

Beautifully
Brown

LIKE ME



DECLARE YOURSELF

BUILD TOGETHER

Behind the Scenes

About the Author



Mother Lover. <3

WRITING

By:
AND

kuwa jasiri

Editing

RESEARCH

Consulting

My inner self

Descendants/Ancestors

ILLUSTRATIONS

*Paintings and sketches by:
various artists*

<https://raven0us.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/standing-shadows.png>

<https://raven0us.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/seated-figure.png>

<https://raven0us.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/rocking-chair.png>

VISIBILITY
ARTICLE

SUPPORTING A DIVERSE NETWORK

OF GRASSROOTS **Magick**

Dedication: TO ME...
Ever since I can remember, you are
You are **WORTHY** enough
SHINE BRIGHT

potent
CONTENT and *warnings*

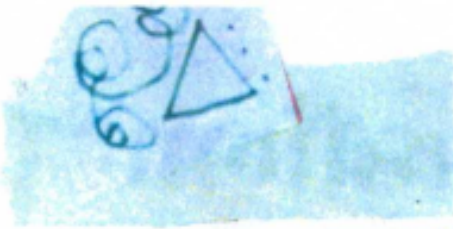
ART
Poetry

Song Lyrics

MAJIK

• the visibility of the Black figure
* Page 8-19 contain nude images
ARTICLE

Beautifully Brown, like me is a zine that amplifies artists of heritage (colour) through my personal story of being an Art Model in rural "Colorado" which features art work of me. Zine includes poetry, and majik that soothes the journey of trauma.



Estelle - Do My Thing Feat Janelle Monáe
Savage Family - Ancestors Family
Fatai - She
Whitney Houston - When You Believe
NAS - I Know I Can

Language of Page Numbers

Kiswahili



Publications

First Aide To Face Adversity

Diné of Big Mountain

Botanical Anatomy

A Tale of Weeping
Reparations As Self-Care

FEATURING
our other
HAPPENINGS

PROGRAMS

- Winter Care Packages,
- Regional Seed Lending Libraries,
- Zebra Collective Social Justice Community Trainings,
- Wildlands, and Watershed Restoration, -Theater Therapy,
- Educational Landscapes, -Seasonal Apprenticeship, and
- Wild Wisdom Workshop Series.

We create opportunity!

I am a Seed

The accommodations of
ovary, sack full of
lively seeds.

I observe in full joy.
Patiently wait for
who disappears.

Suspending down
the tube.

Ovulation is
Summoning this creation
MOON phases and
SEASONS pass.

I am breech.

I am cesarian.

SUMMER IN MALAWI
My parents and I had a birth
ceremony to reprogramm the
neurons around my conception,
birth and early childhood.

Afrikan Majik

Saba-07

TRANSCEND

Climb over self doubt
Plunge into your worth
Swim to the surface
Breathe in deeply
the gifts
of community

These people
support you
REMEMBER
your skills distinctly
transcend reality.



sita-06

written by:
Mother Lover

The visibility of the black figure in Durango, Colorado | July 26, 2015

I am writing this while on shared and/or contested Nuchu, Diné, Pueblo & Apache territory, using modern settler terminology.

I am a 30 year old female assigned gender fluid white person.

Throughout my life I have been sought for figure modeling. From New York to Texas, Mississippi, Alabama to South Carolina to California & Oregon, I have been found profitable & consumable. I have long legs & small breasts & I'm white. Throughout my life I have been questioned by strangers about if I have an eating disorder publicly. I have modeled for very prestigious men & I have been courted with luxury. I have rarely found female identified artists to work with and even less female identified artists who work with figures. Galleries for my own art have been thrown at me though I have used trash and not archaic mediums. Much of the work offered to me includes me displaying myself with the artist with the work. Throughout my life I have been sought to be a doll of white supremacy in the form of figure modeling.

The focus of my life work is learning to cultivate & participate in liberated community that is in relationship with the earth. I utilize art as a sacred gift & paint when I need to, not when a product is needed. I utilize art as a transaction of humility & worship.



Recently, upon arriving in Durango, a being that has walked roads & trails with me presented that Kuwa Jasiri was having an art show. Kuwa Jasiri identifies with their pronoun being their name, Kuwa Jasiri, and I will continue this sharing in that way. Kuwa Jasiri is a Cajun, dark skinned, genderless person that earned a degree in Accounting from Fort Lewis College. Kuwa Jasiri has lived in Durango for nine sun cycles and organizes food distribution and community resources, cultivates relationships with the land and plants and focuses on witnessing and tending the continuity of seeds and their wisdom in remediation of this place and peoples.

Kuwa Jasiri informed me that Kuwa Jasiri had been figure modeling fairly often for artists around Durango in southwest Colorado. From supportive and inspiring affirmations from artists, Kuwa Jasiri presented a model based art show of some of the work the artists had done. This being felt excited to be seen and celebrated the opportunity to center the long forgotten muses of art culture past. A time when more people valued the inspiration of the figure as an equal service to the art. Kuwa Jasiri proposed this as an offering to each of the artists and initially received supportive words and enthusiasm from 8 artists, two of which created images solely for the show.



Artist Meredith Nemirov is one of four artists originally and continually dedicated to the success of Kuwa Jasiri as a person, wrote this statement:

DRAWING KUWA JASIRI Meredith Nemirov

In my 45 years of drawing from the live model I have experienced such a variety of models, all sizes, shapes and temperaments. The personality of a model has a direct influence on an artists' work. How a person inhabits their body, how comfortable they are within themselves, will affect how they pose and in great part determine the success of the drawing.

Working with Kuwa Jasiri has been a joy in many ways. She has posed for our open figure drawing class where we draw every Saturday at Weehawken Creative Arts in Ridgway. Recently she was the model for my three day instructional class at the AhHaa School in Telluride. Her professionalism made my job carefree. Always on time and willing to try a new pose and interested in the artist's outcome.

That is fine, but there are aspects that make drawing Kuwa Jasiri a unique and inspiring experience. First, she is a Black figure, which is rare in this part of the country. She has a stature that one could call tribal and extremely elegant with her elongated figure. The fact that she has very little hair gives an artist the rare experience of seeing the anatomy of the skull sitting on the neck into the shoulders, etc. When posed against an all white background the color of her skin creates very apparent positive and negative shapes, very important for the work. She is very sensitive to every part of her body when she takes a pose, eg. if one foot is straight the other is pointing in. She pays particular attention to her hands and creates a beautiful composition with their position.

This body of work represents a small selection of the many drawings I have done over the last year with Kuwa Jasiri as a model.

Kuwa Jasiri talked to several galleries in Durango. The reports were of very kind words and two offerings from the White Dragon Tea Room curator Michael Thunder and Animas Herbal Wellness Center curators. The communication with the galleries & the artists grew to be subtly patronizing and complaisant as the show approached. Both the artists and the galleries curators became hard to reach. The two artists that made art solely for the show pulled out of the show after Kuwa Jasiri posed for the art; one got their friend to tell Kuwa Jasiri they changed paths.



Kuwa Jasiri felt disappointed that images of Kuwa Jasiri's body were inaccessible to Kuwa Jasiri. Kuwa Jasiri began to experience loosening commitments, unmet deadlines, collaborators uninterested in doing work and an aesthetic of artwork that is commodified to the point of only being available to people that can afford a bachelors in art; all while houseless. Despite the reality that Kuwa Jasiri took on most of the organizing and cultivating of joy and celebration of art. The narrative switched from the celebration of Kuwa Jasiri to an "exotic" body when Michael Thunder proposed that the show statement mention Kuwa Jasiri as from the heart of the sweetest part of Africa. Michael further mentioning that this was their visual perceptive. Kuwa Jasiri clarified that the Cajun are of the European conquerors procreating, commonly through rape, with Afrika and Turtle Island (America) slaves, which is far from the sweetest part. Calculations of profit and concerns about how the art might impact the artists' and Michael Thunder's "professionalism" began to arise. The artists expressed concern that the organic images they had produced inspired by Kuwa Jasiri lacked potential to add to their portfolio. Michael became uneasy when Kuwa Jasiri asked for a portion of art sales as the show curator, a below standard negotiation of 15% for Kuwa Jasiri as show curator, 35% for White Dragon Tea Room as the gallery and 50% for artists was agreed upon.

kumi na moja – 11



& the fact that a dark skinned genderless nine year resident of Durango had the bravery & love of self to center themselves during a public, national attack of increasing intensity on bodies of color.



I am valuable and
Skillful
Living my dreams
I am divine alignment

Despite that, Durango did not take collective responsibility to balance the weight of violence of the current social climate. Kuwa Jasiri's body was used by the artist community of Durango to process the socialization of racism without having the integrity to witness and stand beside Kuwa Jasiri's worth.

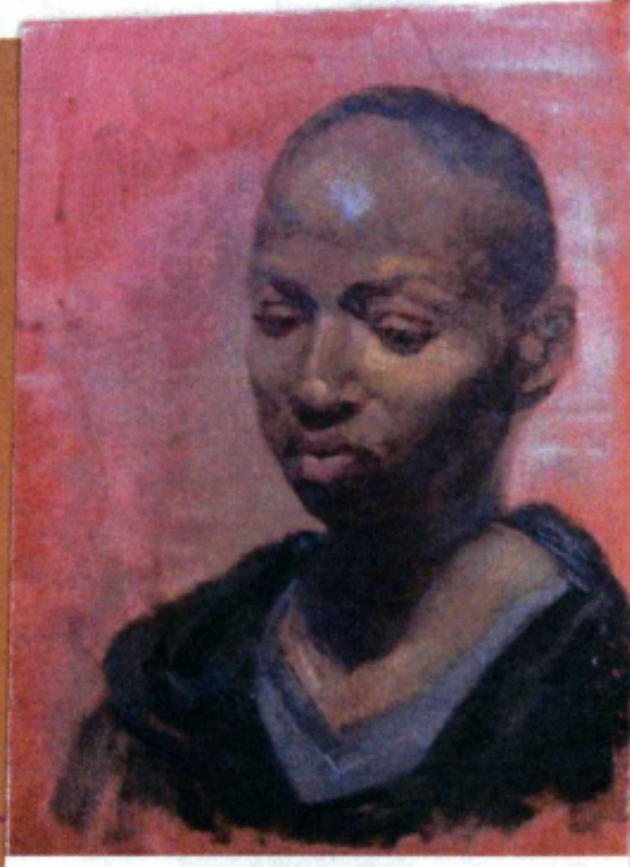
Michael Thunder had his White Dragon Tea Room assistant call Kuwa Jasiri to cancel the show two days before the opening ceremony.

Kuwa Jasiri's family had already made plans to travel across multiple states to see the show. Flyers produced with the support of local businesses had been distributed, Kuwa Jasiri posed more for art made solely for the show after artists had pulled their work out and the six artists and eleven works of art had been coordinated; Meredith Nemirov planning to make a two hour drive to deliver artwork on behalf of three artists.

Kuwa Jasiri phoned Animas Herbal Wellness Center the gallery agreeing to display figure art to discuss drop off details after an email from Whitney, nine days prior. The new curator Bri, the fourth in 6 months of organizing stated due to a lack of communication Kuwa Jasiri had been taken off the schedule. She said someone new had been selected and that individual will be honored over any prior arrangements made.

The invisibility of the black figure in art can be witnessed in the art displayed in any mountain town across the United States.

Truly, if one can subvert their socialized blindness that gives them access to wealth and power over, the invisibilization of a genderless queer person of color can be witnessed all too easily.





An LA artist named Kerry James Marshall has a body of work that brings image to the invisibility of the black figure in art. He writes, "When I was growing up, I recognized my absence in the pantheon. You have to do something about that, and ask what's the price of the ticket for getting in there? Why them, why not me?... There has been a tradition of negative representation of black people and the counter-tradition to that has been a certain kind of positive image, a thrust on the part of some black artists to offset the degradation that maybe some of the other negative stereotypic images present. But both, in a lot of ways, ended up being a kind of stereotype that denied a certain kind of complexity in the way the black image could be represented. So I thought, well, there's got to be a way to do both, to do two things at once. One is to take on the whole issue of negative representation that referred to it, without being it at the same time. And then to not fall into the trap of swinging to the other side and assuming that every representation that a black artist makes of a black person has to somehow present a positive kind of picture of them."(1)(2)

I witnessed this story unfold. I heard of the emails and was near Kuwa Jasiri during the phone calls. Suddenly, The White Tea Room canceled and then Animas Herbal Wellness Center. With very little room for discussion from either gallery, Michael Thunder closed up the production like packing up a store display of someone else's spiritual culture.



kumi na nne - 14

Upon hearing this, with my life long experience being treated completely different without any proof of my character, I felt a need to talk to Michael Thunder. I understood that this was a business owner I was approaching and that any of my experience in humility would not be relevant to this conversation. Michael Thunder was prepared to have a show with an "exotic" "African American" that was most of all "professional" and "profitable". It took me two days to speak to

Michael Thunder directly. I initially spoke to his wife and business partner whose face switched from customer service to concern when I asked about the show that had been canceled. She said something along the lines of, "Well the gallery is all Michael. I don't participate with that." She told me Michael will be in the next day at noon.

Later I was informed Michael wouldn't be in until one and then when I arrived in the store in person, I was told Michael wasn't scheduled to come in after all. I told the clerk that I will be writing a review on the gallery and their practices and I will be interested in speaking to Michael in person as soon as possible. I let them know that I have been both featured in and have curated galleries across the country and I was interested in how Kuwa Jasiri's experience differed from mine and why. The time I arrived to speak with Michael ended up coinciding with the time where artists would have been dropping off their work. I said since Michael was scheduled to be there for artist drop off then I would just wait until he was available to speak to him.

I waited an hour with two different handsome white male passing folks who were the boutique's workers who were also "professionally" pleasant. A boutique whose motto is "Creating community one cup of tea at a time." The boutique was modern and filled with an assortment of spiritual goods & teas. His wife had a fine clothing boutique through a connecting door.

Michael arrived with a sashay greeting. "You must be Orion", he glimmered, "We've met before."

Fact: We haven't met before.

He ushered me to one of his tea rooms that looks like a computer booth from the library and declares that we must share a glass of wild water from where he just came back from hiking from in Vallecito.

He was equipped with a clip board with lined paper and a pen and says, "Ok let me get your story."

And suddenly, the namaste drains out of his vipassana zenned eyes. The buddhist who creates community one cup of tea at a time seemed to have forgotten his mission statement.





He says, "Who are you with?"

As though I can not review a gallery of my own accord. As though I do not have the inherent validity to question systematic racism from just the foundation of me.

I said, "Excuse me. I am here to have a conversation with you. I have no obligation to share my private information with you. I am curious about how it came to be that Kuwa Jasiri's show was canceled two days before the opening."

No. Michael Thunder instead said that if I did not have wealth and professionalism to trade him in that moment, that how someone who serves this community is treated is "none of my business".

Cause we are talking about business. Not art, tea & community.

And Kuwa Jasiri as a body did not guarantee profit, fame and social status and therefore was denied respect, humility & witnessing.

Michael Thunder threatened to call the cops on me. He gave me 4 minutes to address my concerns.

He did not give me time to share the ways I related to and intersected with Kuwa Jasiri that brought me to empathize to the point of addressing him.

He said, "Frankly, I canceled the show because I thought it was going to be a shit show."

Michael only requested one meeting with Kuwa Jasiri 7 days prior to the show, after he remembered a large group was coming in after the opening ceremony, and thus wanted to make alterations to the ceremony.

Kumi na Sita - 16

There was frantic boasting of professionalism as I walked out. I felt his condescension cut me down.

& professionalism under the capitalist government of the united states of America is academically, radically and "professionally" documented as racist. & in this experience, Durango has proven that at least systematically, so is the art. I told him I was going to share this story, that the community of Durango has to look at this and think about this.

He yelled, "You're going to tell them what?!"

He was dismissing conversation so that he would not be incriminated in having to own his behaviors.



From a solidarity action statement from non-blacks in relation to #blacklivesmatter "As white people in the United States, we refuse to align ourselves with a state that carries out violence against Black people. We are taking nonviolent direct action to challenge white complicity and amplify the demands for an end to the war on Black people."(3)

Why did Michael Thunder feel just in jumping to calling the police on me for engaging him in this conversation? Why was the conversation side tracked and walked around so avoidantly by concepts of professionalism? Why, even as a white person bringing this conversation, do other white and white passing people avoid engaging in looking at this together?

"The entire discussion of race in America centers around the protection of White feelings.

Ask any Black person and they'll tell you the same thing. The reality of thousands of innocent people raped, shot, imprisoned, and systematically disenfranchised are less important than the suggestion that a single White person might be complicit in a racist system."(4)

Kumi na Saba - 17

Kuwa Jasiri never identifies with words like "exotic". Kuwa Jasiri says, "I grew up in Boulder."

Kuwa Jasiri's art show press release:

PRESS RELEASE of Be Brave Art Show

Be Brave, a model based, three part art show of works by artists of the Southwest featuring model Kuwa Jasiri. The name Kuwa Jasiri is from the Afrikan language kiswahili meaning be brave. Art is displayed in Durango, Colorado at two venues; White Dragon Tea Room, 820 Main Avenue, July 16-August 15 and at Animas Herbal Wellness Center, 1111 Camino del Rio #5, August 1-31; September 1-30.

Kuwa Jasiri is a Cajun celebration of the feminine form. Her maroon-brown beauty and exquisitely pigmented movements diversify art in our region. Kuwa Jasiri embodies stillness in figure, portrait, and fashion modeling and is loved by a wide variety of sculptors, painters, wearable art designers, boutiques, and visual/performing artists of all ages.

Be Brave Art Show reflects a life as art!

often I make lists

Where are you from?
Slavery, and rape
to put this simply Hate.
From binds that faint memories
dance through my veins
Amplifying them a huge wave of
emotions washes over into me.
I want to stop
I am of generations with holding
our stories

Kumi na nane-18



"Racism affects us directly because the fact that it happened at a geographically remote location or to another Black person is only a coincidence, an accident. It could just as easily happen to us—right here, right now.

Black people think in terms of *we* because we live in a society where the social and political structures interact with us *as Black people*.

White people do not think in terms of *we*. White people have the privilege to interact with the social and political structures of our society *as individuals*. You are "you," I am "one of them."

Whites are often not directly affected by racial oppression even in their own community, so what does not affect them locally has little chance of affecting them regionally or nationally. They have no need, nor often any real desire, to think in terms of a group. They are supported by the system, and so are mostly unaffected by it.

What they are affected by are attacks on their own character. To my aunt, the suggestion that "people in The North are racist" is an attack on her *as a racist*. She is unable to differentiate her participation *within* a racist system (upwardly mobile, not racially profiled, able to move to White suburbs, etc.) from an accusation that she, individually, is a *racist*. Without being able to make that differentiation, White people in general decide to vigorously defend their own personal non-racism, or point out that it doesn't exist because they don't see it.

The result of this is an incessantly repeating argument where a Black person says "Racism still exists. It is real," and a white person argues "You're wrong, I'm not racist at all. I don't even see any racism." My aunt's immediate response is not "that is wrong, we should do better." No, her response is self-protection: "That's not my fault, I didn't do anything. You are wrong."⁽⁴⁾

Durango had a chance to see Kūwa Jasiri's complexity and dispel stereotypical racist narrative. Kuwa Jasiri even organized it for the town.

"When we deny the story, it defines us. When we own the story, we can write a brave new ending." - Brene Brown

Perhaps Michael Thunder can read this over a cup of tea with his staff and the artists of Durango.

↑
KATA
DOG

Kumi na tisa - 19

Authentic Creations

🌀 LIVING MY TRUTH 🌀



Cultural Seed Drive

Requesting Seeds native to west Africa, the Caribbean & the Diné Nation for People of Heritage (of Color)

To donate, contact us:

<https://ArtisticApothecary.wordpress.com/contact/>

ishirini na moja-21



Ever since I can remember I have been enough.

Currently I am learning to love all parts of me.



I AM...
a potent
elixir
changing
el mundo!

OWN

IT

ishirini-20



kuwa jasiri Tyombe Indomela
(that one/this one)
Founder of Authentic Creations

Photograph by: Tynia Dickson

Kuwa jasiri is a Ghanaian descendant
amplifying visibility of marginalized
identities through advocacy,
intersectional art, meditating,
dance, and writing.

Authentic Creations is a grassroots group spreading the wisdom of Seeds through tending the wounds of marginalized communities, and their land with our programs since 2011.

We are able to freely offer programs because of donations from people like you. To donate visit: [https://cash.me/\\$TyombeHallman](https://cash.me/$TyombeHallman)
If you want to contribute in another way, please email us at bebravegather@riseup.net

00000

MAY YOUR
SEASON
BE

full of

bright ideas

Extras

TAKE ROOT

my pronouns are a conservation
something deeply embedded in me
Come closer if you want to listen

GENDER QUERY
Neither he nor
she

One word simply
loses the
complexity
that is me.

Call me this one or that one
so I can
stay unignomy
me.

INSPIRED BY

· My need to show the world I AM BEAUTIFUL

· My need to tend the wounds I acquired while an Art Model.

Essential TOOLS

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF! ♡

© People of Heritage Meditation

“ Octavia Estelle Butler : Kindred

Visibility
Article

(1)

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ug01/westkaemper/callaloo/marshall.h>

(2) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/louisiana-channel/kerry-james-marshall-pain_b_5061615.html

(3) <http://www.blackgirldangerous.org/2015/01/black-lives-matter-today-always-january-15-highway-action-solidarity-statement/>

(4) <https://thsppi.com/i-racist-538512462265>

Black Quantum Futurism : Rasheedah Phillips

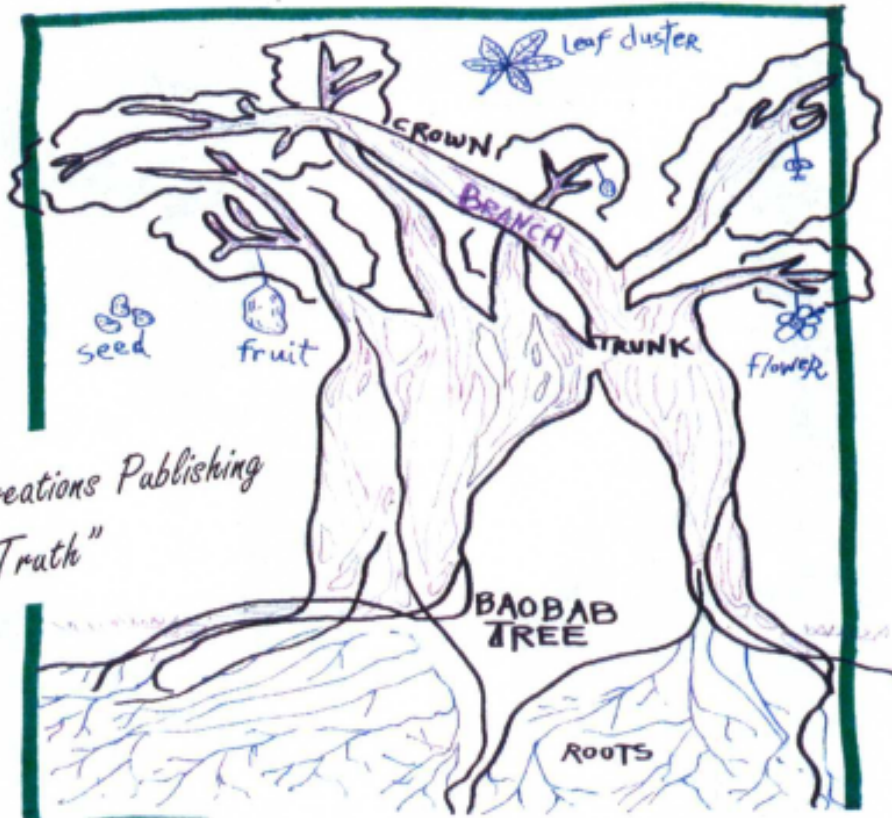
Authentic Self Meditation By: kuwa jasiri Tyombe Indomela
<https://soundcloud.com/findeachother/track-4-authentic-self>

DUST II ONYX Melanated Tarot Deck

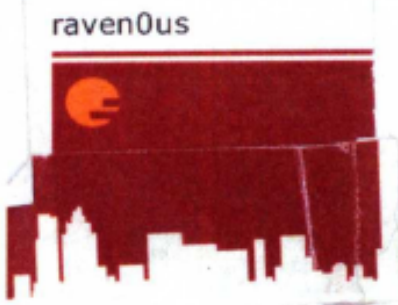
THOUGHTFULLY

Homemade

Publishing



Authentic Creations Publishing
"Living My Truth"



the
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