



# Nikeshha Breeze

Richard Levy Gallery  
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**Nikeshia Breeze**

*Bronze Mask*

2026

cast bronze with patina

7.625 x 4.75 x 3.375 inches

edition of 18

Stamped with artist's initials and  
number on back

**\$5,000**





**Nikeshia Breeze**

*Isadora and Mary Noe Freeman*

2026

archival pigment print

20 x 15.875 inches: image

22 x 16.875 inches: paper

edition of 50

Signed and numbered on front

**\$350**



## Archival Portraiture

In this insightful series, the artist embarks on a journey through the visual history of Black Americans, focusing on the earliest photographic records of daguerreotypes, tintypes, and emulsion photos that date back to as early as 1840. These images, long buried in the annals of history, are meticulously transformed into life-sized oil paintings and charcoal portraits that bring to light the lives of enslaved and free laborers, craftspeople, children, and freemen. Each piece is a tribute, honoring the early Black ancestors whose stories and contributions were overlooked or forgotten in their time.

The artist's work is deeply influenced by the legacy of Frederick Douglass, a pivotal figure in American history. Douglass, an abolitionist and intellectual, understood the power of the portrait in shaping public perception. He was the most photographed American of the 19th century, deliberately using his portraits to counter the prevalent, derogatory stereotypes of Black people. His dignified and powerful images served as a testament to the humanity and individuality of African Americans, challenging the discriminatory narratives of the time.

In a similar vein, the artist's paintings challenge the historical context in which these early photographs of Black Americans were taken. Often, these images were staged in studios with artificial backdrops of European parlors or nature scenes, contrasting sharply with the harsh realities of their subjects' lives. Some portrayed enslaved individuals used to test photographic equipment, while others depicted free Blacks and runaway slaves in the North or, whose images were utilized for abolitionist propaganda or scientific curiosity.

By reclaiming and reimagining these photographs, the artist not only pays homage to these individuals but also engages in a dialogue with the past, echoing Douglass's use of imagery to redefine the African American identity. The series transcends the mere act of painting; it becomes a powerful commentary on representation, identity, and the enduring impact of visual narratives in shaping historical and contemporary perceptions of race and dignity. This body of work is a testament to the resilience of Black Americans and their continuing journey towards recognition and empowerment.

□  
**Nikeshia Breeze**  
*[Five unidentified African American boys who worked as chimney sweeps, covered in soot and holding scrapers and brushes], 2023*

oil paint, cracked gesso on panel,  
hand-crafted walnut frame with velvet  
and cold cast bronze

92.75 x 81 x 3 inches

235.6 x 205.7 x 7.6 cm

**\$60,000**





**Nikeshia Breeze**

*[Unidentified young African American girl in skirt and blouse with hat on chair], 2024*

charcoal, graphite, cracked gesso on panel, hand-crafted walnut frame with velvet

36 x 24 inches: panel

91.4 x 61 cm

38.5 x 26.5 x 3 inches: frame

97.8 x 67.3 x 7.6 cm

**\$7,500**





**Nikeshia Breeze**

*[Two African American Boys Facing Front] #2, 2024*

charcoal, graphite, cracked gesso on panel, hand-crafted walnut frame with velvet

36 x 24 inches: panel

91.4 x 61 cm

38.5 x 26.5 x 3 inches: frame

97.8 x 67.3 x 7.6 cm

**\$7,500**





**Nikeshia Breeze**

*[Portrait of young African American man, seated], 2023*

charcoal, graphite, cracked gesso on panel, hand-crafted walnut frame with velvet

36 x 24 inches: panel

91.4 x 61 cm

38.5 x 26.5 x 3 inches: frame

97.8 x 67.3 x 7.6 cm

**\$7,500**





**Nikeshia Breeze**

*Black Cane Carver*, 2021

oil paint, cracked gesso on canvas,  
hand-crafted walnut frame with  
velvet and cold cast bronze

81 x 69.25 x 3 inches

205.7 x 175.9 x 7.6 cm

**\$50,000**



□ **Nikesha Breeze**

*Anonymous African American*

*Woman with Basket; 1855, 2020*

oil paint, cracked gesso on canvas,  
hand-crafted walnut frame with velvet  
and cold cast bronze

81 x 69.25 x 3 inches

205.7 x 175.9 x 7.6 cm

**\$50,000**



 **Nikesha Breeze**

*Anonymous African American*

*Man and Child: 1856, 2020*

oil on canvas in hand made frame

81 x 69.25 x 4 inches

205.7 x 175.9 x 10.2 cm

**\$50,000**



**Nikeshia Breeze**

*Isadora and Mary Noe Freeman*

2020

oil paint, cracked gesso on canvas,  
hand-crafted walnut frame with velvet  
and cold cast bronze

72 x 53 x 3 inches: panel

182.9 x 134.6 x 7.6 cm

**\$35,000**



## **Southern Comfort**

Nikesha Breeze's latest sculptural work is a striking and thought-provoking exploration of the objectification of enslaved African Americans, deeply rooted in historical context. The piece consists of two meticulously restored antique chairs from the 1800s, symbolizing the opulence and superficial gentility of the antebellum South. What sets these chairs apart is their unique stuffing: a blend of hand-harvested cotton and African American human hair. This choice of materials is a direct nod to the disturbing practice of using enslaved people's hair in household items, as illuminated in Diana Ramey Berry's seminal work, "The Price for Their Pound of Flesh."

Breeze's attention to detail extends to the finishing of the chairs, which are upholstered in luxurious silk jacquard fabric, complemented by intricate brass accents. The juxtaposition of these lavish materials with the poignant history of the stuffing serves as a powerful commentary on the contrast between the outward appearances of civility and the hidden brutalities of slavery.

This sculptural work is more than an artistic statement; it is a tangible connection to a painful past. By integrating materials directly associated with the enslaved, Breeze not only acknowledges their suffering but also honors their resilience. The chairs stand as a somber reminder of the human cost behind the facade of refinement and luxury, inviting reflection on the complexities of history and the enduring impacts of these inhumane practices. Through this work, Breeze challenges viewers to confront uncomfortable truths and consider the enduring legacy of slavery in the fabric of American society.



□ **Nikesha Breeze**, *Southern Comfort*, 2024, oil paint on cracked gesso panel, antique chairs, hand harvested cotton, human hair, silk, 43.5 x 20.25 x 18.75 inches/110.5 x 51.4 x 47.6 cm: chair, 43.5 x 55 x 52 inches/110.5 x 139.7 x 132.1 cm: installation, **\$10,000** each chair, **\$20,000** both chairs

## **WEB Dubois Portraits**

In this evocative series of portraits, the artist Nikesha Breeze pays homage to the legacy of W.E.B. Du Bois's groundbreaking photography exhibition of African Americans at the 1900 World Fair. The portraits delve into the little-known period of Reconstruction in the United States, a pivotal yet often overlooked era in African American history. The charcoal and oil paintings are masterfully rendered on Breeze's signature cracked gesso panels, adding a profound depth and texture that speaks to the resilience of the subjects. These works capture the essence of the early shapers of African American history, their struggles, and their triumphs. Through Nikesha's skillful use of chiaroscuro in charcoal and the vibrant yet thoughtful application of oil paints, these portraits transcend mere representation. They become a powerful testament to the enduring spirit and contributions of these historical figures, immortalizing their impact and celebrating the transformative power of the portrait in honoring heritage and history.



**Nikeshia Breeze**

*W.E.B. Du Bois's Negro Woman (3)*, 2020

charcoal, graphite, cracked gesso on  
canvas, hand-crafted walnut frame with  
velvet

36 x 24 inches: canvas

91.4 x 61 cm

38.5 x 26.5 x 3 inches: frame

97.8 x 67.3 x 7.6 cm

**\$7,500**

## Land Effigy

In this mixed media series, Nikesha Breeze presents life-sized, free-standing sculptures, each meticulously crafted from an array of materials including cotton, sagebrush, choya, willow, bones, antlers, various wild harvested plants and lace. These sculptures are more than mere artistic creations; they are symbolic effigies, paying homage to the intertwined histories of the plants, lands, and peoples that have been cultivated and enslaved across the United States.

Each sculpture in this series stands as a guardian, embodying the spirits of the lands that offered sanctuary and freedom, as well as the healing plants that have grown upon them. They are juxtaposed with the very crops that fueled the plantation economy and the indigenous ancestral medicines that were appropriated. These effigies are not just representations; they are vibrant embodiments of resilience, honoring both the Earth and the Black and Indigenous bodies that have nurtured and been nurtured by it.

Carefully constructed and initiated in specific locations, these sculptures resonate with the spirit of the place, weaving together the narratives of past and present. They stand as reminders of the complex and often painful history of these lands and peoples, while also serving as beacons of hope and healing. Breeze's work invites reflection on the deep connections between people, plants, and the earth, urging a recognition and respect for the guardianship they have provided one another through time.

**Nikeshia Breeze**

*Land Effigy*

2024

mixed medium sculpture, hand sculpted cold  
caste bronze, bone, antler, cottonwood, cotton,  
wire, silk textile, roses, salt, black sunflower  
seeds, birch, soil

78 x 63 x 63 inches

198.1 x 160 x 160 cm

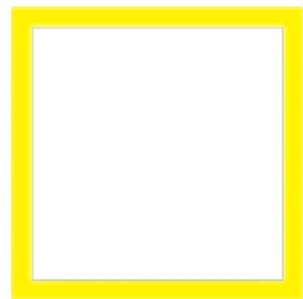


Internationally renowned artist Nikesha Breeze unveils *Black Archive*, a new exhibition at the Richard Levy Gallery in Albuquerque, NM. This powerful show features large-scale oil paintings, charcoal, and graphite works from Breeze's *Archival Portraiture* series. The collection draws upon daguerreotypes of African Americans from 1850 to 1865, held in the National Archive of the Library of Congress. These images, depicting anonymous individuals, reflect a history often obscured and a resilience that defies description. The exhibition also includes new sculptural installations and site-specific works, offering a profound meditation on history, as well as a comment on the material objectification and dehumanization of enslaved peoples in the United States. Inspired by Frederick Douglass's essay "Lecture on Pictures," Breeze's work confronts stereotypes and celebrates the unspoken power of images to shape perception and memory.

**Nikesha Breeze** (b. 1979) is an African American/Assyrian interdisciplinary artist, activist, and educator working from an AfroCentric, AfroFuturistic lens. Their artistic practice utilizes painting, drawing, sculpture, film and performance art to honor their ancestors and to heal intergenerational trauma. Breeze was recently selected by the New Mexico Women in the Arts as a *2024 Woman to Watch in New Mexico*. The EJI, Equal Justice Initiative, in Montgomery, Alabama commissioned Breeze to produce an ambitious installation of *108 Death Masks* to be cast in bronze, which will debut in 2024 as a part of a new national monument for the enslaved called *Freedom Monument Sculpture Park*. This monument and Breeze's work were recently featured in the *New York Times*. She currently lives and works in Taos.



*The Black image has been shaped and reshaped throughout history to serve the needs of, and generate value for, those in control. When this value structure is reclaimed, especially by black artists, and these images are reintroduced to the world through the eyes of honor, the images are given new life and new potential to support the foundation of Black futurity. – Nikesha Breeze*



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