

Trying It On: Skye reaches deep

Jonny Skye, creator of the featured piece, “kweteelili/Try it On,” is an artist who has her hands in multiple projects. After closing the doors to Skye Gallery, she turned to small business consulting, helping local businesses launch and/or continue to thrive. Skye, a member of the Peoria Tribe of Oklahoma, has vast experience in the fields of both arts and education/human services (focusing on urban education reform). She uses her talents to help guide artists and businesses while advocating for education reform.

Skye Gallery was successful in its four years of existence. She curated 40 exhibitions in the joyful yet intimate space on Broadway before the pandemic hit. She adjusted and went virtual, but closed the doors in early 2021.

“I am rooted in my commitment to the sensory experience of art and each other, so I opted not to continue the work virtually,” Skye says. “I am still available to buyers, artists and curate.”

Skye provides artist management services (offering a wealth of options to local artists looking to build and shape their careers) in addition to business consulting. She consulted with Coffee Exchange during the worst of the pandemic, which led to the opening of **Rise ‘n Shine Coffee Bar** in Smith Hill. She also worked with **Central Contemporary Arts** in opening their first exhibition. Currently, she is engaged in the launch of **Ahh, Moments** (a lifestyle brand centered on the benefits of plant medicine) and serves on the board of the **Providence Biennial for Contemporary Art**. She hopes for a new physical incarnation of Skye Gallery in the future.

Having renewed control of her time, Skye could now focus her creative process in a deeper and more meaningful way. She is currently working on a body of paintings titled “oowiši, Peewaaliaki” (the native language of her Peoria ancestors, which translates to “In this Direction”) that focuses on ceremony and seeking connection to spirit.

“This work acknowledges a future in the return. It sits in the vision of global re-indigenizing/re-membering/re-balancing/re-discovering as a way forward from the quandaries of here and now,” Skye says.

Skye, also the descendant of Irish colonial settlers, has indigenous ancestors who came from the upper Mississippi and were pushed down to Northeastern Oklahoma from a series of reservations to a final allotment scheme scenario in Ottawa County, OK. As children, her grandfather and great-aunts were all forced by the US government to attend Haskell, an Indian boarding school.

Her culture and upbringing are important aspects of her work, both on the canvas and in the community.

“I paint to find coherence in the incoherent, to bridge - prioritizing sensibility, erotic power, fertility and futility, and values of abundance and freedom. I am compelled by humbling the colonial norming of power, authority, ownership, and territory. Connecting earth with body. I seek to challenge hegemonic ideas of civilization and refinement while re-centering all that is natural and rooted. I work to address many dissonances - by connecting and remapping micro and macro, subject and object, human will and universal design.”

For more information, go to skye-gallery.com