

Arts Month Proclamation
Ashley Cornelius, 2022

Art is a proclamation of our radiant souls creating unapologetically
Building bridges from tongues disenfranchised to hearts ready to listen
Art is no longer just entertainment
It is a modality for healing
A sacred ritual
A conversation with the community
Our artists are the translators of what adds to the beauty of our region

Blessed are the poets
Writers with pens posed to capture fleeting moments
Spinning stories grande and epic, to be remembered forever
They will find beauty in the mundane details of life
Turn the changing of the leaves into an odyssey of letting go and transitions
Capturing history in metaphors so we may never lose sight of our beginnings
Adding meaning when we need it the most
Tetrising syntax for poetic beauty

Blessed are the painters
Brushstroke brilliance
Visioners of this land, depict us in ways where we fall in love with ourselves
Cartographer of community cohesion
Capturing the abstract, the complex, and the joyous in pencil, chalk, clay, or metal
Inspire a dedication to the process
How it's impossible to stay clean when creating and recognizing the mess is a part of the art
They will show us what a better world looks like, textured and dynamic

Blessed are the musicians
Symphonic demonstrations of creative chaos
Soundtrack humanity's exploration of ourselves
Create a sensory experience that vibrates our souls
Amplify the marginalized, bring their voices high, surrounded by an accompaniment of validation
Honor the off beats, the melodies, the rap lyrics
Teach us that harmony sounds like yelling, crying, breathing, and laughing
It sounds like authentic self-expression
Conduct us in grace and support of our neighbors

Blessed are the dancers
Calligraphy in motion
Sharing drama, tragedy, and love all with a pointed toe
Move the hurt through with fluidity
They will help us reclaim our bodies

Move back into our hearts and minds and make a home
Teach us to move without judgment and give ourselves over to the experiences of radical joy

Blessed are the actors
They will decolonize our movements
Teach us the Theater of the Oppressed
Guide us in rituals
Utilize our bodies to give thanks and reverence
Teach us how to store blessings more than we do trauma
They will help us take off our masks
The actors will reveal the ways in which our world is all a stage
Allow us space to take a bow and shed for the good of the people and the good of ourselves
Remind us of the emotions we've forgotten we can feel
Act out our fantasies, dreams, and pains so we may heal

Blessed are the comedians
Bubbling laughter in bellies and willing it to escape in vibrancy
Alchemy pain and loss into jokes that aim to heal
We laugh so we do not cry
They teach us to laugh until we cry
They will lead a revolution of tight checks, wild smiles, and delight
May we shelter ourselves in the collective giggles, chortles, and chuckles

We are a blank canvas
Full of possibilities and potential
Let this month be the invitation for the artists to create
To get messy
To pour into our community and fill every inch of empty space
Paint the edges
Collaborate and collage artistic endeavors
Record the sounds of artists at work
Dance to it
Paint to it
Dream to it
This month is an invitation for everyone to engage in one new cultural experience
Reap the benefits of creativity bridging new perspectives
May we loudly, enthusiastically and in community, celebrate Arts Month