

# Creating Social-Justice Themed Artwork

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

in Ferguson, Mo., and of Eric Garner, the black man who died in Staten Island, New York after an officer put him a headlock while arresting him that same year.

Okamoto even had a surreal meeting with President Donald Trump, whom she calls a “demagogue,” in the White House over the summer as part of being honored as a presidential scholar.

Though she agonized over whether to even attend the meeting, as she views the President’s policies as counter to her mission as an activist, she ultimately decided to go.

But in order to show Trump was not “untouchable,” the young artist said she wore an all white outfit punctuated with the names of victims of police violence, the dates of their deaths, symbols of the indictment process, and the names of the officers involved if they were acquitted.

“I was asked multiple times to change by so many different people. But I stood my ground,” Okamoto remembered.

As a digital artist, the canvas for Okamoto’s art is electronic. She said she was happy to have discovered the medium given its proclivity for being able to be reproduced for protests.

“I started creating work for Black Lives Matter, which was a huge part of what I was passionate about. And I got in contact with Teresa Raiford, who runs Don’t Shoot Portland, and I just started creating work with them,” the artist remembered.

“It’s the perfect medium for our time today where there’s such a big



Ameya Okamoto’s portrait of Quanice Hayes, an unarmed black 17-year-old who was killed by Portland Police in February 2017. The artwork was carried in protests by Don’t Shoot Portland and Black Lives Matter Portland following Hayes’ death. Okamoto even participated in the protests and presented the portrait to Hayes’ family at his memorial.

ARTWORK COURTESY AMEYA OKAMOTO

need for globalization of thoughts and idea around equity and diversity. Because we’re in a digital age and you can just screenshot and share,” Okamoto said.

Okamoto moved around a lot as a kid. That, combined with the stress of living in a low so-

cio-economic household under a single parent, caused her to struggle with some mental health is-

sues later on. In 2007, she moved to Portland, the whitest major city in America, a transition that was difficult for her as a person of color, she said.

She said it was super-jarring, “Coming from New York City, this Mecca for diversity.”

In high school, Okamoto advocated for other classmates impacted by mental health issues. She volunteered as a suicide and crisis hotline operator and as student peer sex educator for Planned Parenthood in Portland.

Now, the young activist is back living in New York City as a volunteer eighth grade math teacher for AmeriCorps. She’s taking a gap year while taking a college course online before entering school full time for art at Tufts University in Massachusetts.

When it comes to activism, Okamoto gives a lot of credit to Raiford, who “passed the megaphone” to her, both literally and metaphorically, during last year’s Reclaim Dr. King March in Portland on the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination.

During the April demonstration, Okamoto led the crowd in a chant and facilitated other kids’ testimony of experiencing racism or sharing their poems or songs.

“To be able to stand there and work with those kids and realize that even though you have the megaphone, passing it is the most important thing that I think someone can do,” she said.

For more information about Okamoto and her artwork, visit ameyamarie.com.



ARTWORK COURTESY AMEYA OKAMOTO

A digital portrait of Taliesin Namkai-Meche by Portland social justice artist Ameya Okamoto showcases one of the two victims who were fatally stabbed on a MAX train in northeast Portland in 2017 while trying to stop a man’s xenophobic and racist slurs directed at two young girls.

# 1480 KBMS

Take Us To Work, Home Or Play

Listen Live At [Portlandmedium.com](http://Portlandmedium.com)  
(Click On KBMS icon)

MONDAY - FRIDAY	SUNDAY
12 Midnight - 3 A.M. MIKE SHANNON	12 Midnight - 3 A.M. MIKE SHANNON
3 A.M. - 7 A.M. TOM JOYNER	3 A.M. - 6 A.M. TOYA BEASLEY
7 A.M. - 10 A.M. TONI TERRELL	6 A.M. - 12 NOON SUNDAY MORNING GOSPEL WANGELA
10 A.M. - 1 P.M. REV. AL SHARPTON (KEEPING IT REAL)	12 NOON - 1 P.M. HIGHLAND C.C. LIVE BROADCAST
1 P.M. - 3 P.M. KENNY SAGOFF	1 P.M. - 4 P.M. PAPA SMURF
3 P.M. - 7 P.M. D.L. HUGHLEY	4 P.M. - 12 Midnight DOUGLAS WILLIAMS
7 P.M. - 9 P.M. PAPA SMURF	
9 P.M. - 12 Midnight MIKE SHANNON	



Rev. Al Sharpton  
10am - 1pm



Tom Joyner  
3am - 7am



KBMS Radio  
1480 AM  
Portland's best music station