

Jill Wells, BFA, CADC

Born 1980, Des Moines, IA
Resides Des Moines, IA
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PROFILE

Iowa-based, Multimedia Artist specializing in narrative works investigating accessibility, stereotypes, race, history, and human experiences to raise questions about history, civil rights, access, transformation, and sensory input, to highlight the absence or marginalization of communities who have long been denied representation within arts realms.

EDUCATION

2005 BFA in Visual Arts, Major in Painting
Department of Arts and Science
Drake University, Des Moines, IA
Thesis Exhibition: "Narrations of African American History, Time and Parallel Realms."
Faculty Mentor Professor Angela Battle, MFA
+
Cross-Curriculum in Art Therapy
Grand View University, Des Moines, IA
Faculty Mentor Roberta Victor, Ph.D., ATR-BC

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2022 - Current Harkin Institute Fellow, Des Moines, IA
2022 Mandela Washington Fellowship Coach
2009-2021 Painting Teacher, After School Arts Program (ASAP)
Des Moines, IA.
2018-2020 Art in Certified Alcohol and Drug Counseling, Orchard
Place PACE, Des Moines, IA.
2012-2018 Art in Certified Alcohol and Drug Counseling,
St. Gregory Retreat Center, Des Moines, IA.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022 Feel, ICC, Belfast, Ireland

- 2022 Feel, Plymouth Gallery, Des Moines, IA
- 2020 Moods, Messages, and Petty Realness, Alumni Showcase, Anderson Gallery, Des Moines, IA.
- 2019 The Cotton Memoirs, Viaduct Gallery, Des Moines, IA.
- 2016 Five Monkeys Inc., Des Moines, IA.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 In Living Color, Threshold Gallery, Cedar Rapids, IA
- 2022 Who We Art, Plymouth Gallery, Des Moines, IA
- 2022 114th DMWC Art Exhibition, Hoyt Sherman, Des Moines, IA
- 2021 Greater Des Moines Exhibited XXVIII, Polk County Heritage Gallery, Des Moines, IA
- 2020 Iowa Exhibited XXXV, Polk County Heritage Gallery, Des Moines, IA.
- 2020 Outrage to Change, Octagon Gallery, Ames, IA.
- 2017 Greater Des Moines Exhibited XXIV, Polk County Heritage Gallery, Des Moines, IA.
- 2017 The Art Affair: Des Moines Chapter of The Links, The Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA.
- 2003, 04, 05 Student Exhibits, Anderson Gallery Drake University Des Moines, IA.
- 2003 The Ice Cream Social, The Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA. *(under maiden name-Simmons, Jill)

COMMISSIONS | PUBLIC WORKS

- 2022 SWOSH II King Yore, exterior, 19x31', Des Moines, IA
- 2022 BLACK RENAISSANCE, exterior, 40x17', Des Moines, IA
- 2022 RISE, Valley High School, interior, 18x13', Des Moines, IA
- 2022 Sound Wave, interior, 31x9', interior, Des Moines, IA
- 2022 Dublin Love, exterior, Dublin, Ireland
- 2022 Golden Glow, Orchard Place PACE, interior 4x12', Des Moines, IA.
- 2021 The Oracles of Iowa City (Lead Painter), Public Space One and The Center for Afrofuturist Studies, exterior 27x58' and 27x68', Iowa City, IA.
- 2021 Future, The Evelyn K. Davis Center for Working Families, exterior 150x30', Des Moines, IA.

- 2020-21 Be the Change, Disability Rights Iowa, interior 14x8', Des Moines, IA.
- 2014 Annett Nature Center, interior 13x8', Indianola, Iowa.
- 2012 St. Gregory Retreat Center, interior 6x10', Adair IA.
- 2008 Iowa Lutheran Hospital Children and Adolescence Behavioral Health Science Wing, interior 9x143', Des Moines, IA.
- 2007 YMCA - Walnut Creek, interior 48x21', West Des Moines, IA.
- 2005 Water Lab, Blank Park Zoo, interior 60x8', Des Moines, IA.
- 1999 Running Out of Time, Creative Visions Human Development Center, interior 42x12', Des Moines, IA.

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

- 2022 Freedom to Read Statement, Braille series, Knoxville Public Library, Knoxville, IA
- 2018 Iron Sharpens Iron, West Wing Polk County Jail – Bridges Program, Altoona, IA.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- 2022 Grinnell College, BCC Accessible Art Workshops
- 2022 MDW Atlas, Art + Accessibility Blog writer
- 2022 Greater Des Moines Public Arts Foundation, Juneteenth Joy Community Grid Mural
- 2022 City Sounds
- 2021 SWISH, King Yore basketball court mural by Jordan Weber, (Painting Assistant)
- 2021 Ames Public Library, More Than Monoliths virtual art class, art instructor in a 30-minute painting lesson.
- 2020 Des Moines Public Libraries and ASAP pilot online art activity, art instructor in a 10-minute painting lesson.
- 2019 Forest Avenue Library and ASAP, MLK Day, designed and led a community art project.
- 2016 ASAP Savor Fundraiser, curated live art experience

AWARDS + GRANTS

- 2021 Iowa Arts Council Resilience Artist Grant, for Artist X Advocacy (AXA) Mentorship Program
- 2021 Artist INC. Iowa Fellowship, inaugural fellow

- 2020 Iowa Creative Incubator Fellowship, inaugural fellow
- 2020 Polk County Heritage Gallery Merit Award, juried exhibit, oil painting, 'In the Arms of an Angel'
- 2017 Polk County Heritage Gallery Merit Award, juried exhibit, oil painting, 'Penny Saved, Penny Earned E Pluribus Unum'

ARTIST TALKS + LECTURES

- 2022 Artists on Art, Des Moines Art Center
- 2022 Talk of Iowa, IPR News
- 2022 A Seat at the Table, Des Moines Art Festival
- 2022 Al-Quds Bard College for Arts and Science, Jerusalem-Palestine, The Disability Art, Revolution and Advocacy in the USA
- 2022 A Seat at the Table, A Conversation about Cultural Equity in the Arts, BLM Today and Tomorrow: Pain and Healing through Art, The Des Moines Arts Festival
- 2022 Business of Art Conference Octagon Center for the Arts, What We Can Do to Make Art Accessible to More People
- 2022 Des Moines Forest Avenue Public Library Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration, keynote speaker
- 2021 Art Midwest, The Role of Artist Incubators in a Vibrant and Diverse Arts Ecosystem
- 2021 TEDx, The Power of Public Art
- 2021 The Buxton Initiative, MORE THAN MONOLITHS, Ames Public Library
- 2021 900 Views, episode 38 podcast, Jill Wells
- 2021 KFMM's CULTURE BUZZ, AXA
- 2020 Anderson Gallery, Jill Wells Alumni Talk
- 2020 KHOI and Octagon Gallery, Outrage to Change, artist roundtable
- 2009 Des Moines Area Community College (Newton, Carroll, Urban, West Des Moines, IA campuses) African American History and Art, lecturing artist

COMMUNITY PROJECTS + PROGRAMS

- 2022 Art Week, AXA mentorship exhibits
- 2022 Art Week, AXA mentorship mural collaboration

2021-22 ArtForce Iowa Skywalk Activation Project in partnership with Iowa Department for The Blind.

2021 Jack and Jill of America Inc., AXA youth art workshop

2020-Current Artist X Advocacy Mentorship Program (AXA), founder and youth mentor.

PRESS + PUBLICATIONS

Des Moines Register

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2022/10/23/des-moines-iowa-artist-jill-wells-makes-art-accessible-with-the-power-of-touch/69556625007/>

MDW Fair, Atlas, <https://www.mdwfair.com/atlas/powerliftrecliner>

Talk of Iowa, <https://www.iowapublicradio.org/podcast/talk-of-iowa/2022-06-03/please-touch-the-art-iowa-artist-explores-disability-rights-in-her-multi-sensory-work>

Black Iowa News, <https://blackiowanews.bulletin.com/visual-artist-jill-wells-mentorship-program-creates-opportunities-for-underserved-artists>
 'Oracles of Iowa City' murals reimagine double consciousness, The Daily Iowan, September 2021

Oracles of Iowa City, City Channel 4, Iowa City, September 2021

Basketball Court Murals Spark Innovation and Community Pride, Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation,

[https://dsmpublicartfoundation.org/basketball-court-murals-spark](https://dsmpublicartfoundation.org/basketball-court-murals-spark-innovation-and-community-pride/)

-innovation-and-community-pride/, August 2021

New Mural 'Future' Depicts Black Dreams, Black News Iowa,

<https://blackiowanews.substack.com/p/jill-wells-art-mural-desmoines>

June 2021

New Mural, We Are Iowa Channel 5 News, June 2021

Downtown Iowa City Mural Delivers Messages, The Gazette, July 2021

Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines,

[https://mbasic.facebook.com/communityfoundationdesmoines/photos/](https://mbasic.facebook.com/communityfoundationdesmoines/photos/.2295280727162686/4463269627030441/?type=3)

[.2295280727162686/4463269627030441/?type=3](https://mbasic.facebook.com/communityfoundationdesmoines/photos/.2295280727162686/4463269627030441/?type=3), July 2021

What's Up On dsm Social Media, dsm Magazine, July 2021

New mural 'Future' at Evelyn K. Davis Center designed to be seen both from passing cars and up close, The Des Moines Register,

[https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2021/07/09/evelyn-k](https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2021/07/09/evelyn-k-davis-center-working-families-greater-des-moines-future-mural-diverse-dreams-barry-griswell/7801286002/)

[davis-center-working-families-greater-des-moines-future-mural-diverse-dreams-barry-griswell/7801286002/](https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2021/07/09/evelyn-k-davis-center-working-families-greater-des-moines-future-mural-diverse-dreams-barry-griswell/7801286002/) July 2021

Diversity, human connection celebrated in mural dedicated to former Principal CEO Griswell, The Des Moines Business Record, online, July 2021

New Mural Represents Hope and Diversity, Iowa Public Radio,
<https://www.iowapublicradio.org/arts-life/2021-07-09/new-mural-represents-diversity-and-hope-in-iowa>, July 2021
'Future' Mural, Channel 13 News, July 2021
Art and History, The Des Moines Business Record Real Estate Magazine,
pg.124-28, April 2021
Lav and Lime, Black Lives Matter Artist Portrait Manifesto,
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CD2pj3oj3ui/>, August 2020.
Artist finds her voice, discovers her roots through painting, CITYVIEW
Magazine, pg. 3, September 2019
The Des Moines Urban Experience, online and print publication.
Teaching Art, The Des Moines Register, February 2014
Open Space, Des Moines Area Community College, February 2010

BOARDS

2021-Current After School Arts Program Board of Directors

REFERENCES

Michelle Bolton-King
Executive Director of ASAP
Des Moines, IA
515.225.4790
Mboultonking@mchsi.com

Donte K. Hayes
Artist
Atlanta, GA
404.824.0498
dontekhayes@gmail.com