

Nijel Binns

Biography 2019

Nijel Binns is an accomplished portrait sculptor and painter in the realist tradition. His artistic expressions includes three published books on the martial arts, a Screen Actors Guild membership for stuntwork and motion picture fight choreography for five films.

Born in Battersea, England in 1956 to African and Jamaican parents, Nijel became a United States citizen in the mid 60's. After his introduction to painting and sculpture at St. Benedict's Preparatory and Seton Hall Prep High schools in New Jersey, Nijel continued his education with independent study of great works of art. He received professional mentorship under master sculptor Felix De Weldon (best known for the *Iwo Jima Monument*), as well as mentorship under the senior African American sculptor Ed Dwight.

Nijel gained national acclaim with a commission to sculpt pop icon, Michael Jackson in 1990 for the "*Top Selling Artist of the Decade*" tribute. Also that year, Nijel received a commission from Motown Records to create the gold plated, *Maasai Princess* bronze sculpture for singer Stevie Wonder.

Additional portrait sculptures include a wax portrait sculpture of the late astronaut Colonel Ron McNair for the Great Blacks in Wax Museum in Baltimore, Maryland. Nijel has also created the only life-sized bronzed sculpture of the famous Hollywood icon, child actress Shirley Temple. The monument was unveiled at the 20th Century Fox Studios in 2002 along with Shirley Temple Black (1928 – 2014). The statue is referenced in the book "*Twentieth Century Fox, A Century of Entertainment*" by Michael Troyan. In Los Angeles, Nijel has created a life-sized bronze busts of Los Angeles retired Urban League President John W. Mack for the Los Angeles Urban League Headquarters, as well as a life sized bronze bust of Councilman retired Nate Holden for the Nate Holden Performing Arts Center in Los Angeles.

Nijel's large bas reliefs are found at the John W. Mack Elementary School, and at the Charmette Bonpua Skate Park in Los Angeles. On a smaller scale, Nijel produces yearly awards for the Los Angeles Urban League, and The Pan African Film Festival. He has also produced medallic art presented to legendary singer Celia Cruz, as well as medallions for the In The Meantime Men's Group in Los Angeles, and The American Society for Cell Biology in Bethesda, MD .

Nijel's largest public monument to date is the 16 ft. tall, two ton bronze "Mother of Humanity®" monument. It is a tribute to peace, a mother's loving-kindness, and the singularity of the human family. The monument was unveiled on Mother's Day, May 11, 1996 and is permanently installed at the Watts Labor Community Action Committee in Watts, CA.

In September 2015, Nijel's life-size bronze bust of the legendary African American pilot Colonel John Robinson was unveiled at the Ethiopian Aviation Academy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

On August 12, 2019 Nijel unveiled a monument to the Honorable Mervyn M. Dymally at the California State Capitol in Sacramento making it the first and only statue of and by an African American to be installed in the State Capitol. Replicas of the Mervyn M. Dymally bust are installed at California State

University Dominquez Hills, the Charles Drew School of Medicine, The Mervyn M. Dymally High School, and in his home town of Cedros, Trinidad.

In April, 2017, in East Los Angeles, Nijel's bronze *Hollenbeck Fallen Officers Memorial Monument* was commissioned by the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and installed at the Hollenbeck Division Police Station.

As founder and President of The Mother of Humanity Monument Foundation, Inc., a California based non-profit 501©(3) corporation, our goal is the building of a 313 ft. tall Mother of Humanity® Monument as an international gift from the people of the United States of America and the world, to the people of Africa.