

Ya La'ford, J.D., M.F.A.

Earned a bachelor from Florida State University, a Juris Doctorate from University of Florida, and a Masters in Fine Arts from Boston. La'ford is currently a professor at University of Tampa and Saint Petersburg College, and lives and works between Florida and New York.

La'ford is an interdisciplinary artist: educator, visual painter, installation/video artist, and muralist. In her practice she explores human interconnectivity, evidence, negative/positive space and time, metaphysics, obsession and manipulation. La'ford's paintings are included in corporate, university, private and public collections, and she has exhibited her work nationally and internationally.

I am interested in the metaphysics of space and time, and how objects and perception changes when we move around in space. My work reflects my cultural hybridity through my journey to challenge notions of humanistic patterns and spirituality. I move between my heritages to try to find a universal language.

A first generation Chinese-Jamaican, I was born in Bronx, NY, and moved to Miami, FL, at an early age. I also spent considerable time in Jamaica, Washington DC, Houston, TX, Tampa Bay Area, FL, and New York City. I am the granddaughter of John Dunkley, who according to Guggenheim Fellow, Eldzier Cortor, was "Jamaica's first and finest intuitive painter." I currently live between New York and Florida. In having such a rich geographical background, the transitions between countries, between economies, and between the nuances of language and culture have developed for me an understanding of the visual world, in its resilience and its potential for exceeding limitations. I use my artwork to delve into these nuances to find a critical space, which pushes past complacency to modes of resistance in the present moment.

I hunt and find large spaces, areas, and canvases to arouse reflection of an image of the unseen, in the search for a universal language. My obsessive paint strokes mirror my need to disseminate and transmit humanity's unseen experiences, within layers of interconnecting lines that are echoes of a diverse but shared account.

My goal is to orchestrate a conversation between history and art, which could give us the progressive discussions of the future. I believe that our histories serve as a catalyst, and that they mutate and are more alive in us when regarded as a stimulus for transformation of thought. My labyrinths engage social and cultural histories in a constant cycle of being told and retold.