

Artist's Statement

For me as the artist, the Better World Proxe is not just about depicting the injustices our black brothers and sisters have suffered over the years. It is the depicting the pain, the cries, and the hope of some of my dearest friends-- pastors, artists, community leaders-- who are black and taught me about the pain and beauty of their story long before Black Lives Matter became a formalized movement.

As I think about my heart's stirrings amidst the BLM movement, I think of my church community at the Elm City Vineyard in New Haven, CT. I was loved in ways that confronted my internalized racism towards black Americans. My closest friendships were with black men and women who taught me more deeply what it meant to be an artist, a Christian, a person of color, and a friend. They taught me to simultaneously care for the poor as well as the brightest of university minds. This experience taught and moved me deeply to repent of my racial brokenness and seek racial reconciliation.

Being forgiven and loved by my black brothers and sisters changed my outlook on my country. I have become a man of God who can tell the truth of the pain of racism in our country but also say there is hope in Christ Jesus. Only Jesus can free the oppressed and the oppressor to break open a new world that is here but also that is to come. My black brothers and sisters have displaced fear and inserted Jesus' love and healing into my life. I have never felt more alive. I have never seen so much pain but at the same time so much joy to press on. I have never experienced so much tension but also so much love from one community. I have experienced mercy, patience with honesty, love that is overflowing and a joyous celebration after such tremendous pain. These experiences have woven themselves permanently into my art and made it richer and fuller. I have walked, lived, and communed with angels for years. I walk with my black brothers and sister who cry out the refrain Black Lives Matter because Jesus walks with them.

Shin Maeng



Shin Maeng hails from Cambridge, Massachusetts. He started seeing faces and profiles in knotholes 25 years ago. His "urban-stained-glass" look is inspired from comic books, the pictures he sees as he prays for his community and the city, and video games. He is currently a student at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston. Shin has served as the artist-in-residence at campus ministry conferences across the country. He is also the artist that helped create the Story Project, Urbana's Proxe featured in the bookstore.

To learn more about Shin's art, go to www.shinhappens.com

About the Medium

This drawing was hand-drawn with ink and marker onto a paper. The drawing was then scanned and converted into an electronic file in Adobe Illustrator, where the colors were added.

Graphic Design: Laura Juranek, Sarah Shin