

Chelle Barbour

Artist Bio

(t) 323-246-6293

(e) chellebarbourstudio@gmail.com

A California native, Chelle Barbour began her early foray into the arts as an actress in community college theatre. Working with a director, Dr. MaryEllen Kazmark, Chelle landed lead roles in *Summer and Smoke*, *Show Boat*, and *The Sound of Music and For Colored Girls Who Considered Suicide when the Rainbow is Enuf*. Barbour moved to Los Angeles and continued the pursuit of theatre, fine art and design, and ultimately completed her education at UCLA and USC. Today, Barbour has refined her multidisciplinary art practice, which includes assemblage, collage digital video, painting, photography, independent curating and writing. Over the last few years Barbour's collage work has emerged. Barbour constructs the visage of the black female through the lens of Afro-Surrealism. Her characters cast a wide net in terms of how they are read. From chameleons, agent provocateurs, goddesses, muses, warriors or spies, Barbour's collage portraiture conveys allegory, desire, fantasy, femininity, fragility, tension, and the inherent complexity of the black female imaginary.

Barbour has participated in many group exhibitions and collaborations like the Black Lives Matter public art project at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery (2016); Simone Leigh's International Black Women Artists for Black Lives Matter project at the Project Row Houses in Houston, TX (2017), *You IS Pretty! Surrealism and The Black Imaginary*, a solo show at Band of Vices Gallery in Los Angeles (2018), and one of three American artists selected to participate in the European exhibition, *The Medea Insurrection: Radical Women Artists Behind the Iron Curtain* (2019) on display at the Wende Museum of the Cold War in Culver City, CA.

Barbour's art practice also involves curating and writing exhibition reviews, artist profiles, and catalog essays. She has worked with a nexus of local and international artists that began while conducting field research in Cuba for her graduate thesis, "Performance and Memory by Selected Cuban Artists: Ana Mendieta and Tania Bruguera," which examined Cuban history and contemporary art through the lens of Alison Landsberg's critical study of prosthetic memory and mass culture. Barbour's curatorial involves both independent and institutional exhibitions, such as *A Book as a Work of Art for All*, *Madame B*, *Colored Girls: Works of Art by Women of the African, Asian and Latin Diaspora* presented in Los Angeles, and traveling shows like *Posing Beauty*, *The Kinsey African American Art and History Collection*, and planning a three-year exhibition schedule at the Northwest African American Museum in Seattle.

*Barbour's artworks are in the permanent collection of the California African American Museum, the J. Paul Getty Museum photo archive, and in notable private collections. Also, she is a 2018 Nominee for the Rema Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artist Grant.