



# IMO NSE IMEH

Visual Artist | Art Historian

[WWW.IMOIMEH.COM](http://www.imoimeh.com)

## PERSONAL PROFILE

I am a Nigerian-American visual artist and scholar of African Diaspora Art. I leverage my practice of visual art and research in art history to investigate historical and philosophical issues around the black body and cultural identity.

## ART IN NOTABLE COLLECTIONS

### **Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art**

Work Acquired: "Feeding the Veins of the Earth (Grounded Angel)," 2020

### **University Museum of Contemporary Art**

University of Massachusetts, Amherst  
Works Acquired: "Breathe," 2020, "Butterfly Girl" (Artist Reproduction), 2017

### **Danny Simmons Collection of Art**

Work Acquired: "Wisdom Becoming" Diptych, 2019

## CONTACT DETAILS

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## EDUCATION

### **Yale University**

Doctor of Philosophy, Art History; May 2009

Master of Arts, Art History; May 2005

### **Columbia University**

Bachelor of Arts, Art History; May 2002

## EMPLOYMENT

### **Westfield State University**

Professor of Art & Art History

September 2009 - Present

Tenured Faculty. Rank: Full Professor

## PRESS

Worcester Magazine, 7/2023

**"Painting history: Mechanics Hall readies new portraits of four 19th century Black leaders"** ([View Article](#))

Massachusetts Daily Collegian, 11/2023

**"The Miracle Machine: the brotherhood and vulnerability of black men"** ([View Article](#))

New England Public Media, 3/2023

**"Imo Imeh on Curating 'Something Extraordinary'"** ([View Video](#))

Addy Hour Podcast, 3/2023

**"Black Bodies and Race in Art & Society with Imo Imeh and Daniel Swann"** ([View Video](#))

## NOTABLE COMMISSIONED PROJECTS

### **Journal of Biological Psychiatry, Yale University "Cover Art Initiative, Publication 2024"**

Imo Imeh has been commissioned to create six works of art that will target the theme of a Biological Psychiatry issue.

The project addresses topics like depression, psychosis, dementia, trauma, and addiction from the perspective of the Black community, but also draws upon ideas of faith, generational memory, and healing, qualities that are central to Black life. ([View Press Release](#))

### **Mechanics Hall Portraits Project: Portrait of Frederick Douglass, Installation 2024**

Imo Imeh has been commissioned to paint Frederick Douglass as part of the first portraits of 19th Century Black leaders to be installed in Mechanics Hall. The two other portraits feature Sojourner Truth and William and Martha Brown. ([View Press Release](#))

## 2024 EXHIBITIONS

*A Time Was Had: Is An Awakening*. Art Genesis Gallery in collaboration with Maison Lune Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. February 2024—March 8 2024 (*group exhibition; curator: Mashonda Tifre*)

### *Forthcoming*

*Biological Psychiatry “Cover Art Initiative” Exhibition (provisional title)*, National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C. September 2024—June 2025 (*solo exhibition; curator: J.D. Talasek*)

*Queens, Gods, and Devotees (provisional title)*, Maguire Museum of Art, St. Joseph’s University, Philadelphia, PA. September 2024—December 2024 (*group exhibition; curator: Susanna Gold*)

## 2023 EXHIBITIONS

*The Hope of Radiance*. August Wilson African American Cultural Center (AWAACC), Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, February 2023—May 2023 (*solo exhibition*)

*The Miracle Machine*, Augusta Savage Gallery, UMass Amherst, Amherst, MA, September—December 2023 (*group exhibition; curator and exhibiting artist: Imo Nse Imeh*)

*Something Extraordinary: A Visual Review of ‘Story’ as Timeless*, Arno Maris Gallery, Westfield State University, January—March 2023 (*group exhibition, curator: Imo Nse Imeh*)

*Ten Little Nigger Girls*. South Gallery, Greenfield Community College, Greenfield, MA, March—April 2023 (*solo exhibition*)

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

*Visible Man: Art and Black Male Subjectivity*. Fine Arts Center Galleries, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio, September—November 2022 (*group exhibition; curator: Dr. Micheal D. Harris*)

*Another American’s Autobiography: Selected Works from the Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art*. Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society’s Sigal Museum, November 19, 2021—July 2022 (*group exhibition; curator: Claudia Volpe*)

*and i’ll be there with you*. Pulp Gallery, Holyoke Massachusetts, January 15—February 6, 2022 (*solo exhibition*)

*Clarion Call: Poems and Paintings by Danny Simmons; Angels of 17 Years Boy by Imo Nse Imeh*. Mariposa Museum, Oaks Bluff, MA, May—October 2021 (*two-person exhibition*)

*We Are For Freedoms*. University Museum of Contemporary Art, UMass Amherst, Amherst, MA, March—October 2021 (*group exhibition*)

*I Dreamed My People Were Calling But I Couldn’t Find My Way Home*. Rush Arts Gallery, NYC (Chelsea). Curated by Danny Simmons, November 2012—January 2013 (*group exhibition; curator: Danny Simmons*)

## PUBLICATIONS (WRITING)

"Feeding the Veins of the Earth," Essay contribution for *Shifting Time: African American Artists 2020-2021*, The Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art, ed. Klare Scarborough and Berrisford Boothe, forthcoming 2022

"The Hope of Radiance," Exhibition Catalogue Essay for *Another American's Autobiography: Selected Works from the Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art, at the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society's Sigal Museum*, ed. Claudia Volpe, 2021

"I am My Ancestors' Essence," Exhibition Catalogue Essay for *I am My Ancestors' Essence*, Tafeta gallery, London, October-November 2021

"Hip Sistas in Flux: Globetrotting Maidens, Black Diaspora Shifts, and the Visual-Lingual Braid in Victor Ekpuk's 'Mboobo Series'" in *African Graphics, Signs and Cultures: The World of Victor Ekpuk*, ed. Falola, Toyin (2018)

"The Dynamics of Cultural and Aesthetic Expansion in Cross River Networks," A Review for *Purchasing Culture: the Dissemination of Associations in the Cross River Region of Cameroon and Nigeria*, by Ute Röschenthaler (Africa World Press, 2011), in *African Arts*, Volume 49, Issue 1, Spring 2016

*Daughters of Seclusion: The Revelation of the Ibibio "Fattened Bride" as the Icon of Beauty and Power* (Peter Lang Publishing, 2012)

## PUBLICATIONS (ART)

*Feeding the Veins of the Earth* (2020), *Angel Landing* (2020), *Lead Me to Rest* (2020), in *Shifting Time: African American Artists 2020-2021*, The Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art, ed. Klare Scarborough and Berrisford Boothe, forthcoming fall 2022

*Breathe* (2020), cover illustration (back) and featured in *A Gathering of the Tribes Magazine* Issue 16, "The Black Lives Matter Issue," eds. Reed, Ishmael and Simmons, Danny, forthcoming fall 2022

*The Furies* (1999), cover illustration for *The Black Intellectual Tradition: Reading Freedom in Classical Literature*, by Parham, Angel and Prather, Anika, Classical Academic Press, Camp Hill, PA, 2022

*Good-bye Brother* (2012), cover illustration for *A New Perspective for the Use of Dialect in African American Spirituals: History, Context, and Linguistics*, by Barber, Felicia, Lexington Books, Lanham, Maryland, 2021

*Feeding the Veins of the Earth* (2020), in Exhibition Catalogue for *Another American's Autobiography: Selected Works from the Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art, at the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society's Sigal Museum*, ed. Claudia Volpe, 2021

*Harvest* (2013), *[anti]Stasis* (2012), in *Orion Magazine: People and Nature*, Volume 39, No. 3, Autumn 2020

*Ovation* (2018) cover illustration, several other works featured, in *AISLIN Magazine*, Spring 2019

*Seraph* (2018), in *Art New England: Contemporary Art and Culture*, Volume 40, Issue 1

## UNIVERSITY LECTURES & ARTIST TALKS

"In Conversation: Imo Nse Imeh." Museum Lecture. In Conversation Lecture Series. Programming around the exhibition Another American's Autobiography: Selections from the Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art, Northampton County Historical & Genealogical Society, Sigal Museum, Easton, PA., April 2022

"Benediction: A Studio Talk with Dr. Imo Nse Imeh," Guest Lecture. Course: African American Literature (with Dr. Vanessa Diana). Schoolwide open event. Westfield State University, February 2021

"Benediction: A Studio Talk with Dr. Imo Nse Imeh," Alumni Research Forum, History of Art, Yale University. March 2021

"Benediction: A Studio Talk with Dr. Imo Nse Imeh," Guest Lecture. Course: Reflective Teaching Practices and Classroom Management, Elms College. October 2021

"Dr. Imo Nse Imeh's Current Studio Projects and the Importance of Finding Your Voice," Guest Speaker, Men of Excellence Club, Springfield College, April 2021

"Benediction: A Studio Talk with Dr. Imo Nse Imeh," Guest Speaker, Social Justice Scholars Talk, Loyola University-New Orleans, April 2021

"Suicide Girl and Her Nine Sisters: A Conversation about Black Children, Danger, and Invisibility," Artist Talk, Western New England University, 2019

"17 Years Boy: Images, Sounds, and Words Inspired by the Life and Death of a Young Black Boy," Campus Scholarship Showcase Talk, Westfield State University, 2018

"Ten Little Nigger Girls, New Works by Imo Nse Imeh," Visiting Artist lecture Series. Brown University, 2017

"Ten Little Nigger Girls, New Works by Imo Nse Imeh," Diversity Workshop. American International College, 2017

"The Maiden Spirit: Beauty and Power Realized in the Identity of the African Woman, in Nigeria and Beyond." Sankofa Lecture Series. Quinsigamond Community College, November, 2015

## MUSEUM LECTURES

"in his name: An Artist Talk on New Work by Dr. Imo Nse Imeh." Lecture & Musical Performance. Museums a la Carte Lecture Series. Springfield Museums, Springfield, MA, April 2022

"The Maiden Spirit: Beauty and Power Realized in the Identity of the African Woman, in Nigeria and Beyond." Friends of the Arts of Africa and Oceania Lecture Series. Boston Museum of Fine Art, February 2016

"Igbo Maiden Spirit Masks: Considering Agbogho Mmuo and the persistence of the 'Maiden Spirit' in Southern Nigeria," Art Institute of Chicago, 2014

## CONFERENCE LECTURES

“Special Session: The Biological Psychiatry Cover Art Initiative: Addressing the Underrepresentation of Black People on the Journal Cover Through a Series of Commissioned Artworks,” 2024 Society of Biological Psychiatry Annual Meeting, Austin, TX, May 2024

“BENEDICTION/in his name: Locating Ourselves in America’s Stories, Revised and Untold,” 53rd Annual National Conference of Black Political Scientists. Conference Speaker. Theme: Visions of Black Futures at a Crossroads, Virtual Studio Talk: March 2022

“BENEDICTION/in his name,” 2021 Virtual Summit on Racism. Conference Speaker. Theme: Reigniting Racial Equity in Our Community, Organized by Society for History and Racial Equity, Kalamazoo, MI. Virtual Studio Talk: November 2021

“Benediction: A Studio Tour with Dr. Imo Nse Imeh.” 2021 State of Health Equity among Boys and Men of Color Summit. Conference Speaker and Artist. Organized by UConn Health Disparities Institute (HDI).

“Find Your Voice, Leave Your Mark,” Opening Address, 100 Males to College Annual Retreat, Springfield Public Schools. (Virtual Art Tour & Message), April 2021

“Mechanisms in Uyai: Rewriting Her Body with Accoutrements of Beauty and Power,” Panel: The Arts of Africa, Recent Issues and Trends, CAA 2010, 98th Annual Conference, Chicago, 2010

## PANELS

“BIPOC Artists: A Conversation on Advocacy and Equity in the Arts and Culture,” part of series *Community Conversations at Westfield State University*. Panel includes: Dr. Imo Nse Imeh (Art), Dr. Felicia Barber (Music), Jose Rivera (Theatre), and Rosemary Tracy Woods (Arts Advocate), March 2022

“What Does it Mean to Be an Artist of Color?: A Panel Discussion with Dr. Imo Imeh (Art, Westfield State); Michael Hagins (playwright); Joel Thompson (doctoral student in Music Composition at Yale University); George Ramirez (Art, Westfield State). April 28, 2021.

“As an African American educator-what can we do to impact change?” *Westfield State University Constitution Day Panel*. Panel: Dr. Felicia Barber – Moderator/Organizer (Director of Choral Activities), Dr. Imo Nse Imeh (WSU Art Department), Ashiah Richeme (WSU Director of Diversity and Inclusion), Aubree Bowman (Bloomfield High School, Choral Director), and Nuchette Melissa Burke (Hartford Community Schools Coordinator), September 19, 2017

“Coon Songs and Spirituals: Constructing Race and Culture Through Lyrics and Performance, a History of African-American Music,” *3 Conversations Lecture Series for Ten Little Nigger Girls Exhibition*, Panel: Dr. Felicia Barber and Dr. Imo Imeh. Westfield State University, February, 2016

“The Pickininy at Play: Puzzles, Postcards, and the Black Body as a Pictorial Commodity,” *3 Conversations Lecture Series for Ten Little Nigger Girls Exhibition*, Panel: Dr. Robert Thornton and Dr. Imo Imeh. Westfield State University, February, 2016

“#blackboysindanger: The Public Consumption of Black Bodies in the Media,” *3 Conversations Lecture Series for Ten Little Nigger Girls Exhibition*, Panel: Dr. Robert Thornton, Dr. Chris Gullen, and Dr. Imo Imeh. Westfield State University, February, 2016

## NOTABLE PROJECTS

### **BENEDICTION**

My current studio project, **BENEDICTION**, tells the story of a group of angels that have been cast down to earth, and bound to the skins of Black boys and men. Their task is to serve as witnesses to the traumas and triumphs that they experience while in this guise. I consider this series as my personal response to the global pandemic, and the many horrific realities of black existence that the darkness of this plague has elucidated for the entire world to witness.

### **17 Years Boy: Images, Sounds, and Words Inspired by the Life and Death of a Young Black Boy**

This project is an ephemeral portrait painting, and time-based, multimedia installation that is inspired by the life and untimely death of Trayvon Martin. The project speaks to the issue of Black boy subjugation in the United States, but also to the question of the black male spectacle in the public space.

### **Ten Little Nigger Girls**

This series of large-scale drawings is a retelling of the 1907 children's book and nursery rhyme, *Ten Little Nigger Girls*, by Nora Case, which features a cast of ten black girls who are eliminated from the story one-by-one, sometimes in horrific ways (for example, one is burned alive, another is eaten by a bear). My project features contemporary black girls in various states of danger, to examine the language, history, and realities of race in America, and the unsettling ways in which black children specifically have been imagined in the American social economy over the past century.

### **5 Takes on African Art/ 42 Flags of Fred Wilson**

University Museum of Contemporary Art

Guest Curator, Curatorial Advisor

As a visiting curator and advisor for this exhibition, I worked with graduate students and the director of the UMCA to imagine and organize this remarkable exhibition of the Charles Derby Collection of African Art, and Fred Wilson's 42 Flags series of paintings. I also served as "Editor-In-Chief" of wall labels, text panels, and exhibition brochure entries.

## ADDITIONAL RECOGNITION, PRESS, ARTICLES

### **The Greenfield Recorder**

Jan 28, 2022. Feature Article: "An Artist Responds to Insurrection," by Allen Woods | Link: <https://www.recorder.com/Col-woods-ImehExhibit-44689525>

### **New England Public Media**

June 1, 2020. Requested Commentary: "Rioters Need Our Prayers and Activism—Not Our Criticism," written and delivered by Imo Imeh | Link: <https://www.nepm.org/post/rioters-need-our-prayers-and-activism-not-our-criticism#stream/0>

### **New England Public Media**

Feb. 12, 2018. Feature Story about 17 Years Boy: "Public Painting of Trayvon Martin Sparks Conversations about Racism on Campus," by Jill Kaufman. | Link: <https://www.nepm.org/post/public-painting-trayvon-martin-sparks-conversations-about-racism-campus#stream/0>

### **AISLIN Magazine (Cover Story, Cover Image)**

Spring 2019, Issue 005, The Color Issue

Cover Story: "Dr. Imo Nse Imeh: Exploring the Invisibility of Black Children Through Art"

Cover Image: Ovation, 2018 | Link: <https://www.aislinmagazine.com/imo-imeh>