



S o l a S a w y e r r

San Francisco, CA

BIOGRAPHY/ARTIST STATEMENT

I was raised in Oklahoma City with my older brother, by my Nigerian father and my African-American mother. I have studied and loved art since I was a child but chose a career in science and received a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of Notre Dame and then a Master of Arts in Teaching. I taught math and science in both middle and high school for eight years before making the permanent change to full time artist in San Francisco. I received my MFA in figurative painting from the Academy of Art University in the summer of 2009. My time in the art field has been short but art has always been a consistent part of my life.

I am a figurative oil painter who enjoys the challenge of trying to capture and interpret what I see and the freedom to push this in any direction. I paint portraits, nude and clothed figures in both expressive and traditional ways consisting of sometimes muted and sometimes rich and vibrant colors. I create my work alla prima and with layering. I like working alla prima so that I can capture the feeling of the moment but I also like laying various sheets of color on top of one another in a transparent manner and creating a variety of textures.

In addition to my love of painting I also am very passionate about travel and have visited many countries around the world. I had the opportunity to participate in the Academy of Art's study abroad summer program in Corciano, Italy where we studied plein air landscape and cityscape painting. The ability to stand in the middle of nature and capture it on canvas the way I am experiencing it and seeing it at that moment is one that continues to be beneficial in all of my painting.

I spent most of my life growing up away from my extended family that live in Nigeria, Mali, England and the east coast of the United States and feel like this has kept me from being close with them. In my current work, I have been able to explore some of the feelings about the relationships I have with my family through the medium of paint. I have created some of my paintings from old photographs and use various textures, layers

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and techniques throughout the process to help represent the vintage feel of the picture and to help mirror the relationships and my interpretation of the relationships between myself and the person in the picture. I enjoy creating paintings that have a variety to them, a consistency to the whole group and that show my varied passions in painting. Despite how a person meshes with their family, there is a beauty and poetry to family and I want to represent this in the form of paintings. I recognize that there is this commonality and universality of family and multi-ethnicity to everyone, so I am delving even deeper into this idea by painting and incorporating other people into the universality and poetry of family and multi-ethnicity and by using modern photos in this same style. I continue to explore both representational and semi-abstract methods to show these relationships. The most recent series has allowed me to incorporate my passion for the figure, my love of abstraction, and my desire to explore the “POETRY OF FAMILY.”

