

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work attempts to convey a truthful narrative and demonstrate how I engage with issues of invisibility, re-contextualization, appropriation and subversion to preconceived ideas of black personhood. I look at how our unchosen histories have shaped our contemporary state. Furthermore, my work speaks directly to the common reality amongst people of colour of an 'obscured history' which often negates our individual stories. Thus, making a commentary on history and its selective unfolding. Through portraiture, I merge my contemporary aesthetic with a historical aesthetic as a way of showing how the old informs the new.

Stemming from my ancestral mixed race lineage, my images take on superimposed characters. I intentionally use African elements that have been super imposed filtering through a western medium. This layered symbolism illustrates an affiliation with a multifaceted identity. Both innate and superimposed variations of my work are capable of division into those which are more and those which are less obvious to the human eye. My work carries layers of signification and meaning, illuminating once invisible bodies by making them hyper visible while undermining the authority of simplistic readings of the black body.

Furthermore, I explore the place of African fabric in the refashioning of cultural, racial and gendered identities as well it's use as a vehicle with which to challenge structures of power that render certain people's histories and cultural expressions invisible. My subjects wear African dresses that have been partially transformed into Victorian regal attire. By reconfiguring the 'African dresses as Victorian gowns', I invert the social power indexed by Victorian dress and use clothing in ways that unpick inherited binaries haunting understandings of difference in Post-Colonial Africa. My work gestures towards ways in which I embark on a cultural remaking of the self and other, contributing to new imaginings of African identities. The (dis)-connections between personal history and received social history are an ongoing interest.