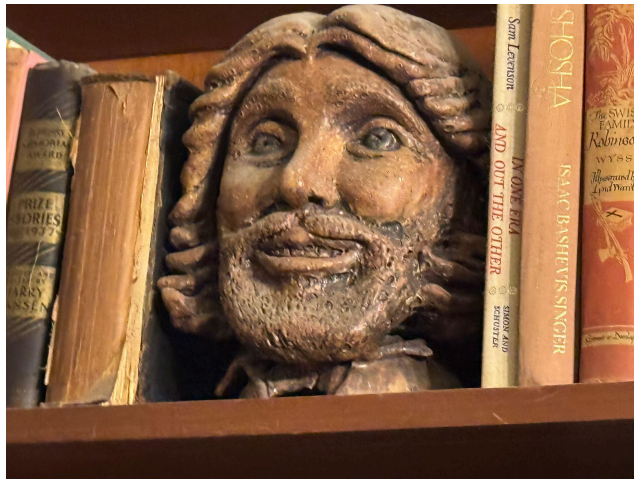


Aliah Selah - Visionary Interdisciplinary Artist

1. What Draws Me to Clay

My relationship with clay began when I was twelve years old, working as a teacher's assistant in a ceramics studio at my temple. I was immediately drawn to the material—the way it could become anything, the way it responded to touch, and the quiet, grounded presence it required. Even then, working with clay felt natural and familiar, as if I already understood something about it without needing to be taught.

At sixteen, I created my first bust. I was not enrolled in a formal ceramics sculpture class, but my high school art teacher allowed me to work independently in the studio during my free time. I spent several months immersed in the process, simply sitting down and shaping the form as it revealed itself. I was not following instructions—I was following an inner knowing. That experience became a turning point, showing me both my connection to figurative sculpture and my ability to work intuitively in three dimensions.



Title: Future Son Shines

Medium: Ceramic Sculpture

Year: 1977

Description: Created at age sixteen over several months of independent studio work, this was my first figurative sculpture. Developed intuitively without formal instruction, the piece reflects an early connection to three-dimensional form and an inner sense of recognition that continues to inform my work today. This piece explores masculine identity and presence through form and structure. The sculpture reflects my

interest in capturing both physical likeness and underlying character.

I gave it to my in-laws, and then my grown son came to visit them. He had grown a beard and had the same length of hair and blue eyes. It blew them away that somehow, I did a bust of our “son in the future”, in my teens.

At the time, I did not have language for what I was experiencing, but it felt less like learning and more like remembering. Years later, I would come to explore this more consciously through my project *Sojourn on the Silk Road* (www.cocreativeconnections.com), a learning program centered on the journey of an artist monk traveling to the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas. Through that work, I found myself drawn again to ancient traditions where art is both spiritual practice and creative expression—where sculpture, painting, and devotion are deeply intertwined. This was part of my 2 semesters studying Art Education to develop curriculum for what I am calling (Emotionally Intelligent Art Education) EIAE (Social Emotional Learning) SEL CoCreative Arts for Empowerment and Community Building. As part of that, I completed an internship at Feats Of Clay Ceramics Studio. Returning to clay in this structured, educational context reaffirmed what I had felt years before—that this medium is where my artistic practice, teaching philosophy, and embodied way of learning that comes together most naturally.

2. My Artistic Path

Looking back, I recognize that my connection to clay has always carried this sense of continuity. It feels rooted in something timeless—an embodied way of knowing that lives in the hands as much as in the mind. Returning to sculpture at this stage of my life is not a shift away from something else, but a return to what has always been present.

For me, clay is not only a medium. It is a relational, embodied process. It invites presence, patience, and transformation. It offers a way of working that aligns deeply with my values as both an artist and an educator, and it is the foundation from which I now choose to grow my practice.

My artistic path has developed through an interdisciplinary approach, integrating sculpture, painting, photography, and community-based art practices. Over the past several years at Cabrillo College, I focused on building a strong foundation in figurative drawing, painting, and sculpture, allowing each discipline to inform and strengthen the others.

Working with the human figure has been central to my growth as an artist. Through life drawing, figurative painting, and sculpture, I developed a deeper understanding of form, gesture, proportion, and presence. These studies allowed me to move beyond surface representation and begin exploring the expressive and symbolic potential of the figure.

Looking to the Master Artists Classical training, I took Figurative Drawing at the same time I took Figurative Sculpture at Cabrillo College where I earned an AA in Ceramics. I made the bust below (“Spiral On, Business Man) and this full-bodied sculpture. The wonderful teacher, Sean Monaghan (who teaches Sculpture at UCSC) known for years of making large sculptures for Burning Man and many bronze sculptures around Santa Cruz. (<https://www.santacruz.com/papers/cruz/03.10.99/bronze-9910.htm>)

Title: Who Owns The Life Within Her?

Medium: Gray Modeling Clay

Size: 19” x 11” x 7”

Year: 2019

Description: This figure expresses feminine presence through gesture and form. The work emphasizes both strength and vulnerability, inviting reflection on identity and embodiment. And what it means to be given a life and how it has been normalized to choose to end the life of a child - or pressure from poverty or lack of support from the father to end that life. Will that continue to be a right, and should it be?





Title: Spiral On, Businessman

Medium: Ceramic Clay

Size: Life Size

Year: 2019

Description: This figure expresses feminine presence through gesture and form. The work emphasizes both strength and vulnerability, inviting reflection on identity and embodiment.

Sculpture, however, has remained the most natural extension of this work. While drawing and painting helped me see more clearly, working in clay allowed me to understand form spatially and physically. The process of shaping volume, weight, and movement in three dimensions brought a level of clarity and connection that I did not experience in the same way through two-dimensional media.

I also helped to organize the 2017 & 2018 Cabrillo Artist Activist Showcases.



I organized and contributed to 2 artist-activist showcases and developed my own interactive installations focused on community engagement, *Get2KnowU: The Art of Authentic Discovery*. These experiences expanded my understanding of art as a shared, participatory process rather than a solitary one. (See some of it in my Digital Artist Portfolio link on the last page.)

Your core themes for my art are:

- Healing through creativity
- Connection over perfection
- Community building through art
- Spiritual / symbolic / cultural honoring
- Embodied learning

“My intention is to offer art that inspires people and pulls them into ideas that give birth to creative transformations in their own lives.”

Abstract / Process Work (Painting & Mixed Media)

Featured at the 2019
VAPA Showcase



Title: The Cost Of Power (male)
The Cost Of Beauty (female)
Medium: Ceramic Clay (bisque)
Year: 2019

Description: This work reflects my process of beginning with abstraction to explore material, color, and composition. Through this approach, imagery emerges intuitively, allowing for a deeper connection between process and final form.



It was inside VAPA when the MakerSpace Event displayed art all over the lower campus and the Sculpture Garden. This project reinforced my belief that art plays an essential role in interdisciplinary learning and long-term cultural impact.



This painting inspired a Yogadancer Series - that is, a current study of abstract-inspired figurative drawing paintings that I seek to expand into yogadance sculptures. As a lifetime dancer, I have a 50-year yoga practice that grounded my dancing when many dancers were not healthy with their body image. It was Yoga and the healthy vegetarian Ayurvedic concepts that kept me balanced and my body stronger for dance. In 1982, I did a Yoga Teacher Training with 80-years-young, Shri Raman. As part of that training, I developed Yogadance, and did my final for the Yoga Teacher Training's Activist Project as a local Yogadance concert. Then, I toured with it to Israel, France, and Amsterdam and shared the most wonderful experiences. *A Dancer For Peace Tour* in

honor of Peace Pilgrim & Yogadance inspired by the movement of Isadora Duncan.

3. What My Work Is About - CORE THEME - Inspired CoCreation



Ceramic Tile Installation was both developed and cocreated in 2019. And due to lockdown, not completed and installed until a few years later. It is a ceramic mural **10' x 20'**

Description: This collaborative mural project integrates art and engineering, emphasizing creativity as a shared process across disciplines. Designed and constructed with a team, the work reflects the role of art in innovation, education, and long-term public engagement. I was part of the class where we made this mural for STEM - about science rooted in math. All made of ceramic tiles that we designed and made together with the engineers. It was a wonderful experience and will be there for many years to come. Generations of engineers will be inspired and see how art is part of being creative, and that is what makes engineers invent.



Title: Past Life Monk

Medium: Ceramic Sculpture

Size: Life Size

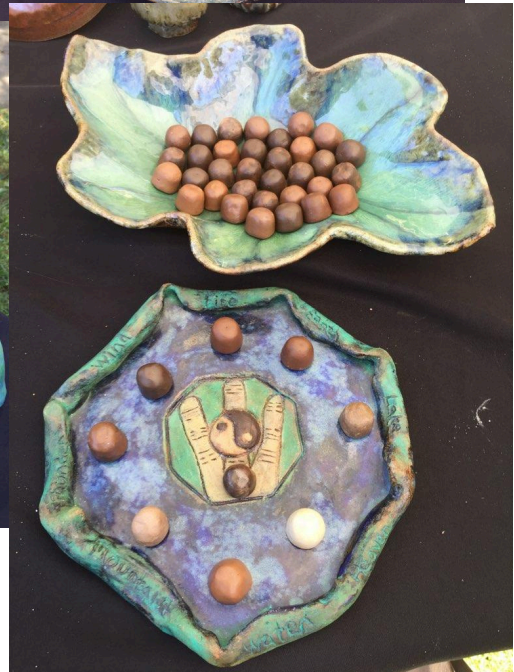
Year: 2018

Description: This figure connects directly to my *Sojourn on the Silk Road* project. The sculpture reflects my interest in art as spiritual practice and the role of the artist within a larger cultural and historical continuum.

www.cocreativeconnections.com

Cabrillo College showcased a Ceramic Potluck Picnic at 2019 CCACA California Conference for the Advancement Of Ceramic Art in Davis, CA.

We each made a plate, bowl, cup, & eating utensils for the ceramic potluck picnic.



Title: "Lao Tzu's Laughing Lotus I-Ching Chocolates"
Medium: Ceramic Sculpture
Size: Life Size
Year: 2019

Description: I made 64 chocolates - one for each I-Ching Hexagram. I used various clays for all the colors of chocolate. They were made with raw clay that were oiled - and many tried to eat them. Created for exhibition in the Davis Ceramics Show, this piece reflects my continued exploration of figurative form and expressive surface in a gallery context.



SECTION 4 — CREATIVE PROCESS: COCREATIVE ARTS

My creative process is rooted in what I call **CoCreative Arts**, an approach that prioritizes connection, exploration, and embodied learning.

Through my recent painting studies, I gained valuable insight into observation, value, and the discipline of seeing. This experience strengthened my understanding of form and composition, particularly in relation to the human figure. At the same time, it clarified that my artistic direction is not centered on perfecting static representation, but on cultivating connection, intuition, and expressive presence.

In my process, I often begin with abstraction. This allows both myself and my students to develop a relationship with the materials—to explore color, movement, and composition without the pressure of achieving a specific outcome. From this foundation, form begins to emerge naturally, and technical skill is built in a way that supports expression rather than restricting it.



This approach fosters confidence, curiosity, and a deeper sense of creative trust. It allows the work to evolve through interaction, rather than forcing it into a predetermined result.

While I value technical training, I am ultimately interested in how art can remain alive—how it can continue to invite discovery, connection, and meaning throughout the process.

I honor indigenous people and would love to focus more on how to make busts of people of various cultures.

“Midwives Of Many Cultures
Blessing All Our Babies”

Honoring Midwives around the world.

I would love to explore the features of various cultures in figurative clay sculptures. Spring 2020, just before lockdown, I was building a multi-headed goddess sculpture from this drawing, for the next Davis Show. So learning the structures/armatures to support large sculptures is one of the main reasons why I am looking for more sculpture training. I know I will grow artistically with your program, and I am especially interested in growing mechanical skills.

Working as a hormonal healer, I love the birth process, so I made:



Front



Back



The Mama Earth Belly Bowl. 2 cupped hands - is the daily portion according to some Yogic Practices.



Title: Mama Belly Series stopped by lockdown.

Medium: Ceramic Clay

Size: Various

Year: 2020

Description: This figurative sculpture explores gesture and presence through three-dimensional form. Developed through intuitive shaping and observation, the piece reflects my ongoing interest in the human figure as both a physical and expressive, while pregnant. The idea was for people to give it as a gift to pregnant women to help them to embrace motherhood with their morning raspberry tea - a uterus tonic.

and expressive, while pregnant. The idea was for people to give it as a gift to pregnant women to help them to embrace motherhood with their morning raspberry tea - a uterus tonic.

SECTION 5 — SCULPTURE: FORM, PRESENCE, & COMMUNITY

Sculpture—particularly clay—has become the central focus of my practice because it brings together everything I value in art: embodiment, presence, and connection.

Unlike two-dimensional work, sculpture engages the entire body. It requires touch, movement, and spatial awareness. The process of shaping clay creates a direct relationship between the artist and the form, allowing the work to be understood not only visually, but physically.

My figurative sculptures explore gesture, identity, and symbolic presence. Each piece emerges through an intuitive dialogue with the material, where form develops gradually rather than being imposed. The spiral becomes both a physical form and a symbol of inward reflection and outward expansion. The concept of the spiral is: human → symbolic → conceptual → natural



Title: Spiral Sea Sculpture

Medium: Ceramic with mixed media surface

Size: 7" x 7" x 4"

Year: 2018

Description: The natural form and iridescence of an abalone shell inspired this sculpture. In exploring how to capture its luminous surface, I experimented with layered applications of beige, blue, and purple pearlescent nail polish. The spiral form reflects my interest in natural patterns, continuity, and the meditative quality of organic structures.

I would love to go further with these ideas:

- **permaculture art vision**
- **sensory installations**
- **sound/vibration work (bowls in the image reinforce this)**

As a Qigong Teacher, I offer my students optional Laughing Lotus Heart Qigong Warm-ups before getting creative. I am not just forming clay—I am exploring surface, light, and material transformation, and how each student's visions can come to life while making friends to share it with. (CoCreative Healing: www.cocreative)

SECTION 6 — TEACHING PHILOSOPHY: COCREATIVE ARTS & COMMUNITY

A central aspect of my work is teaching, and my artistic practice has always been closely connected to how I engage with others through creative processes.

Over twenty years ago, I developed and implemented a community-based art approach while teaching in a K–9 inner-city school. At the time, the classroom environment was often shaped by conflict—students struggled with competition, comparison, and disconnection from one another. Rather than addressing these challenges separately from the art curriculum, I began integrating interpersonal skill-building directly into creative work.

Through themes such as trust, respect, understanding, and shared expression, students were invited to explore both their artwork and their relationships at the same time. As this approach developed, I began to see a shift. Peer counseling and peer tutoring emerged naturally. Students who had previously been in conflict began supporting one another. The art classroom became a space not only for creativity, but for connection.

From this experience, I developed what I now call the ***Friendship Circle & Peace Bench Protocol**, as well as a broader framework of **Emotionally Intelligent Art Education (EIAE)** within my (Social Emotional Learning) SEL CoCreative Arts model. (*High School = Artist's Circle)
(For more info: www.cocreativeconnections.com)



In this approach, art becomes a tool for:

- building community
- developing emotional awareness
- and fostering collaborative learning

Rather than focusing solely on individual achievement, students learn to create within a shared environment where each person's expression contributes to the whole.

Land of the Medicine Buddha Festival

CoCreative Sound Bath: where each one heals each other as they rotate to each station.

This was a family who came to do CoCreative Sound Baths where they were able to heal everyone in the family.

My teaching begins in a similar way to my artistic process—often through open, exploratory experiences that allow students to engage with materials without fear of failure.

From there, skills are developed in a way that supports confidence and personal voice.

This approach reflects my core belief that: Art is not only something we create—it is something we use to understand ourselves and connect with others.

SECTION 7 — VISION: INTERACTIVE PERMACULTURE ART ENVIRONMENTS

My work expands into permaculture-based environments where art, nature, and human interaction form a living system. Looking forward, my work is expanding into the creation of immersive, interactive environments that integrate sculpture, nature, and community participation.

I envision developing **permaculture-based art installations** that are multi-sensory and experiential. These environments will include:

- figurative clay sculptures
- natural elements such as plants, stone, and earth
- sound, music, and vibrational healing
- spaces for interaction, reflection, and shared experience

Rather than presenting art as something to be observed from a distance, these installations invite people to enter the work—to move through it, engage with it, and connect with one another within it.

My figurative sculptures will play a central role in these environments, often inspired by movement, meditation, and symbolic gesture. These forms will serve as both visual and energetic anchors within the space, guiding the experience of those who enter.

This vision brings together all aspects of my practice:

- sculpture
- teaching
- community building
- and interdisciplinary creative expression

It reflects my intention to create spaces where art becomes a living experience—one that supports connection, healing, and transformation.



“Blessing Our Elders Always”



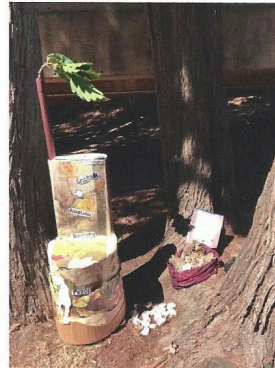
“Tibetan Past Life”



“KalaChakra - Time for Awakening”

This work represents my vision for interactive, multisensory environments that integrate sculpture, nature, and community engagement. The installation invites participants to move through and interact with the space, creating a shared creative experience.

How it was inspired: This summer I took the Alternative Drawing class with a brilliant art professor, **Andrea Borsuk**, who is very interested in the project and new degree, after she inspired us with studying Andy Goldsworthy with is a nature based sculpture that he is known for around the world. Andrea asked us to make an an outdoor instillation somewhere on campus for the final. I chose to put mine in the Sculpture Garden - a place that I have always been drawn to and would love to help revitalize. **I felt the need for an interactive meditation spot in the Sculpture Garden that I would love to be ongoing and made in a more sustainable way with this Instillation Art Proposal:**



For the Alternative Drawing Class - our final we had to do an outdoor instillation and I did an interactive installation that I call: **Elemental Forgiveness Inspirations** - I would love to solidify this interactive art instillation asking participants 4 questions to get in touch with emotions that can inspire their art-making.

1. What makes you mad? (Fire)
2. What makes you cry? (Water)
3. What makes you feel isolated? (Air)
4. What makes you feel heavy? (Earth) With poetic words to help them allow those emotions to birth inspirations. And the wise faith that knows how forgiveness comes as we see all the inspiration our emotions have brought us. Then, we can be grateful for the art that came because of it. Forgiveness is for the artist who is grateful to the process of art-making and how that touches us so deeply - as we heal through our art - we grow. I understood the need for a interactive meditation spot in the sculpture garden and I would love to re-do this outdoor interactive instillation in the Sculpture Gardens, where it could stay - for a period of time - yet to be decided. And as part of it, I am also making a new sculpture for the hollowed tree close by, that I am making to fit that space - to photograph it for my Photography 3 project. I would love it to have some time there. Together we are developing this proposal process to have the space be used for other sculptures in the future. Seeking to take further - **Elemental Forgiveness Inspiration - as an interactive conceptual instillation.**

Steps to peace: Gratitude, Inner Awareness, Acceptance, Understanding, Peace



Title: The Medichair
Medium: Mixed Media Installation / Concept
Size: 37" x 14" x 12
Year: 2019

Description: The concept of the Medichair centers me so I can be more creative - visualizing. Perhaps it will inspire you to feel supported in your art and create some beautiful vehicles for your calm. What would resilience offer you? As an outdoor installation in the Sculpture Garden, Cabrillo College - it was an interactive experience.





Title: The Buddha Box
(for meditation on the go)
Medium: Wood and various things in the box. Mixed Media Installation / Concept
Size: 10" x 7" x 5"
Year: 2019

Description: I made the box out of a 2x4x8 piece of pine wood. I put the hinges, the clip, and Handel on it - along with the wood legs. I found this piece of driftwood in the toolroom that no one claimed. So I begged them to give it to me, and they finally did.

Then, I found out it fit perfectly (no screws needed - it wedged in) to make the dragon head.



SECTION 8 — CLOSING: COMMITMENT & DIRECTION

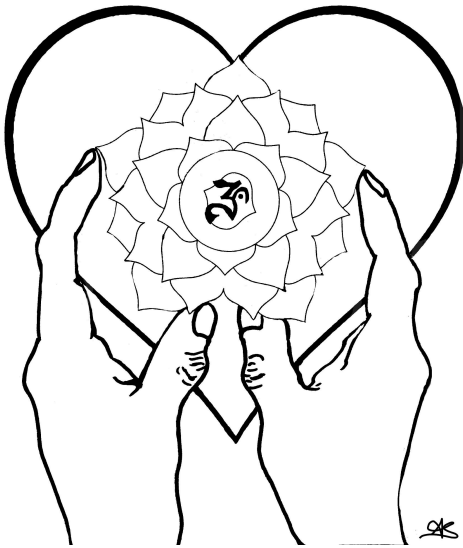
Pursuing an MFA in Sculpture at the Academy of Art University is a natural and intentional next step in the development of my work.

The program offers the opportunity to deepen my practice in figurative sculpture while continuing to integrate interdisciplinary approaches that include installation, sound, and community-based art. It provides a focused environment in which I can refine both my technical skills and my conceptual vision.

I bring with me a lifetime of artistic exploration, a strong foundation in figurative work, and a developed teaching methodology that integrates art with emotional intelligence and community building.

I am committed to expanding this work—both as an artist and as an educator—and to contributing meaningfully to a field that increasingly recognizes the importance of connection, collaboration, and creative expression.

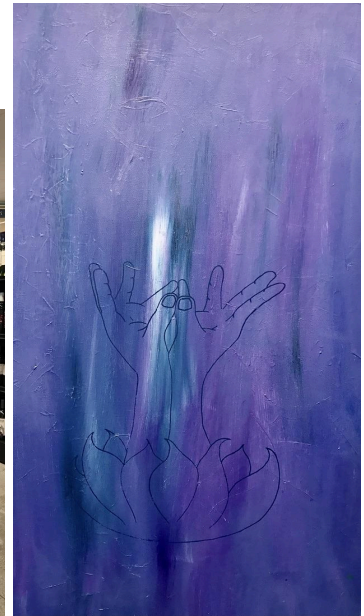
This program will allow me to fully develop my practice in sculpture as the central medium through which I create, teach, and engage with others.



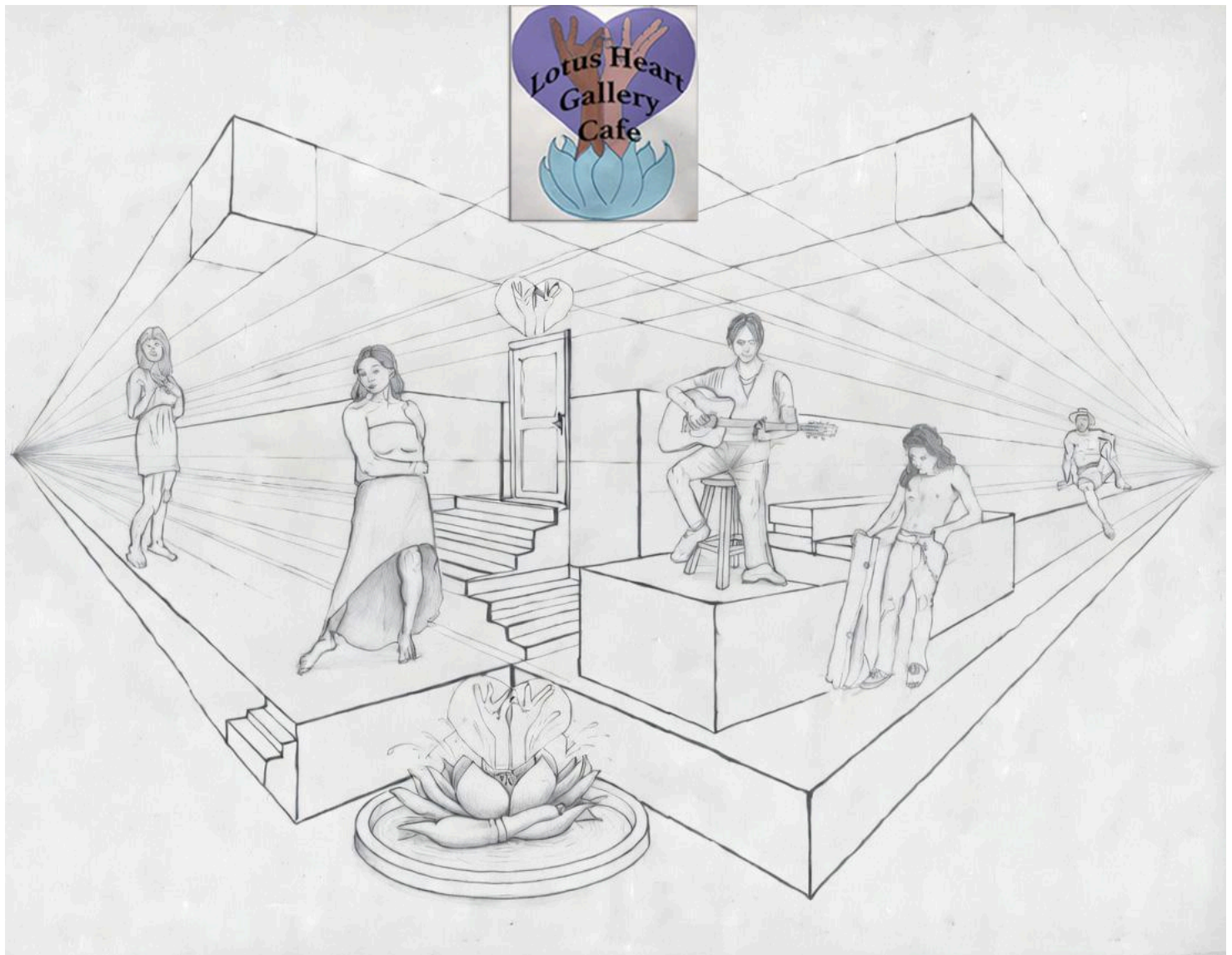
“OM Lotus Hands”



“Lotus Heart Mudra”



“Awakening To the Light”



This is a vision I have had for years, my business, Lotus Heart Gallery & Authentic Life Wellness Center, had to close due to lockdown. So I focused on school and by Spring 2023, I had earned 7 degrees (Ceramics, Painting, Art Photography, Art History, Communication Studies, Health Science & Kinesthetic Wellness, focusing on my decades of teaching Laughing Lotus Heart Qigong, & Lotus Heart Yogadance.) I am an Asian Bodywork Therapist and teach Qigong Sound Healing and offer 432 Hz Sound Baths. Lotus Heart Gallery Cafe would have uplifting images and be known as a heart-centered, inspiring gallery, a cafe/juice bar with healthy food, music performances, and a healing room, an art-making studio, and a class for Yoga, Qigong, & life-affirming community building positive subjects. This drawing is a site-specific installation concept for the future Lotus Heart Sculpture Fountain project that will likely be my MFA thesis.



**My most recent painting:
Rise Of The Super Empaths:
Soul∞Blossoming
Dedicated to:
CoCreative Artists ∞ Lotus Heart Empaths
Who Thrive = Super Empaths**

For a long time, I have had the goal of earning an MFA so that I can be an art teacher for adults, teaching those who seek to be art teachers - especially burnt out teachers what I feel can heal our schools through cocreativity, building community. I was able to develop these ideas in a private inner-city school (K-9). There were many behavior issues, upmanships, telling on each other, and constant fighting. So I added friendship skills, interpersonal communications, and community-building experiences to every class as they talked about their art and the friendship theme for the day (Trust, Respect, Sharing, Understanding, etc.), and I saw how that transformed the school. I saw peer counseling and peer tutoring organically. I would love to teach artists and teachers what I now call the "Friendship Circle & Peace Bench Protocol" as part of the CoCreative Arts & Communications class I developed and taught. Earning an MFA is a vision that allows me the ability for me to take that work further by teaching art teachers the protocol to bring humanities back into the arts. I first went to AAU Fall 2023 with the goal of the **MA in Communications & Media Technologies** due to my music, video, and web production experience. I took Podcast & Documentary Production classes because I want to document and promote the CoCreative Arts movement. Then, I switched to earning an **MA in Art Education** and spent 2 semesters learning how to write curriculum. Then, I switched to the MFA to go from beginner to advanced and write SEL CoCreative Arts Lesson Plans curriculum as I go.

My vision is a promise to frustrated administrators, burnt-out teachers, and disillusioned students who are seeking a humane upgrade in education. So I am grateful to AAU, which allowed me to find my way and gather all the skills I need for this vision. Emotionally Intelligent Art Education with life skills, empowerment, CoCreativity, and collaboration tools for community building, where everyone is an artist, and every kind of learner thrives.



“Flower Offering To Ashira’s Vision At The Beach” Painting, Stone Sculpture & Photo by Aliah Selah

For more information about Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
CoCreative Arts and (EIAE) Emotionally Intelligent Art Education.
www.cocreativeconnections.com

Online Visionary Art & Media Portfolio:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1xJ57UtM8CC1nC2xoipaP7oarA68Yvf8ARewUTh2cmX4/edit?usp=sharing>

Beach Art During Lockdown:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1GF13kCg39H-G5RpMYSqLPrhyloVnSKNQIYftqbInRtg/edit?usp=sharing>

Social Media & Electronic Portfolios:

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AliahSelahMusic>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/aliah.selah>

Facebook Music: <https://www.facebook.com/AliahSelahHealingMedia/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/aliahselah/>

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/aliahselah>

Reverbnation: <https://www.reverbnation.com/aliahselah>

Broadjam: <https://www.broadjam.com/aliahselah>

Fan Site - mostly for music: www.aliahselah.com

(I will re-do this site as part of the MFA Ceramic Sculpture/Mixed Media).