

## **LYNTHIA EDWARDS ARTIST STATEMENT**

My collage works present the complex emotions associated with Black girls' experiences in the American South. Inspired by historical research, personal experience, and everyday encounters, the works reveal the complexity, physical beauty, and internal elegance of my young Black female subjects that is compounded by their unique experiences.

The emotional, physical and psychological implications of the subjects reflect racial, political, and social concerns that the artist has experienced firsthand. In each work, the subject is an iteration of myself at various ages, navigating the isolating tension of being artistically inclined, Black, and female in a larger social context that rarely celebrates these categories. The recurring black and white stripes along the subjects' arms and legs represent the pattern of Black expression being interjected by white, Southern expectations in a seemingly endless cycle, and the liminal state that I've embodied since childhood and reference as an adult. The way I proportion figures in the composition of my work is greatly influenced by William Christenberry, an artist native to western Alabama well known for his photographic depictions of isolated objects within landscapes and artistic exploration of the "psychology of place." The faces of most of the subjects in my work appear emotionless, indicating ambiguity and a deep awareness and hesitancy to engage in their environment. However, the vibrant, multi-textured nature of their flared skirts signifies their inherent playfulness that directly contrasts the restrictive, Pentecostal household of my youth.

Demonstrating a commitment to activism and social justice that began in my childhood, my practice descends from an artistic lineage of Black American artists including Romare Bearden, William H. Johnson, Charlie Lucas, and Faith Ringgold. These artists utilized what was immediately available to them to artistically and sonically relay ideas about the world around them. Similarly, I learned artistic techniques later in life and take pictures of hands, clothes, and other facets of my personal life to dually ground my works in the past and the present.

