

Senay Dennis

Oakland, CA

Summary

As a muralist, educator, and activist for over 20 years, I utilize Hip Hop culture to engage Bay Area youth and their communities in the creation of artwork that promotes community empowerment and visual and cultural literacy via dialogue, self-reflection, and critical inquiry. The goal of my artwork and advocacy is to create a healthy and vibrant environment in which youth can grow, develop, and learn.

Teaching Experience

My curriculum combines Hip Hop mural design/illustration preparation and technique with critical reflection on student and community needs, and is tailored to the specific needs and interests of the community and age levels being engaged. I have taught and painted murals with young people of all ages at the following Bay Area sites:

SAN FRANCISCO ARTS COMMISSION, San Francisco, CA September 2011-Present
IMAGINE BUS PROJECT, San Francisco Juvenile Hall September 2007-Present
HOOVER COMMUNITY SCHOOL, Redwood City, CA November 2009-April 2010
ASCEND SCHOOL, East Oakland, CA January 2010
FAR WEST HIGH SCHOOL, North Oakland, CA September 2005-20012
OAKLAND LEAD/OAKLAND PEACE CAMP, Oakland/Fruitvale, CA June 2009- August 2009
EAST OAKLAND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL, East Oakland, CA September 2005- 2007
EAST BAY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, Richmond, CA September 2000- 2001
OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CHILDREN'S ART, Oakland, CA January 2001-2001
EAST SIDE ARTS ALLIANCE, Oakland, CA 1999-2000

Lectures/Symposia

I give lectures and workshops on Hip Hop culture and Aerosol Art history and technique locally and internationally.

MILLS COLLEGE, Hip Hop in the Obama Era conference, Oakland, CA, April 2010

- Lecturer, "The Forces of Nature" - socio-political overview of Aerosol Art
- Presented hands-on workshop on Hip Hop street calligraphy technique

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, MANOA, If These Walls Could Talk symposium, Honolulu, HI, April 2010

- Panelist, "The Language of Muralism: Classical to Revolutionary"
- Lecturer, "Art of Resistance: Spray Can Art, Culture, & Pedagogy"
- Painted mural for University
- Presented hands-on workshop on Hip Hop street calligraphy technique

SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY, San Francisco, CA, March 2010

- Lecturer - socio-political overview of Aerosol Art

SKYLINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, Rock the School Bells conference, Pacifica, CA, March 2010

- Lecturer – "The Legendary 80s" & "Forces of Nature" -- socio-political overview and local history of Aerosol Art
- Presented hands-on workshop on Hip Hop street calligraphy technique

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, Moraga, CA, January 2010

- Lecturer - socio-political overview of Aerosol Art

Other lectures/panels:

2007 National Oral History Conference, Oakland Museum; 2004 National Hip Hop Political Convention, Oakland; 2003 Oakland Museum.

Professional Artwork/Affiliations

I curate and create art for various exhibits and projects related to Hip Hop and Aerosol Art cultures.

ROYAL CROWNZ COLLECTIVE, Oakland, CA - Founding member, 2001-present

Produce custom, one-of-a-kind, hand-painted merchandise

BAY AREA AEROSOL HERITAGE SOCIETY/AeroSoul - Founding member/Chairman, 2000-present

The mission of the BAAHS is to document and disseminate the history of Bay Area Aerosol Art culture via film, textual documentation, and lecture.

OAKLANDISH ART GALLERY - Director & Curator, Founding Member, September 2003- 2005

- Planned and curated more than 30 exhibits
- Developed lecture, performance, and community outreach projects
- Managed gallery operations
- Supervised 7 staff and hundreds of volunteers over 3-year period

SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN ARTS COMMISSION - Neighborhood Arts Program Consultant, 1992-1997

- Created conceptual design and construction for mural projects in schools and communities; themes included e.g. black history/ethnic history, Hip Hop culture, social justice, peace
- Led art instruction on all mural-related activities

Mural Commission Highlights

I have received commissions for mural work from the cities of Oakland, San Francisco, and Sacramento. My murals have beautified neighborhoods and have elevated the social consciousness of community members with regard to issues of health, peace, and social justice.

- The Legacy of MLK, OUSD MLK Elementary school 2013
- Re-build The Town, Community Mural, 2006
- Done By the Forces of Nature, City of Oakland Redevelopment Agency, 2010
- Computer Love, East Oakland Community Mural, 2005
- Harem Aket, East Oakland Community Mural, 2005
- 23rd, Community Memorial, Private Collector
- Bob Marley, Haight Street, Private Collector
- House of Hoops, Nike. Zimmerman Crowe, 1999
- I Live, Valva Realty, 1998
- Heavy Traffic, San Francisco Arts Commission, 1995
- Still I Rise Community Mural, City of Sacramento/Downtown District, 1994

Exhibition Highlights

- AeroSoul 1,2 and 3 2008- 2013 African American Art and Culture complex
- We Do It For the Love, exhibit honoring local Aerosol Artists, Oakland, 2007
- Black Panther Rank and File, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, 2006
- Movement-Migrations and Matters, Oaklandish Art Gallery, 2005
- East Bay Graffiti, Adidas/Berkeley, 2005
- Art Reception for Refa One, U-Turn Gallery, Oakland, 2002
- Exhibition Next / Z2000, Akademie Der Kunste, (Academy of Fine Arts Berlin), 2000
- Hip Hop Hieroglyphics, Cosumnes College, Sacramento, CA, 1995
- Women's History, Coalition African American Women, Sacramento, CA, 1992

- Rooted in Culture, Les Helle Artes Club, Sacramento, CA, 1992

Bibliographic Highlights

- Dunip R. & J. Prigoff. Walls of Heritage, Walls of Pride- African American Murals. New York: Pomegranate, p. 197 (2004)
- Gastman R., Freight Train Graffiti, New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., p. ?? (2006)
- "Interview with artist Refa 1", San Francisco Bay View, December 3, 2003 & January 7, 2004
- "Legendary Eighties, Nonchalance: Refa-One still forms the Backbone of the Eighties Slideshow," East Bay Express, August 21, 2002
- "Black Magic," Print-America's Graphic Design Magazine, January 5, 2001