

DeQuan Whitley

Artist Bio

DeQuan Whitley is an Arkansas based Interdisciplinary Artist. With a primary focus on graphite portraiture and music production, these two serve as starting points for many of his projects. He chooses not to shrink himself with his creativity. Actively exploring countless mediums to express his ideas and thoughts.

He got his start drawing his favorite anime characters, graffiti tags, and realism portraits. Beginning only with a regular number 2 pencil, he grew his expertise and toolset over the years. Graphite pencils, alcohol and Posca markers, oil pastels, colored pencils and even photography. With some formal education through grade school art classes, he continued learning on his own after graduating. He always had a call to music but never pursued proper musical academia. A self-taught music artist, he would write down song lyrics alongside his portrait drawings. Often using symbols, slang, icons, and hip-hop styled graffiti.

Now an established artist, he has exhibited work in numerous shows. Most recently Local Color Studio Gallery 9th Anniversary (2024), CB Staff Art Show (2025 & 2026), and Hill Top Hip Hop Live at Six Twelve (2026).

He is currently still exploring ways to organically blend his passion for music creation with his devotion to traditional art. Curating a career that allows both disciplines to thrive without having to put one over the other.



From LR With Love, 8.5 x 11 inches, Graphite, NFS.

Artist Statement

I am an interdisciplinary artist with a focus on visual art and music. In my practice, the two are not separate; they influence each other. My visual work is centered in capturing the human form through realistic portraiture, while my music tells stories of my experiences navigating the world.

My process for portraits mirrors how I approach crafting songs. Layering tones, textures, and contrast similar to melodies, drums, and lyrics. Tweaking lights and shadows as if they were treble and bass. Gradients and lines are directed to shape features, like music notes are sequenced to shape a melody.

Although I enjoy the full anatomy of the human body, headshots and hands appear as a reoccurring theme in my work because I think they are the most expressive. Hand gestures often represent group names, areas of upbringing, and calls to action which are found in hip-hop music. A call to culture.

I sketch on whatever paper-like surfaces I have available until the ideas are fleshed out. I use an array of pencils from 4H-9b to build several layers of graphite to achieve a realistic effect during the final process.