

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Don't Lose Our Youth, Oil, Rice, Gesso, Aerosol on Wood, 2022

Christopheraaron Deanes, BFA, MEd

Abstract

Artist's Statement for the cover art of IJPS Volume 9, issue 1: *Don't Lose Our Youth*, Oil, Rice, Gesso, Aerosol on Wood

Keywords: Youth, Trauma, Hope, Resilience, Potential, Community

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Christopheaaroon Deanes' work contextualizes conversations that challenge perceptions of critical thinking to require heightened connections and improved social engagement. He builds upon understandings about race, social civility, and benevolence. Education and the arts are at the center of his work, focusing on developing chances for critical conversations about race and the role we all play in securing a better future with a more empathetic and equitable space for us.

Don't Lose our Youth depicts the innocence and promise of our youth in the context of the pandemic, racialized disparities, and war. Our youth are experiencing all the same trauma as are adults, even while they are maturing and coping with hormonal and developmental changes. This piece shows the resilience and potential of our

youth within their relative isolation; while adults around them continue with their daily lives, as if the impact of this collective trauma is now and not tomorrow.

In a broader sense, the work evokes beginning, separation, loss, and an attempt to make sense of our political climate.

Christopheraaron Deanes, BFA, MEd, is a Culture and Climate Coordinator in the Fridley Public Schools in Fridley, Minnesota; he also facilitates restorative practices workshops and reestablishment of relational connections through coordinated processes with school districts and businesses.

Christopheraaron holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of St. Thomas. He also completed a program in Educational Administration at St. Mary's University and a fellowship in the University of Minnesota Urban Educators Program. He has taught classes at local elementary, middle, and high schools as well as Dakota County Technical College and The Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

He is considered a mid-career artist in the Twin Cities, working on public art projects with the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul as well as Hennepin County Facility Services, to empower and engage the community.



Christopheraaron is Director and his wife Cara Deanes is Executive Director of Roho Collective, a nonprofit organization that supports over 50 black and brown artists nationally in building small creative businesses. Roho Collective has developed workshops to help small businesses thrive, including website development, economic empowerment, grant writing, artist resumes, financial literacy, taxes, and other topics. In addition to artist sales and projects that engage communities in healing modalities through the arts, Roho Collective provides creative therapy through spiritual leaders and circle keepers that fosters healing and connection in the community.

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