



LOCAL STORIES

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VoyageMIA

Check Out Alicia Brown's Story



Today we'd like to introduce you to Alicia Brown.

Hi Alicia, can you start by introducing yourself? We'd love to learn more about how you got to where you are today?

My name is Alicia Brown I am a Jamaican artist and a mother. Currently I reside in Florida.

The Journey to where I am today started as early as age 10 or 11 as a student in Primary school. I would draw in every book and every chance I had while in school and at home. I received a bit of praise from my friends and encouragement from my grade four. I remember telling myself at that stage that I would love to be able to draw for the rest of my life. I was always passionate about art. So after graduating from St. Hilda's Diocesan High. I decided to pursue art at Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts in Kingston, Jamaica. After completing four years of undergraduate studies at Edna Manley College, I realized that it was extremely challenging to pursue an art career as a painter due to a lack of opportunities and resources. As a result, I decided to pursue a career in teaching with the hopes of maintaining an art practice and



eventually be able to become a full-time artist. After teaching at the Secondary level for over ten years, I decided to pursue a Master's of Fine Arts degree. In 2012 I enrolled in the graduate program at New York Academy of Art in New York. After completing graduate school, I became more aware of what it entails to maintain an art practice and my aim and focus were to do whatever it would take to achieve that goal and dream. I returned to Jamaica after completing grad school and taught at a college for about five years. In 2018 I decided to resign from teaching the same year I relocated to Florida. The years that followed were especially challenging due to all the new changes including the arrival of the Covid Pandemic in 2020. During this time I was conducting a lot of research on how to sustain myself from the paintings I was making. In late 2020 I created and registered my business Alicialisabrown LLC. The business offers one-of-a-kind original oil paintings and drawings to both commercial and private art collectors and it also provides clients with the opportunity to commission personal pieces. As the business grows, I will be adding more services with a long-term aim to start a Foundation to assist single mothers to pursue their careers/dreams while taking care of their children.

Alright, so let's dig a little deeper into the story – has it been an easy path overall and if not, what were the challenges you've had to overcome?

I don't think many success stories materialized without issues or challenges. There were numerous struggles and obstacles that I encountered and still experience as I try to develop, and operate my new business. Currently, I am working solo making work, marketing, and taking care of a toddler at home. However, I try



not to focus too much on the obstacles especially those I have no control of but I try my best to work through them. Also, one very important thing to note is that I have a great support system from my family and friends who provide me with advice, encouragement, and sometimes financial assistance.

Thanks for sharing that. So, maybe next you can tell us a bit more about your work?

I would describe my art as Figurative and realistic. I work with oil paints intending to capture nature as I see it. Elements of the natural and artificial world such as plants, insects, animals, and objects are juxtaposed with the figure in my work, creating a mix of surrealist or magical styles.

I specialize in painting Figures and portraits along with insects and plants. What I am known for in my work is the representation of women from the Caribbean. In the paintings, the figure is adorned with collars around their necks, created from elements of nature or objects as reference to the ruff collars that were popular in Europe during the 16th – 17th century amongst the high-class society and were worn around their necks as a symbol of aristocracy. my work aims to create narratives highlighting the influences of history, colonialism, social status, the environment, and present trends on the formation of cultural identity especially of people from the Caribbean region. I create paintings of regular people who would not be seen as important in their social spaces and adorn their necks with ruff collars made from objects, flowers, insects, and other elements from nature. In most cases, the figure is placed in a space that they were forced into or a space where they would not be accepted. By juxtaposing the figure within



spaces associated with the aristocracy and adorned with objects from different worlds, I try to highlight the tension and obsession with the concept of belonging and adaptation.

As an artist specializing in representing the figure in my work, I am very proud of my growth and the development of my skill due to the training and hard work that I put into my practice. Also, I am very pleased to have my work in prestigious collections such as Bennet's Collection of Figurative Women Artists. My work has and continues to get more exposure and recognition from various platforms worldwide. I am currently preparing for a solo exhibition at UUU Art Collective in Rochester, New York in the winter.

What sets me apart from other artists is that I am unique in the way that I present my story and experiences in my work. Also, over the years, I have developed a unique style in my work that makes me stand out from others!

Do you have any advice for those looking to network or find a mentor?

Currently, I don't have a mentor but there are a few artists in the business who I respect, admire, and would love to reach out to as a mentor. With that said, I think there is value in having a mentor especially for artists who are at the beginning of their art career and needs that push and encouragement to move forward.

Networking is especially crucial for artists both established and upcoming, there are numerous opportunities available to artists, and networking with other artists and meeting people outside of the field can provide pathways to participation in art shows and other events.



What works for me is that I maintain a relationship with artists especially from my graduate school and from social media.

Most of these artists have reached out to me to participate in shows or other events that they curate or that they know someone is curating. Most of the opportunities I have received to showcase my work came about as a result of networking in and outside of the art community. My career would not be where it is today if I was not involved in constant networking so I would encourage every artist to make it a priority to network!

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