



Raneece Buddan

Self Portraits and Discovery

Raneece Buddan, an emerging interdisciplinary artist, is quickly making her mark. Born and raised in Jamaica of an Afro-Caribbean mother and an Indo-Caribbean father, her eye-catching art intertwines a mixture of both heritages. In 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional artforms using wood, oil paints and textiles, she creates herself anew with every piece. Raneece currently works as a communications manager for a local gallery. This allows her plenty of time to work in her downtown Edmonton studio.

Her art journey started very early. In grade nine Raneece was able to align her education towards

the visual arts, learning to sculpt in clay as well as paint with oils. Jamaican curriculum allows students to focus more in specific areas than Canadian high schools. With growing interest in the field, she decided to pursue a university degree. She immigrated to Canada in 2015 and finished her high school in Fort McMurray. At the same time, Raneece continued to develop her portfolio to enter a university fine arts program. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) with Distinction in 2020 at the University of Alberta.

Raneece explores media combinations using textiles and synthetic hair to broaden her

understanding of the cultures she come from. African, East Indian, and Caribbean patterns and colours give an indicator of the complexities for descendants of these mixed ancestry. For certain cultures hair styles make strong political statements. Today, there is much question as to who has the right to politicize hair styles such as protective braiding styles (1). Because most of society has little understanding of the meaning behind African hair styles (2) and how it relates to their oppression, it remains to artists, such as Raneece, to bring light to symbols and meanings through their art.



“I feel that all my pieces are self-portraits in some way, and they all help me discover myself along the way.”

With her hair neither curly nor straight enough, Raneece can speak about the realities of never fitting in a particular cultural mould. Being praised for having long silky hair since she was a young child, Raneece accredited her beauty to her straight hair. Straightening her hair allowed her to feel accepted and as though she fit in better with the Indian side of her family. Raneece art has been a journey of self-acceptance and discovery of identity through hair expression.

One large 3-dimensional structure that features woodworking, textiles, and ceramics stands out.

Entitled To Fit but to Stand Out the elements come together to create a vibrant and intricate work. The wood appears to move fluidly, exposing spaces that give way to gorgeous textile. In making figurative cut-outs, Raneece tries to find the shape within the wood grain.

Textiles replace skin colour on paintings and sculptures as links to her cultural background. They represent an important connection to her history, and to objects she even admired growing up. Her sculpture Blooming Ancestry features an abstracted human figure constructed of ceramic and plaster. Traditional and colourful textiles are placed on the unfinished parts of the figure giving us an internal glimpse of identity.

There are many things yet to uncover. Raneece hopes to eventually incorporate more of her own weaving into her art. With family being a big part of Raneece's life, her art centres on intermingling her parent's rich culture and history. While her art is mainly a journey

of self-discovery, she hopes that others can find a connection to it with the recognition of a symbol or textile.

Based on an interview with Ayshani Aurora in 2023

References:

1. Chaves, A.M., & Bacharach, S. (2021). Hair Oppression and Appropriation. *The British Journal of Aesthetics*. <https://doi-org.ezproxy/library.uvic.ca/10.1093/aesthj/ayab002>
2. Jacob, J. (2021, October 29). Hair power: Exploring the history and meaning of hairstyles across the globe. *The Lovepost*. <https://www.thelovepost.global/decolonise-your-mind/photo-essays/hair-power-exploring-history-and-meaning-hairstyles-across-globe>

