

ART FOR ACTION PAINTINGS' NARRATIVES

The following paintings were done under the Art for Action project commissioned by Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK) with support from Primate's World Relief Development Fund (PWRDF). The objective of the project was to enhance activism on violence against women through art as a medium of communication.

Artist: YEMENE ABERA

1. Peeping child



After the Ethiopian general elections of 2005, many people were detained in military camps to the west of the country at Wollega Ghimbi. One of the people arrested was the artist's sister. After a long time the government brought some of the detainees near the artist's home area. His sister was one of them and he went to visit her in prison. The place was chaotic. People were crying, shouting, some were happy, some unhappy. At the back the artist saw a young lady holding an infant on her shoulders pushing forward to see and congratulate her husband for having survived and coming back from the military camp. The child was wrapped in a traditional cloth known as *Netela*, to protect the child from evil. The artist took a keen interest in the child. He compared the child's calmness and chaos going on in that place; he kept on wondering what was going on in the mind of the child.

This paint reminds the artist about the brutal political persecution that happened to his people.

The artist has dedicated this painting to his deceased father who was killed by the government.

Abstract

The artist did this abstract work as a tribute to women. He believes that women contribute a lot in the society and they dominate in most issues; family, economic, social, political, hence many images of women in the painting.

2. Laughing woman



The artist is trying to express the beauty of a woman. Her laughter radiates life and happiness. The choice of colours also is bright, complimenting the artist's message.

3. Woman carrying a child



Painting expresses the plight of an African woman. She shoulders all responsibilities; children, house chores, going to the market, fetching water and has to balance all these.

She has been doing this for a long time from time immemorial; with no end in sight, hence the road heading to horizon.

The message is that not unless the society intervenes, the woman will continue being a beast of burden to infinity.

If you would like to purchase any of these paintings, please get in touch with RCK.

4. Housekeeper



The artist is trying to communicate the kind of violation women, domestic or hotel workers go through.

Violation takes place in least expected circumstances.

5. Young lady reading newspaper



She is a victim of sexual and gender based violence. She has been harbouring this in secrecy, but as she is reading the newspaper, more victims of sexual and gender based violence are reported.

This reminds her of her own experience and is agonized by the memory.

The artist's message is that government and people of goodwill should put an end to SGBV issues so that they can stop reoccurring.

6. Young ladies



When girls experience SGBV it usually difficult to share this and they keep it a secret, they are ashamed to share their ordeal with family and friends.

In some cases they become pregnant or are infected

with sexually transmitted diseases and since they do not know how to go about it, they decide to commit suicide by hanging or over-dosing on drugs.

The artist is advocating for the society to empathise with survivors of SGBV, offer them support and appropriate advice to enable them overcome and live positively.

Artist: KIFLAY GHEBREYESUS

1. Justice



The artist named this piece of work as justice. In court we have the court of arms on the wall signifying the state. In this painting in place of a court of arms there is a currency note. Meaning that in court loyalty is paid to money and most

cases are corrupted by criminals who pay or buy their freedom through money.

In the middle is a woman crying for justice. She symbolizes victims of violence the world over. She has been crying for justice for generations until the cup below her is overflowing with tears.

The candle symbolizes human right activists, professionals and the civil society who are out burning themselves to shine for others who live in darkness.

If you would like to purchase any of these paintings, please get in touch with RCK.

2. Mother carrying a child



The artist is expressing how women and children are forced to run away from their homes and end up as internally displaced persons or refugees in foreign land.

The images behind are showing how houses are being destroyed, burnt down and family is forced to run in different directions for safety. This therefore destroys family unity, but the woman has to bear the responsibility of carrying and looking after the child.

The woman is pondering on her next move and the child is a figure of innocence, unaware of what is happening. The child will also have to bear the aftermath of violence by living in destitution in camps, starvation and unsure of its destiny of reaching adulthood.

3. Crying woman



The crying lady depicts a disillusioned person. The lady is not master of her destiny. There are images behind portraying people who are controlling the woman's destiny against her wish.

She has no one to share with her agony and is crying in isolation. She is hoping a new day will come when the society will appreciate her as a person who can make her own decisions and her ideas are accepted.

Woman grinding



The artist is bringing out the ills that are happening behind closed doors. The woman is unhappy because she is overworked and not getting any assistance. She has been working all day long and now she has to grind flour and cook for the family. Her

husband is enjoying himself by taking a beer in the background.

The artist is advocating for a society where all genders share responsibilities for the sake bettering our society.

MICHAEL ASFEHA

1. Scared child



The artist is bringing out the atrocities that go unknown or society pretends not to be aware of.

The child is scared and is seeking solace at the corner. This depicts a child who has been violated by a person who is supposed to protect it. Below there is a lot of blood that has formed a river meaning that this vice has been going on for long to the extent of forming a river.

The hand depicts the hand of the violator.

The artist wants to express true reflection of the society, which has violated and neglected its children. The children on the streets and the homes their rights have been abused and have no one to confide in. The child is scared.

2. Peeping girl

The artist is portraying a girl child peeping through her mysteries. She would like to go to school and get an education and empower herself. However, she is being preyed on by older men who either

defile or force her early marriage.

The artist is advocating for justice to prevail and rescue the girl child from all forms of abuses and put a smile on her face.



3. Praying Woman

They lady is praying to God to deliver her from earthly temptations such as money and portrayed in the painting. There is a sash tied on her waist that seems linked to the money. If the lady goes for

the money she will be harmed by the lion.

This painting is portraying challenges of life that women go through. Some of them are things that they opt, for ending



up being detrimental to them. Examples include early marriage, prostitution and other illicit affairs, where they get material rewards but expose themselves to HIV/AIDs and SGBV. The artist is advocating for women to be strong and not to be tempted by temporary gratifications.

4. Eloping Couple



The artist is showing how some cultural practices are detrimental to women. In some African cultures, eloping is part of life and it is acceptable even if the girl has not consented. The woman has no say over her life. A stranger can come and kidnap her and keep her as a wife.

The kind of union that results is full of violence and will continue to be violent. In this kind of marriage, the woman is treated as a slave and SGBV cases are order of the day.



MEKONEN TESFAY

1. Portrait of Wangari Mathai



The artist was inspired by the activities of 2004 Nobel peace laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai.

Prof. Wangari Maathai has been an environmental conservation activist, she lobbied for democracy through championing for multi-party politics in Kenya. She has also been in the forefront of agitating for humanitarian issues. She is well remembered for the Green Belt movement and release political prisoners campaign. Though she suffered a lot of humiliation as woman she never gave up. She is now one of role models for Kenyans.

2. Dancing woman



The artist's message is that African women should be proud of themselves. They should celebrate their beauty.

3. Empowering woman



The artist is expressing that women should be in the forefront agitating for their rights.

Before any other person can come forward, women should be ready, willing to go out and champion for their rights.

4. Woman carrying a child



The artist is expressing the way women in Africa are over-loaded with many responsibilities.

She is carrying luggage on her head, hands and child at the back. She does all this come rain, sunshine, come night or daybreak.

5. Peeping crying girl



This is a young girl who has been violated. The evidence is the bloodstains on her clothes.

Her self esteem has been destroyed, she cannot go out to play with her peers nor is she able to confide in any person. She hopes that somebody will discover and help her out of her mystery

6. Victim



The woman in this painting is a victim. She has been raped and infected with HIV and is not ready to continue living. She is not able to raise her head and face the day, her hair is unkempt and views herself as a victim.

7. Survivor



This is a continuation of the paint description above. Here the woman has been able to overcome her fears. She is economically empowered and is able to depend on herself for upkeep. The

artist wanted to communicate that women are not just victims but they are also survivors.

8. Shadow



The artist is expressing how women are violated. The shadow depicts somebody strong and violent who is always out to intimidate women.

9. Abstract Africa



The artist is expressing that for Africa to get out of its human abuses, economic woes and political turmoil, women have to be involved to save Africa

SAMUEL MEHANI

Abused pregnant woman



The artist is portraying a pregnant woman who is shielding her un-born baby from the violent husband. This work of art is expressing how violence subjected on women extends to

harm the un-born.

The artist is trying to create awareness on how we are exposing our future generation by being violent to pregnant women.