

Artist Bio – Artlisia Bibbs aka Priestess Iyanifa Ifalano Iretiola

Visual and Performance Artist | Elder | Cultural Bearer | Griot

Iyanifa Ifalano Iretiola (Artlisia Bibbs) is a multidisciplinary artist, priestess, and cultural elder whose work is a powerful invocation of ancestral memory, cultural identity, and spiritual resilience. With practice rooted in both visual and performance art, she weaves the sacred into every thread, brushstroke, and ceremony she creates. Working in textile, oil, acrylic, pastel, sculpture, and collage, her art becomes a living archive of the African American experience and the spiritual traditions of the African diaspora.



Cultural Role & Spiritual Calling

Initiated as a priestess in 2021 into the **Egungun Egbe** of the historic Oyo Tunji African Village in Seabrook, South Carolina, Iyanifa Iretiola holds the honored title of **Yeye Isese**—"Mother of Tradition." As an Elder, she serves on the society's business, fundraising, and ritual committees, offering prayers, libations, and ceremonial guidance rooted in the Yoruba, Hoodoo, Wiccan, and Native spiritual traditions.

Her spiritual journey began in childhood, shaped by the hands and hearts of grandmothers, aunties, and elders who taught her to craft "Art in Motion" masquerade costumes, quilts, and ceremonial regalia that carried the wisdom of generations. These creations are not just adornments; they are rituals in fiber and form. Every stitch is a prayer, every fold a remembrance, each piece a vehicle for The Great Re-Membering—healing the fractures of the past through ancestral reconnection.

Master Artist & Educator

A master textile artist and costume maker, Iyanifa Iretiola's work honors the sacred symbolism of **Egungun** and traditional African spiritual regalia. She blends time-honored techniques with contemporary design, carefully selecting fabrics and materials that reflect spiritual status, ancestral presence, and cultural pride. Her sculptural works—often in clay—evoke African iconography, embodying themes of strength, resilience, and transformation.

Beyond her creative practice, she is a beloved educator and mentor. With decades of experience, she has trained and empowered a new generation of artists and spiritual practitioners. Through workshops, community art projects, and one-on-one mentorship, she passes down vital cultural knowledge, keeping the flame of tradition alive.

Artistic Philosophy & Storytelling

As a visual artist and griot, Iyanifa Iretiola channels the role of the traditional African storyteller—guardian of memory, wisdom, and truth. Her performance art incorporates music, movement, ritual, and spoken word to celebrate and confront the complexities of the African American journey.

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Each performance is a sacred act, calling forth the voices of the ancestors and echoing their legacy into the present.

Her work in public art, especially murals, has become a visual language for community upliftment and historical reflection. These large-scale works not only tell stories, but they also *witness* them, ensuring that the beauty, struggle, and brilliance of Black life is seen, felt, and remembered.

Artist Statement

"My work is rooted in spirit, born of memory, and fueled by love for my people. I create to honor the ancestors, to teach the children, and to heal what has been broken. Art is my altar, my activism, and my offering."

— Iyanifa Ifalano Iretiola