

# EAST NEW ORLEANS REGIONAL LIBRARY PUBLIC ART COMMISSION

Paintings by Jeff Whipple



The paintings in this brochure were commissioned for a new library in New Orleans that replaced one that was destroyed by the flood from Hurricane Katrina. Jeff Whipple was awarded the commission in a national call to artists.

Whipple used people from the library's community as models for paintings depicting the appreciation of reading. He photographed dozens of library patrons who posed with books. He selected sixteen models for the eleven oil paintings that will hang throughout the 30,000 square foot library. Whipple was determined to make the paintings look like the models because library visitors will know and recognize them. He hopes the portraits will provide a sense of community in an area that was severely damaged by the tragic flooding.



The volunteer models posed for the artist at the temporary library building in May 2011. Whipple took nearly 1000 photographs of the several dozen local residents that volunteered over two days.

One of the most challenging aspects of the project for the artist was selecting the final photographs to use as references in the paintings. There were hundreds of terrific images of the models posing as readers. In the end, Whipple chose photographs of sixteen models to use for the eleven paintings.



There were many wonderful photographs of the models that couldn't be used.





A portion of the small temporary library was turned into a photography studio with strobe lights flashing all day long. Posing for an artist was a new experience for the volunteer models. Most had never modeled for anything. Jeff Whipple and his assistant Liz Gibson tried to make the modeling fun and exciting. Whipple guided the models into poses and asked them to act out different emotions like happiness, surprise or confusion. The results from the amateur models were amazing.



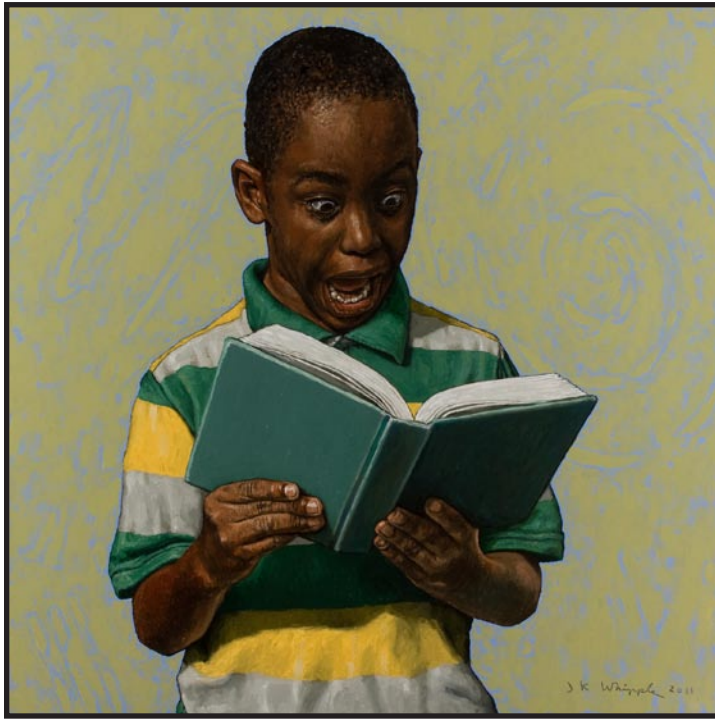




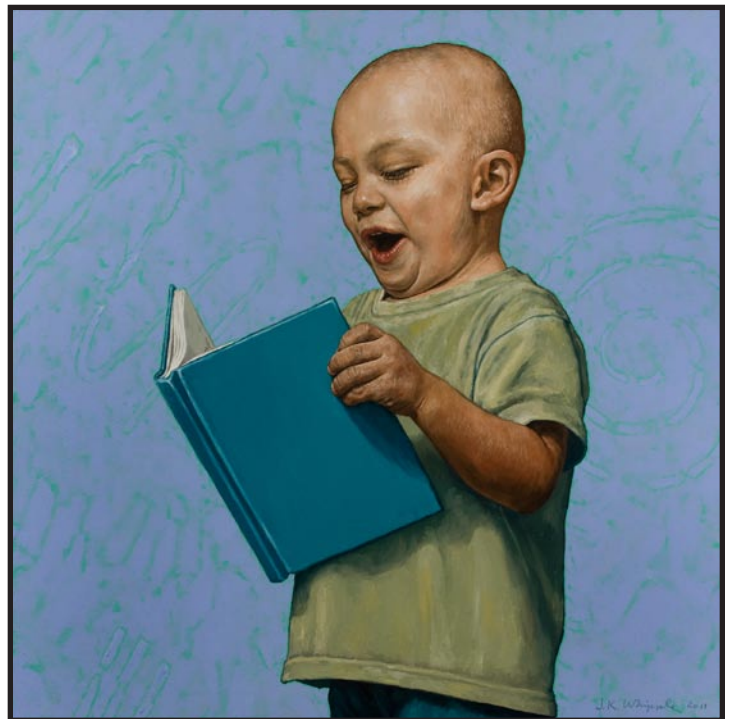
The modeling session was a family affair. Parents brought their children and older siblings helped the little ones stay focused.







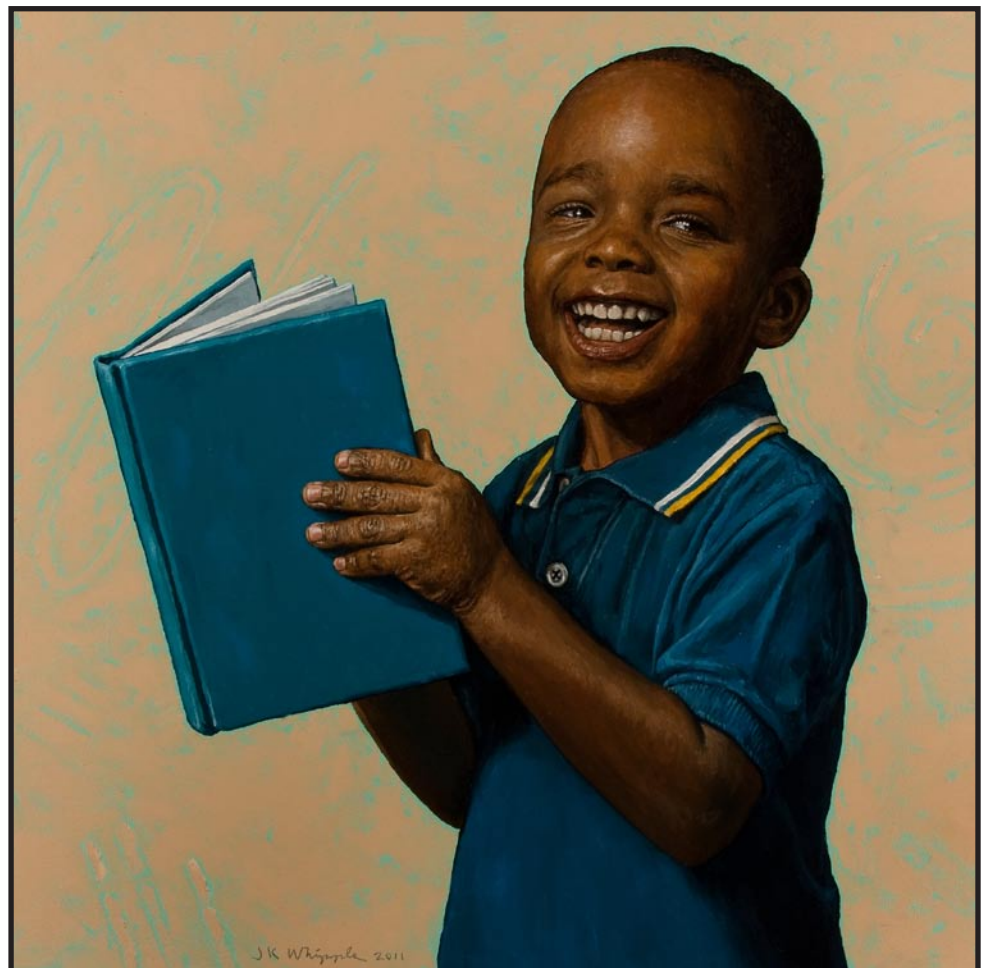
*Ah! Reader*



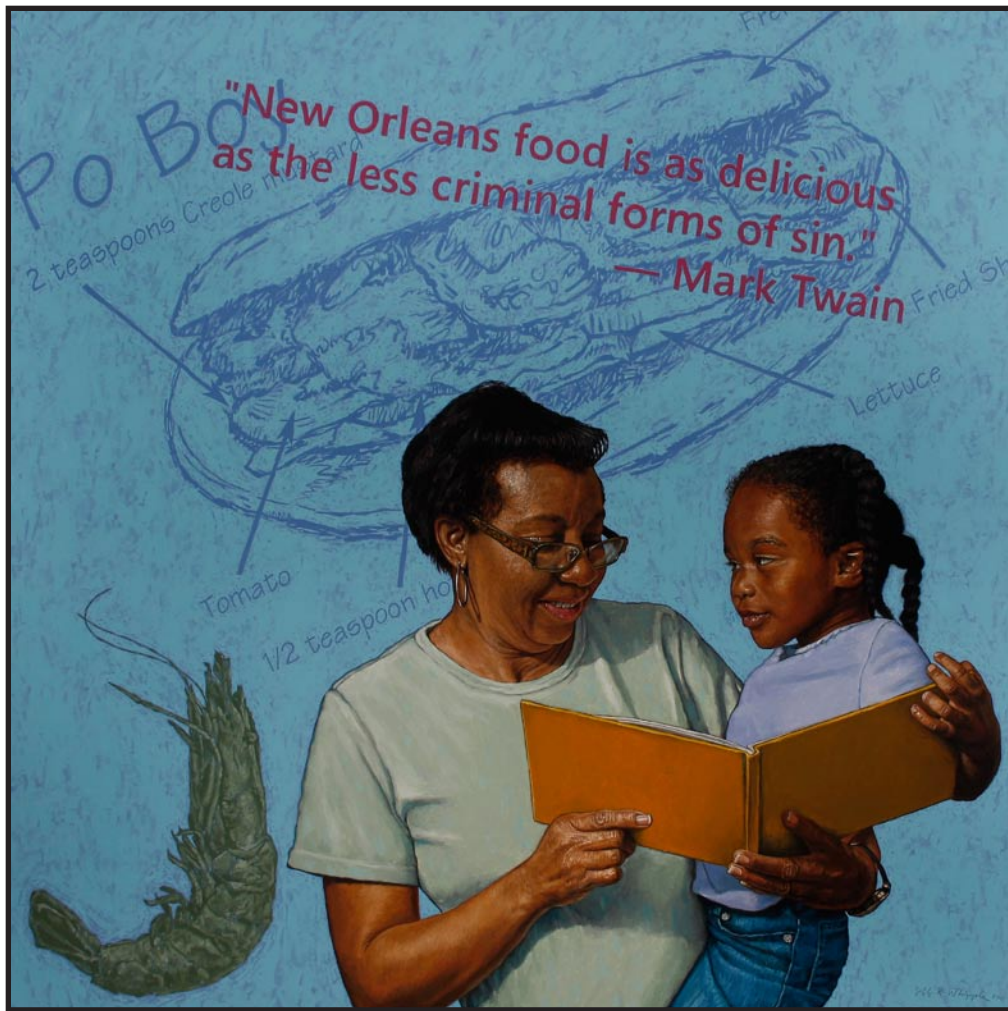
*Oh! Reader*

Each on this page is oil on canvas, 24" x 24", 2011  
East New Orleans Regional Library, New Orleans, Louisiana  
Commissioned by the Arts Council of New Orleans Public Art Program

The neighborhood that the library serves is in northeast New Orleans along the shore of Lake Pontchartrain. The old library had ten feet of water in it from the flood. The new library is widely seen as a symbol of the rebirth of that community.



*Ha! Reader*



Whipple wanted to capture the look of love and appreciation that this little girl showed for her grandmother.



*New Orleans Food*

Oil on canvas, 60" x 60", 2011

East New Orleans Regional Library, New Orleans, Louisiana

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The photograph below shows the painting where it hangs in the library on the first floor.

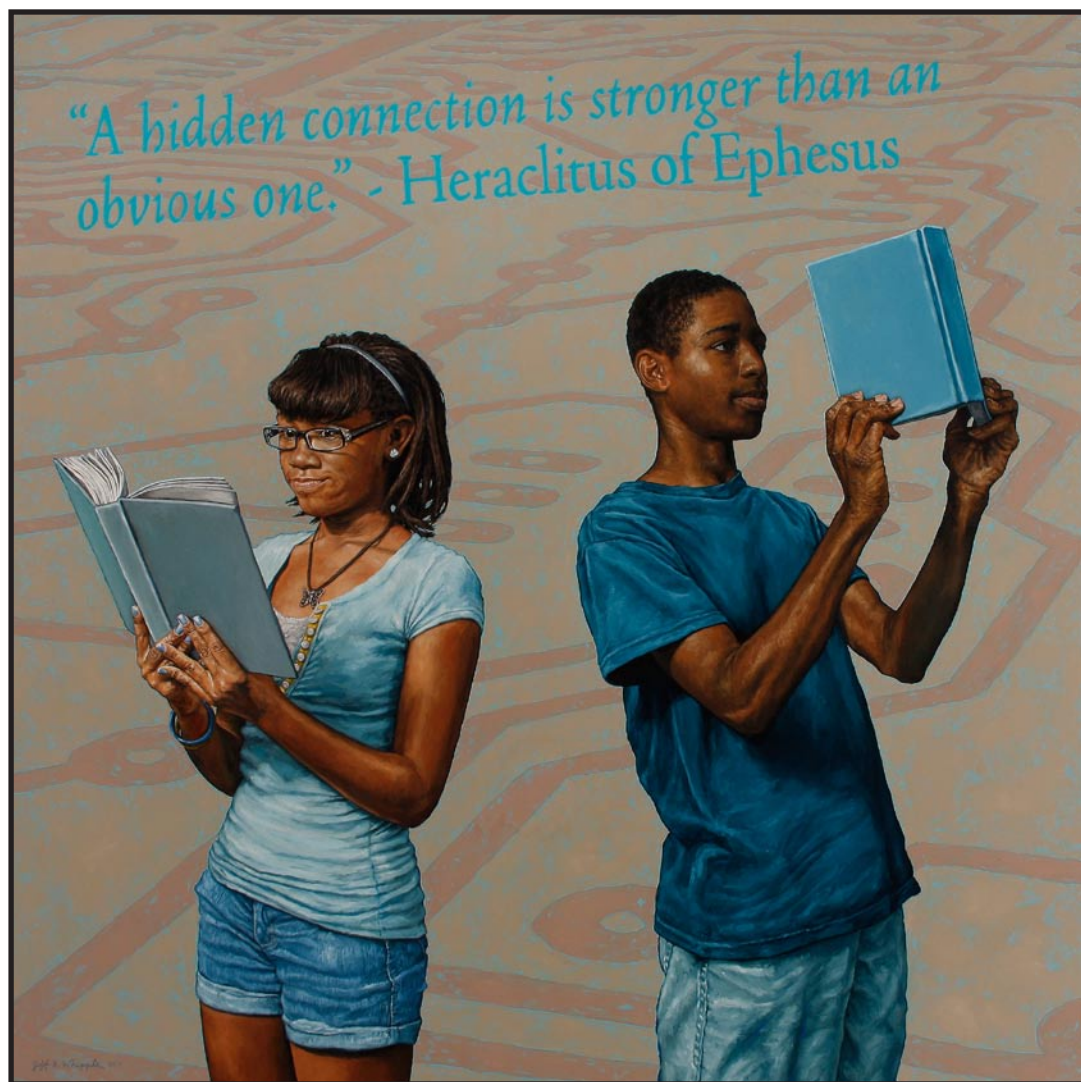






Each of the six larger paintings have images in the background. They represent the information that a library can provide. They all have scientific drawings and quotes.

The background in this painting is related to the theme of New Orleans food. It shows a drawing of a Po Boy sandwich styled like a scientific diagram. There is a monochromatic rendering of a shrimp and a quote about New Orleans food from Mark Twain.



*Connections*

Oil on canvas, 60" x 60", 2011

East New Orleans Regional Library, New Orleans, Louisiana

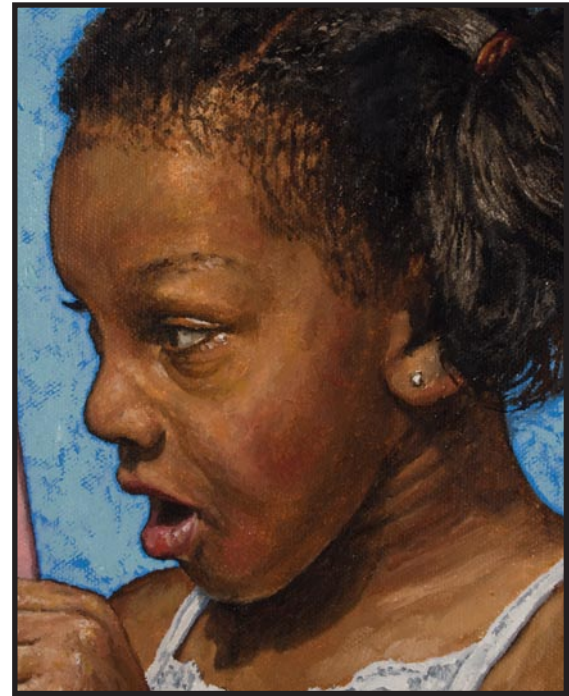
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These kids didn't pose together and may not even know each other but now they're "connected" for all time.

The background shows a circuit board with connections and a quote about connections from an ancient Greek philosopher.





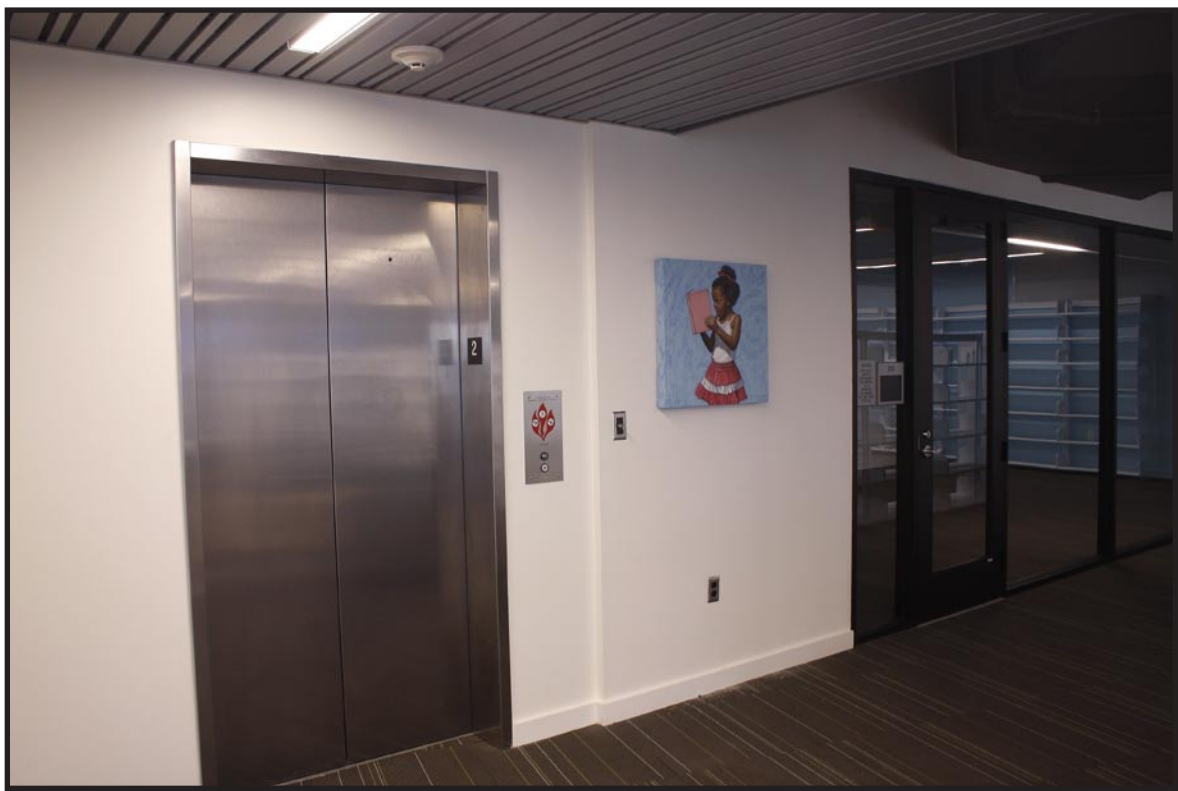


*Reading Pink*

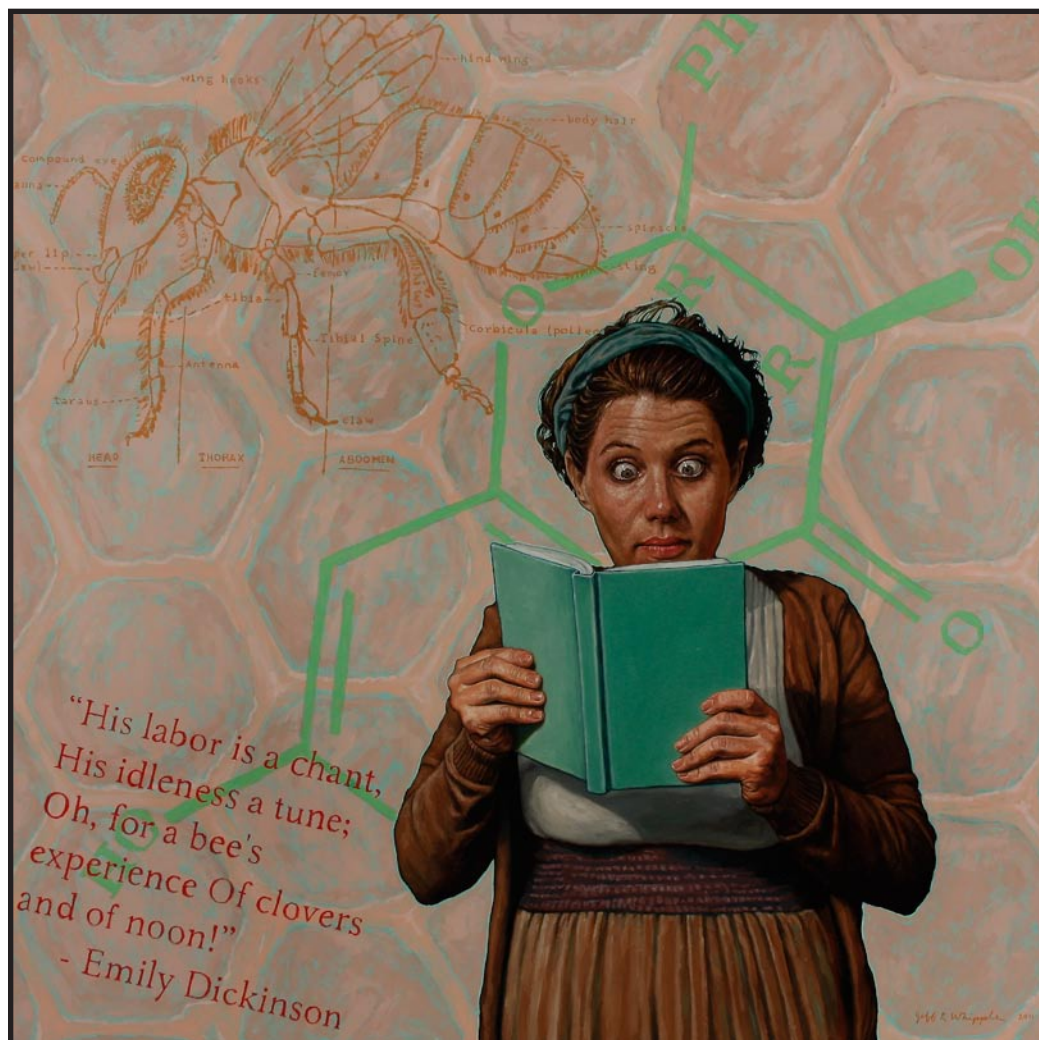
Oil on canvas, 24" x 24", 2011

East New Orleans Regional Library, New Orleans, Louisiana

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This background shows a diagram of a honey bee and a low contrast rendering of a honey comb. There is a quote about bees by Emily Dickinson and the chemical formula for honey.

### *Honey Bees*

Oil on canvas, 60" x 60", 2011

East New Orleans Regional Library, New Orleans, Louisiana

Commissioned by the Arts Council of New Orleans Public Art Program







*Intense Reader*

Oil on canvas, 24" x 24", 2011

East New Orleans Regional Library, New Orleans, Louisiana

Commissioned by the Arts Council of New Orleans Public Art Program



The artist guides the model into a pose for the above painting.





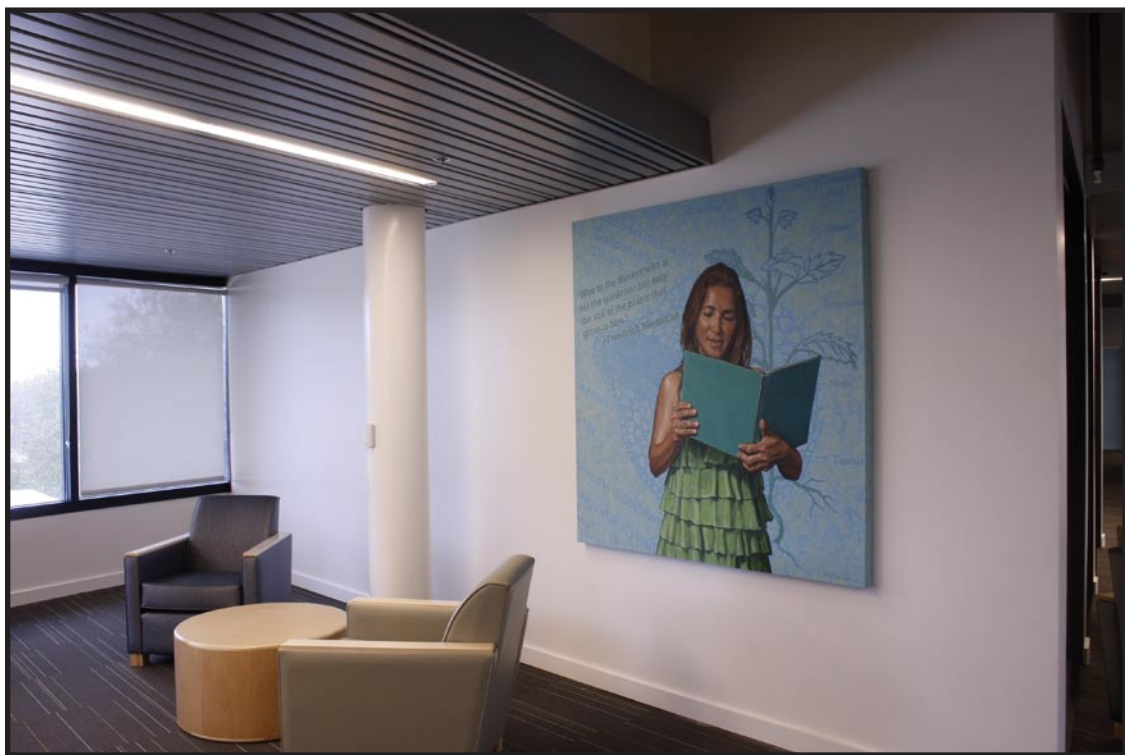
The background for “The Gardener” shows a diagram of a root cell and above that there is a scientific drawing of a plant. There is a quote from Friedrich Nietzsche that speaks metaphorically of a gardener. The model’s dress has a floral quality too. It wasn’t green originally.

*The Gardener*

Oil on canvas, 60” x 60”, 2011

East New Orleans Regional Library, New Orleans, Louisiana

Commissioned by the Arts Council of New Orleans Public Art Program





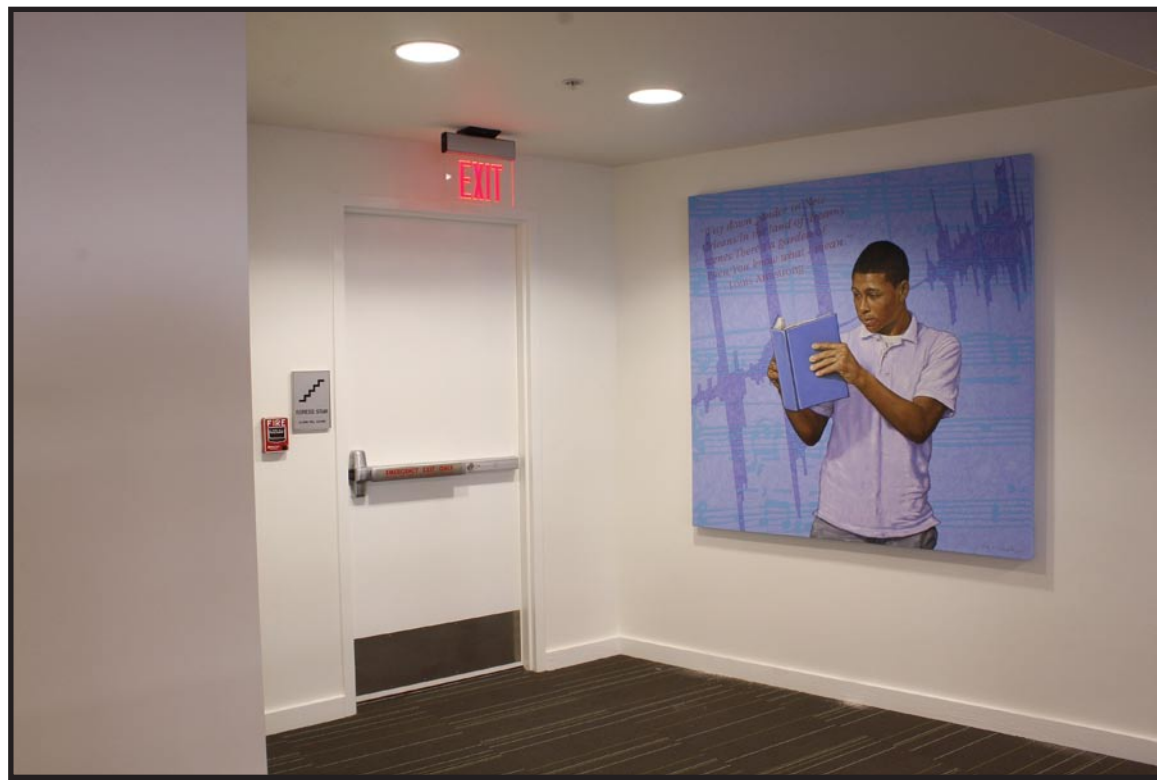
The title for “In the Land of Dreamy Scenes” comes from the quote in the background from a Louis Armstrong song. The background also has a drawing of a sound waveform and the blue lines are the sheet music from “When the Saints Go Marching In.” The artist chose this model and pose because he’s holding the book in the way a musician holds a saxophone.

*In the Land of Dreamy Scenes*

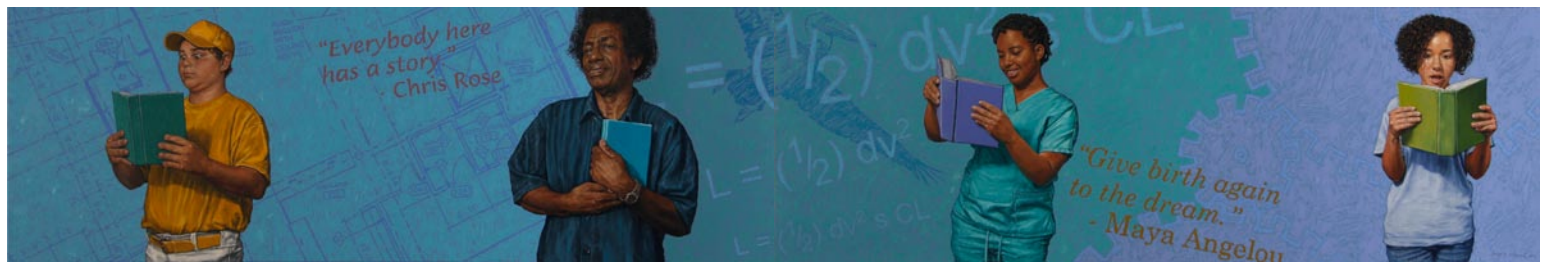
Oil on canvas, 60” x 60”, 2011

East New Orleans Regional Library, New Orleans, Louisiana

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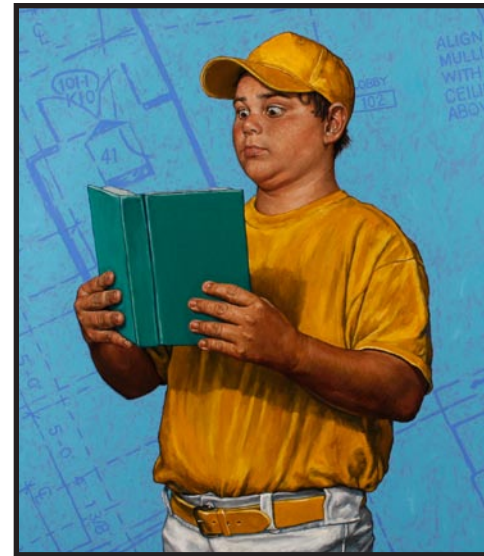


*Plans, Stories, Flights, Dreams and Gears*

Oil on canvas, 3' x 18', 2011

East New Orleans Regional Library, New Orleans, Louisiana

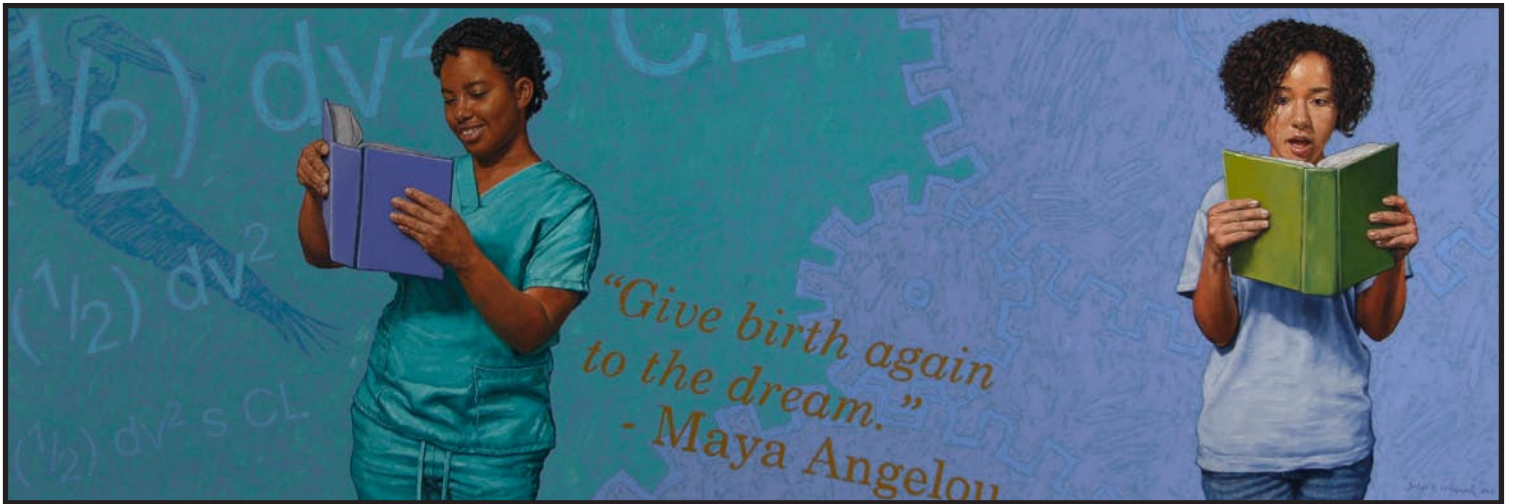
Commissioned by the Arts Council of New Orleans Public Art Program







This background has the architectural drawings for the library and a quote from local commentator Chris Rose.



The background continues with Louisiana's state bird, the brown Pelican in flight and the scientific formula for flight. There is a quote from Maya Angelou and then a drawing of engaged gears to represent the way a community works together.

