

Artist Statement

Keimya Harris

Many black people like myself loved seeing someone that looked like us in the media and print. It was rare and few to see shows and media that embraced black culture no matter how big or small the role was. As a child in order to cope with the minimal amount of black media and print I decided to create my own stories and make black characters the forefront within my stories. When creating *The Protectors* it allowed me to create a new narrative that challenges having a white person as the main character and eliminates the trope of a white savior that also makes appearances in narratives about black people. Studying aspects of black culture allowed me to have a better understanding and portray it more effectively and accurately. *The Protectors* story focuses on the theme of self discovery and racial identity by creating parallels between our world and theirs. In the beginning stages of my creative process I generally start by figuring out what scenes would be memorable and help communicate the message I want to design. By producing these storyboards it helps me think about how to visually present each scene. Illustrator E. B. Lewis inspired me to produce work that made me want to design black characters with colors that make their skin tones contrast from the backgrounds in my work. The relevancy of this is to prevent them from being drowned out in the backgrounds. Maria Dimova's use of color and how she combines colors influence me to do the same in my work and to explore color theory. The pages are usually created with markers, watercolor, and digital media. The creation of this plot being exposed to the world will open up new opportunities and understanding of black culture. It can also open up the possibility of discussing issues of race and help my audience become honest with themselves. Through my work I hope this can assist the growth of black representation and challenge the way people perceive black culture.