

Ayanna Muata

As a young woman growing up on the South side of Chicago, Ayanna was baptized as an infant and attended Catholic schools from K through 12th grade. Surrounded by priests and nuns and immersed in Catholic culture for the first 17 years of her life, Ayanna considered becoming a Catholic nun herself. Instead she chose to marry and bear 2 sons. Her "ministry" comes out now in compassionate actions like listening to those who feel less heard, seeing those who are often less visible in society, and finding ways to bridge the gaps that so often divide us.

As a visual artist, she explores the use of refuse or litter in the urban environment as illuminated icons of both interior and exterior spaces, with a measured stillness. She sees all mediums as a way to move through the adversity and trauma that so often happens in life to get to that place of healing.

The slow, repetitive quality of her work counteracts the accelerating pace of racial discrimination and climate emergency. As such, she offers a lens for reconsidering pressing global issues in a penetrating, contemplative way.

