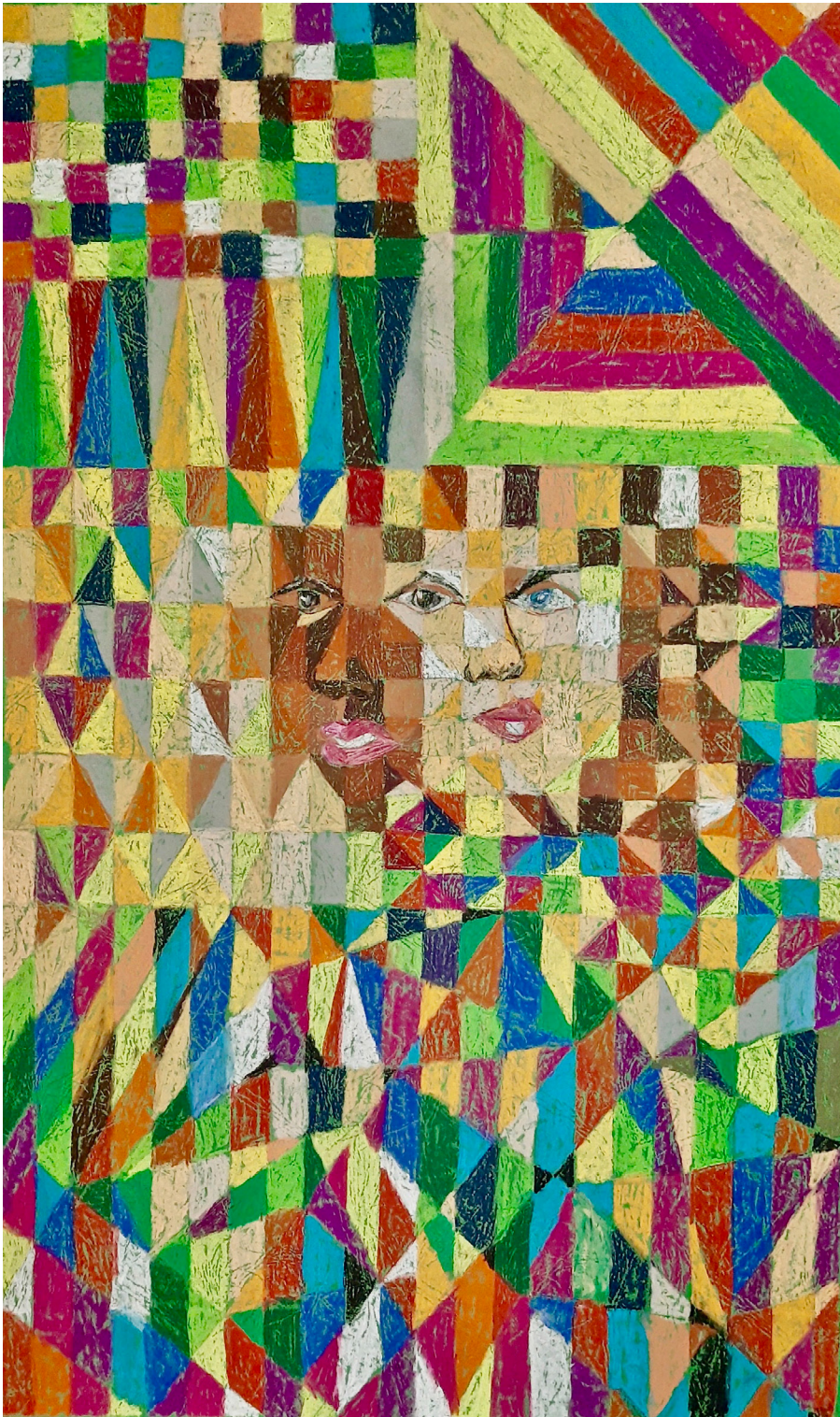
bonniephillips08.wixsite.com/mysite

Instagram [@bonniephillips008](https://www.instagram.com/bonniephillips008)



Sherbet Warrior - Angela Davis, Oil on Canvas, 30"x40", 2021

Opposite Page:
Sherbet Warrior - Harriet Tubman, Oil on Canvas, 30"x40", 2022



Labdhi Shah

labdhisah.com

Instagram [@artistlabdhisah](https://www.instagram.com/artistlabdhisah)

Oneness, Chalk pastels on
paper, 38" x 24", 2020

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Catalogue Design: [Josefina Hernandez Studio](#)