

Artist Statement

For the last 15 years, Alicia Cosnahan's art has created an exciting change in DC's public art and lives of many local young residents. Her unique approach combines education, public art and a new way of exploring living environments. Born in Belgium and raised as an Army Brat in Germany, she has traveled the world, studying art and lifestyles of the locals. When she studied Bavarian folk art and traditional cuckoo clock making, or walking through the same gardens and flower fields that Monet and Van Gogh walked, she dreamed of bringing the beauty and cultural richness to the cities in the United States and exposing the young generation to culture of creativity and exploration.

In 2000's, DC was a blank canvas full of abandoned and vacant spaces. Too shy to bring her drawings and paintings to galleries, Alicia started installing her canvases and drawings onto the boarded up buildings and vacant lots. This act of selfless and radical improvement of the public space has inspired a new policy development and resulted in the contemporary mural scene and an acceptance of art being outside of the museum and galleries and available to the people.

Alicia's goal is to inspire the young generation to love and respect art, because it is the most important driving force in social and cultural progress. Being one of the first DC street artists and muralist and creating the DC's largest mural, she has reached out to thousands of DC children through the talks in schools, workshops and summer camps. While teaching art, she enriches their lives and improves the environment they live in.

With the firsthand experience of teaching students in juvenile detention centers and neighborhoods with limited opportunities, Alicia demonstrates a unique ability to captures the strength of a child's spirit, their eagerness to succeed, and the joy of a child's imagination through these life-size works on canvas. From a street corner with abandoned toys, a girl roller skating on a hot summer day and a ten-year-old girl with an oversized yellow bow each piece further the emotional connection between the artist and the children.

As a muralist, her style utilizes the significance of symbolic imagery to convey the story with simplicity and frankness. Her murals and teachings partner with science and allow the kids to see the beauty in things beyond even what the eye can see. Depicting a flat rendering style and rudimentary expression of perspective, Alicia provides a visual documentary of this community, "It is about celebrating the neighborhood and the individuals who make it so great," she explains. These stories are what makes Alicia's DC experience so unique. Through abstract and natural representation of the neighborhood and street scenes, she captures the spirit of the community and those cherished moments shared.