

# Naja Misaki Simeon

## Bio and Artist Statement

My name is Naja Misaki Simeon. I am a St.Lucian born artist. I studied Visual Arts and Engineering Technology at Grambling State University in Grambling Louisiana and I have been teaching and making art for over 10 years.

My journey began with self portraits in a classical style of painting, mostly oil on Canvas and I have done a self portrait on the 12th of January at midnight every year for the past ten years. For it is only in going within that you can reveal your true self.

I moved to a period of landscape paintings, also using oil on canvas in Ala Prima (wet on Wet) en Plein Air. These paintings took me on a journey deep into tropical rainforests and secluded beaches where I had to void myself of all man made distractions and study nature in its true form. It was like a self imposed isolation. This helped me find myself in Nature, for its only in venturing out that you discover what you are really missing.

During my studies, I did many different bodies of work and had many exhibitions from Nachadish Louisiana, Baytown Texas, London England, Port of Spain Trinidad and even on the side of a cemetery wall in the French Quarter of New Orleans. It's been a tough Journey indeed. From doing portraits of homeless people just to have a conversation with them, to painting murals and tagging walls in the middle of the night all in the name of art.

But on my return to St. Lucia, I realized that it's only in going away that you appreciate what you left behind. After my journey took me around the world and open up my eyes and senses to different

cultures, I returned to St Lucia only to find that true treasures lie where the journey had begun so many years ago. And just like Santiago in the alchemist, it was returning to the old church where he used to herd his sheep, that was where he found his treasure. My journey took me full circle to the people and the cultures that moulded me and now my destination is to tell the story of the people their culture and their life one art installation at a time.

## **2016 to present**

- Designed and painted the mural for the launching of the Frank Norville center for Creative Arts.
- Designed and painted the Go-Green project mural at the Gros-Islet Secondary and Go-Green poster at the Soufriere Primary School.
- Won the Picture of a Nobel competition for his painting of Octavio Paz.
- Received an award from the district of Gros-islet for his contribution in Art and teaching.
- Solo exhibition at the Windjammer Landing Resort and Spa
- Participated in the Arts Village, part of the Saint Lucia Jazz & Arts Festival
- Art Exhibition at Buzz restaurant.
- Embarked on the Outdoor Gallery Project with Sherwin Brice and volunteer youth groups to paint uplifting murals throughout the island. 12 murals and counting.
- Participated in the CYEN earth hour celebrations doing live glow in the dark paintings.
- Founding member of 'Koudmen', a youth mentoring program in Arts, Music and other creative areas.
- And many more.

In the past year Naja Simeon has embarked on many projects. For 2018 -2019 these include:

- Painted mural at the District education office for district one for math month.
- mural at Odson Combined School.
- mural at Vide Bouteille Primary school.
- mural at the Cul De Sac day care.
- Community mural at Saltibus.
- mural at the Anglican Infant School.
- mural at Babonneau Secondary School.
- Community Mural in Marchand in collaboration with the Teachers' Credit Union.
- Independence Murals ; Vieux-Fort, Castries, Micould and Canaries
- Castries Market mural
- Saint Lucia Mural, Pointe Seraphine
- Helpaws mural, Soufriere
- Carnival mural
- Project Chocolat Mural