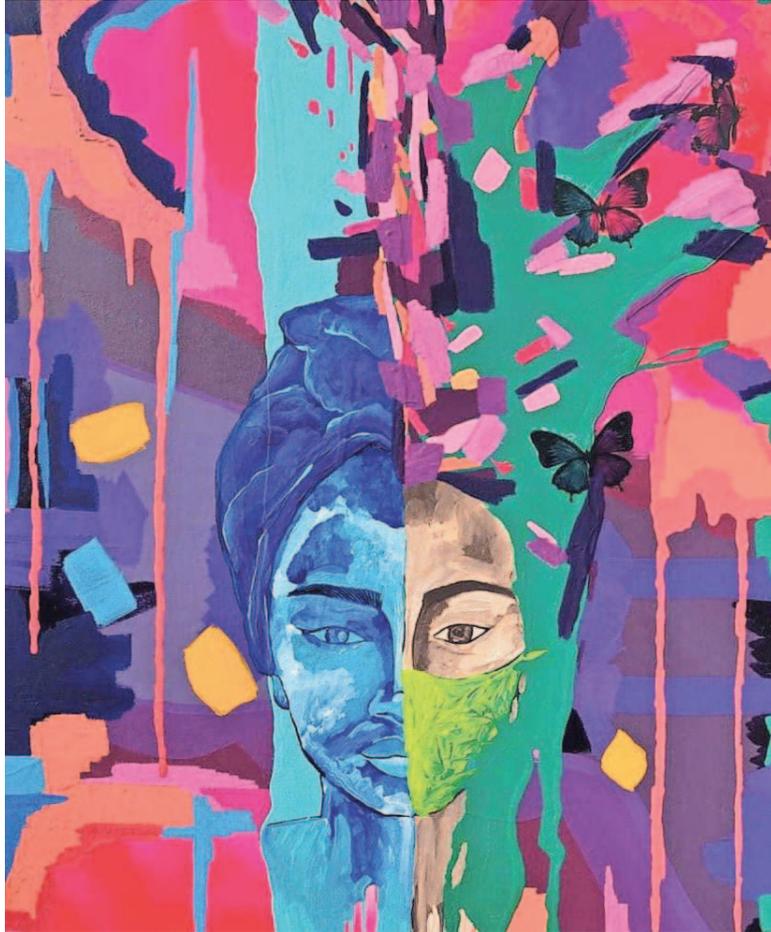


# PULLING TOGETHER



"Our Common Thread" by Jaime Hernandez is included in the LeMoyné Art & Soul auction.  
JAIME HERNANDEZ

## Artist sums up polarizing year in Art & Soul entry

**Amanda Sieradzki**  
Council on Culture & Arts

"The islands bleed through into my work," says painter Jaime Hernandez, who is this year's featured artist for LeMoyné Arts' Art & Soul Online Auction and Celebration.

Her piece, "Our Common Thread" depicts a woman divided in half, masked and unmasked, as fiery magenta, icy cobalt and tropical green drips of color cascade around her.

"If I can't use a hot color in a piece, I can't do it," adds Hernandez. "It's always there."

This year's Art & Soul Celebration will look different than in years past, culminat-

ing in an online auction on Oct. 15. Their "LeMasque!" theme is encapsulated in Hernandez's work.

For Hernandez, the polarizing summer of heated politics, a worldwide pandemic and protests against police brutality all came to the surface in her paintings. All proceeds from the auction will go towards LeMoyné's educational and community outreach programs.

Hernandez was grateful she visited her family in the Virgin Islands back in January, just months before international travel would halt globally. Her trip wasn't all celebratory however, as she went to lay her late mother's ashes to rest.

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The first piece in Jaime Hernandez's series, "Quarantine Queens," featured models donning neon bright masks and gloves. JAIME HERNANDEZ

## Art & Soul

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Hernandez credits her mother with giving her a creativity and passion for making. Her death kick-started Hernandez's drive to become a serious artist and put work out there to be sold and exhibited.

"For me it was a wake-up call," says Hernandez. "I wanted to keep that creativity alive. She was so young when she passed, so I told myself I had to stop sitting around and push myself to do this."

Hernandez's father was also a painter and artist. She remembers watching him at his canvas in the garage while her mother made ceramics. Walking around her hometown, she fell in love with street art and the colorful, graffiti-like motifs that would adorn the walls at Carnival.

These influences take root in her multi-media works that blend collaging with magazine paper and paint to create layered images. Hernandez enjoys working intuitively, and never sketches out a piece before she begins. Instead, she chooses colors that match her mood and pulls from pop culture and media to convey a narrative.

"Painting is like journaling for me," says Hernandez. "I'll have a mood that I'm in and I'll just decide to work that out somehow. I always choose colors first, then I'll go through the inventory in my head of things I've been thinking about doing and what colors would work well with that image."

Each piece takes a week or so to complete as Hernandez composes the canvas. She works with paper, tape and spray paint to layer and emulate the same aesthetic a wall plastered in posters or graffiti might have in a busy cityscape. When it comes to images, she is drawn to mid-century icons like Audrey Hepburn and models from various fashion magazines.

At the start of quarantine, Hernandez used humor to express how she was feeling in her paintings.

Her first piece in the series, "Quarantine Queens," featured models donning neon bright masks and gloves and a spray painted, "COVID-19 sux" running right down the middle. As time progressed however, Hernandez started taking a more focused approach which ultimately led to "Our Common Thread."

"That was the final piece about quarantine and that was the most serious one," says Hernandez. "I suggested this piece because I hoped it would make people think more. Anything that moves you is art, so if you're moved by a piece, you're gaining something positive."

The LeMoyné-featured painting was a first for Hernandez as she didn't use any paper, relying instead on acrylic paint to bring each texture to life. She used a resin varnish to brighten the colors in the finish and worked from a reference image for the portrait of the young woman's face.

In spite of the constant barrage of news 2020 has wrought — the good, the bad, and the in between —



Jaime Hernandez has work in LeMoyné's online Art & Soul auction. JAIME HERNANDEZ

### If you go

**What:** 2020 Art & Soul Online Auction and Celebration

**When:** 5:30-7:30 p.m., Oct. 15

**Contact:** For more information on the online silent and live auction, please visit <http://www.lemoyne.org/art--soul-celebration.html>.

Hernandez remains hopeful. She sees strength in artists who continue to persevere and make work, and is happy to be able to contribute and draw the community together to support one of our staple art institutions.

"At the end of the day, as many things as we have on our list that keep us separated, we are all going through 2020 together," says Hernandez. "It has made us all think, work and act differently, and I think out of something that is so polarizing in every dynamic otherwise, at least we can pull together that we're all experiencing it together. The more we pull from our commonalities, the easier it will be for us to communicate with one another."

*Amanda Sieradzki is the feature writer for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area's umbrella agency for arts and culture ([www.tallahasseearts.org](http://www.tallahasseearts.org)).*