

Chelle Barbour
Artist Bio
2026

Chelle Barbour is a Los Angeles based interdisciplinary visual artist, cultural producer, and independent curator whose practice moves across Afro-Surrealist and Afro-Futurist collage, mixed media, writing, and photography. Emerging first through theatre, her work has evolved into a distinct visual language rooted in assemblage, speculative imagination, and cultural memory. In Barbour's hands, collage becomes more than a formal strategy; it becomes a philosophical and political act—one capable of reordering history, reclaiming narrative, and making visible worlds too often excluded from dominant representation.

Her work is animated by a sustained engagement with Black subjectivity, mythic presence, and the liberatory potential of the image. Drawing on the layered logic of Afro-Surrealism and Afro-Futurism, she constructs compositions in which fragments of history, beauty, ritual, and dream converge. These works invite viewers into visionary spaces where Black identity is not constrained by stereotype or historical injury, but expanded through mystery, sovereignty, sensuality, and radical imagination. The result is a practice that is at once intimate and epic—one that honors the archive while insisting on new futures.

Barbour's artwork has been presented in solo, group, gallery, and museum exhibitions, and her collage and photographic works are held in the permanent collections of the California African American Museum, the Photographic Archive at the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Wende Museum, the Bank of America Collection, the Richard Seavest Collection, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), and other private collections. These holdings affirm the significance of an artistic practice that bridges formal innovation with cultural and historical depth.

Beyond the studio, Barbour distinguished herself as an incisive institutional collaborator and public intellectual. She has participated in international panel discussions at the Wende Museum in conjunction with *Medea Insurrection: Radical Women Artists Behind the Iron Curtain*; served as symposium moderator for *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1960–1985* at the California African American Museum; and contributed as a discussant to the College Art Association panel *How Will Feminist Culture Engage the Future?* These engagements underscore her longstanding investment in critical dialogue around contemporary art, Black feminist thought, and the cultural politics of representation.

Her public practice further extends through lectures, conversations, and workshops at institutions including UC Riverside, LACMA, Azusa Pacific University, Vassar College, the Riverside Art Museum, and the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture. She has also directed collage workshops at Kidspace Museum, UC Riverside, LACMA, the San Diego Children's Discovery Museum, and other venues, bringing her interdisciplinary approach into conversation with diverse audiences across generations.

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Whether through image-making, curatorial work, or public discourse, Barbour's practice insists on the transformative power of art to reframe perception and expand the field of possibility. Her work offers not simply representation, but revelation: richly layered visual worlds in which Black life is imagined with dignity, complexity, and cosmic force. Barbour earned her Bachelor of Fine Art Degree (2007) and Master's Degree (2013) from the University of Southern California. In 2021, she received the distinguished Established Art Fellow Award by the California Arts Council.

For institutional collaborations, workshops, acquisitions, or commissions, please contact **chellebarbourstudio@gmail.com**.