

NINA CHANEL ABNEY

Nina Chanel Abney's painting practice spans a variety of forms: from canvases to playgrounds to fashion. She is perhaps best known for her large-scale public murals, whose improvisational, brightly-colored compositions channel the velocity of the information age. A vibrant language of graphic signs drawn from the internet, popular culture, and social media articulates the energy of viral content. At the same time, the interaction of dynamic forms conveys the fatiguing and seemingly inescapable conditions of life below the surface impression. The artist describes her playful, yet nonetheless challenging artwork as "easy to swallow and hard to digest."

Through abstract figuration, text, and symbols, Abney mines the concept of public image, drawing on a variety of sources beyond fine art, such as mainstream media, celebrity news, cartoons, music, and other content that tumbles through the news cycle. Here, she collages colorful vinyl cutouts into a storyboard of the contemporary moment, asking what it means to level the playing field: politically as well as socioeconomically. A checkerboard pattern grounds the various characters (or players) in the narrative, referencing the historical, structural, and cultural impediments to progressive politics—inequality, segregation, and discrimination—both locally and nationwide.

Nina Chanel Abney (b. 1982 in Chicago) earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Augustana College in 2004, where she studied computer science and studio art, and earned her Master of Fine Arts at Parsons School of Design in 2007. She currently lives in New York.

Organized by Ellen Tani, Assistant Curator

Support provided, in part, by Jean-François and Nathalie Ducrest.

#NinaChanelAbney

All exhibition texts are accessible at www.icaboston.org/exhibitions/nina-chanel-abney, or by scanning the QR code below.

