



YBCA. "Bay Area Now 9," YBCA, October 6, 2023.



Muzae Sesay
Bellevue Bandstand, 2023
Oil, oil pastel, vinyl emulsion, and colored pencil on canvas
59 x 59 in
149.9 x 149.9 cm

Muzae Sesay uses painting as a means of comprehending our relationship to space, community, and memory. Often depicting our designed environment, the artist synthesizes and flattens theories, images, and symbols into geometric compositions that provoke social reflection. With "A Prayer for Infrastructure," Sesay looks subjectively at our collective dependency on a 'higher power' to, in good faith, benevolently shape and sustain our built surroundings. Oakland's I-980 freeway is a central focus, as it is a clear example of structural redlining - separating and destroying neighborhoods as a weapon of marginalization against the prospering Black community of West Oakland. In the last decade, grassroots organizations have called for the freeway to be reconfigured as a boulevard for housing and landscaping. Sesay examines this history, reflecting on larger paradigms of urban planning and infrastructure.

Muzae is reflecting on different kinds of structures by which commerce, industry, and capital pass through neighborhoods, cities, counties. His critique isn't obvious; he's leaving it up to viewers to make informed interpretations.

"For me, inspiration truly comes from all aspects of life, and the Bay Area is rich in a type of life that bonds. Everything I do, everything I've seen, everyone I've known—all become inspirations to create and tell stories about connections." - Muzae Sesay