



## On Representational Justice and The Superhero Project

By Amanda D. King

“The endeavor to affirm the dignity of human life cannot be waged without images, without representational justice.” – Sarah Lewis, Author and Assistant Professor of History of Art and Architecture and African American Studies at Harvard University

Representational justice is an artistic practice that uses image-making to honor the full humanity of people of color. Practitioners of representational justice use artistic production to counter dominant narratives about race and power by showing the beauty, dignity and strength of communities at the margins of society.

Representational justice reclaims space in visual culture for people who are systematically excluded from full participation in society. For youth especially, it is an opportunity to say in the face of othering, “I am beautiful.” Interventions around race and politics are orchestrated through images. To see the full spectrum of marginalized individual identities represented in images is to free us all from our nation’s history of inhumanity and to usher us into a more just and equitable future.

The Superhero Project brings representational justice to the community by visually transforming youth of color facing serious illnesses or disabilities into the superheroes they are inside – limitless in power and brave in the face of injustice. The superhero alter egos created by the youth reimagine self-portraiture; they function to affirm their dignity and counter stereotypes about disabilities. Above all, they elevate youth of color with disabilities from one of the most marginalized and excluded groups in society to the most celebrated protectors of the universe. Their visions motivate us all to use our talents to effect change in the struggle for racial equity and justice.



Shooting  
w/o  
Bullets

**Amanda D. King** is an artist, activist and educator. Her artistic practice involves analog photography, creative direction, public art and arts education as activism. Her work explores black subjectivity and seeks to awaken society to the enduring struggles and residual strengths of black people. She is interested in the nexus between the individual experiences of black folks and the systemic issues of race, gender and socioeconomics that affect us all. In a society that weaponizes blackness to maintain white supremacy, she uses imagery as a force to compel racial equity and justice.

Amanda has a law degree from Case Western Reserve University where she received the Martin Luther King, Jr., Diane Ethics, and Dean’s Community Service Awards. She uses her public platform and creative talents to advocate for systemic change in Cleveland’s public policy and arts ecosystem.