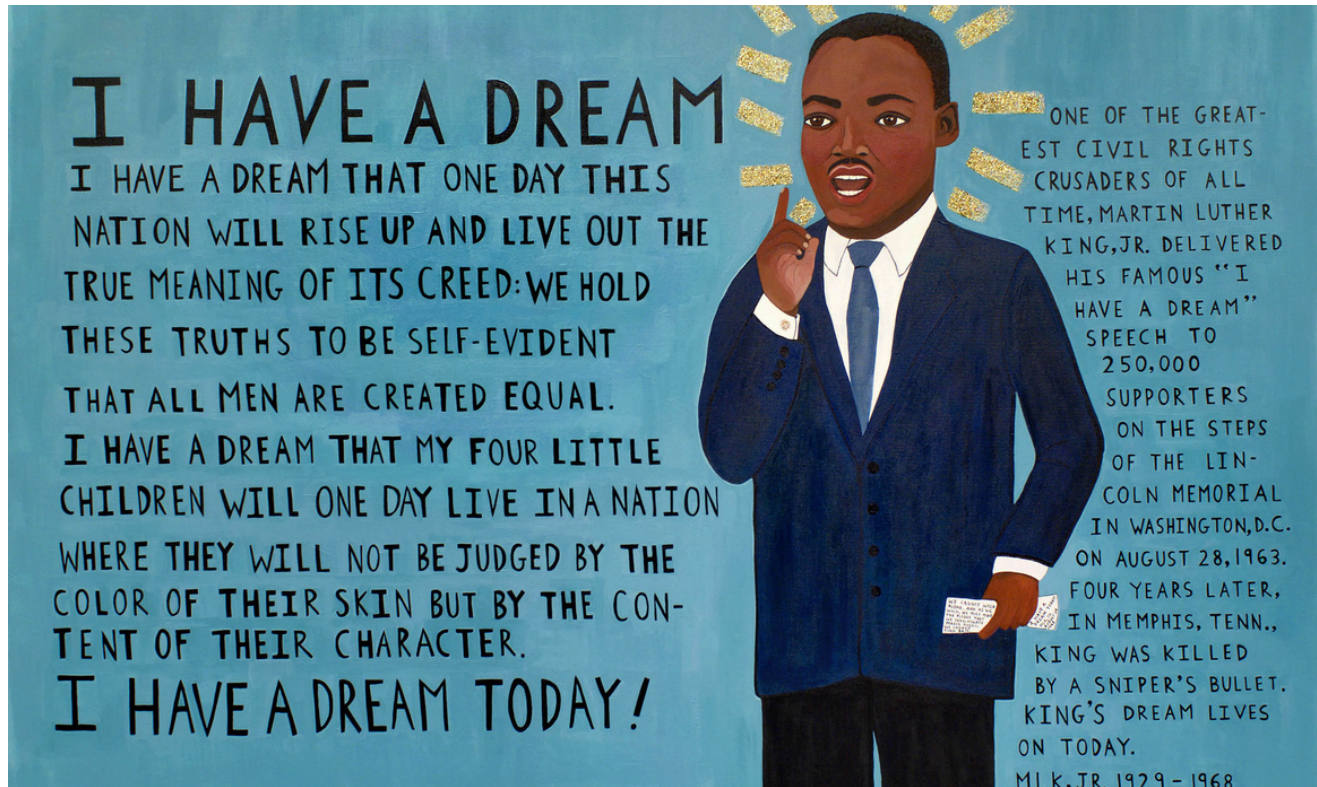

Baret Boisson



Above:
MLK Jr. - "I Have a Dream"
2007
Acrylic and glitter on canvas, 60 x 72 inches
National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis, Tennessee

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Baret Boisson is a self-taught painter who is best known for portraits that capture the authentic character of her subjects. Her paintings portray a wide range of people, from historic icons to present day luminaries to private individuals who are out of the public eye. She combines an optimistic, vibrant palette, witty use of text and the aesthetics of folk art to create artworks that exuberantly declare her belief in a better tomorrow.

Born in Florence, Italy, Boisson's childhood and teen years were vibrantly nomadic. As her family moved from Italy to Barcelona to Suriname and later to French Guyana, Boisson absorbed each new place with all of her senses. This diverse and multicultural upbringing would eventually become a key component of Boisson's artistic vision.

With a keen desire to encourage communication between people and to share their stories, Boisson imagined a career in international politics. While she majored in political science at Barnard College in New York City, it would take another 10 years before she realized that her passion for fostering mutual understanding and respect between people would find its ultimate expression in the form of being an artist.

Boisson first took up painting at age 30 when in an effort to cheer her up, a friend in Los Angeles invited her over for a glass of wine. He had laid out some art boards, paintbrushes and paint on the floor, and while they listened to music, Boisson completed a painting that very evening. It was the first time that she had picked up a paintbrush, and she likens the experience to a fish finding water. Since the completion of that first painting—a portrait of two boys—Boisson has dedicated herself to making art.

Today, Boisson is best known for her portraits that capture the authentic character of her subjects, which range from historic icons to private individuals. In 2016 her powerful portrait series *Inspiring Greatness* was the subject of a solo show at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee. This series—which features paintings on canvas, ceramics and painted cigar boxes—combines the image of a notable figure with painted text, whether excerpts from biographical information to a speech or a phrase for which they are known.

Right: *Emma González*, 2018, acrylic and glitter on canvas
16 x 20 inches, Collection of Debby Peterson

Below: *Source of Wonder*, 2018, spray paint, acrylic and glitter on canvas, 36 x 58 inches



Attended by over 100,000 visitors, the exhibition brought together over 25 of her portraits of men and women who have advanced the cause of social justice, from Gandhi to Rosa Parks to Billie Jean King. Following the exhibition, Boisson's painting of Martin Luther King, Jr. was acquired by the Museum and is now part of its permanent collection. The National Civil Rights Museum is a fitting permanent home for this portrait as it is located at the Lorraine Motel, where Dr. King was assassinated in 1968.

As *Inspiring Greatness* is an ongoing series that keeps pace with living history, Boisson has recently completed portraits of gun control activist Emma González, climate activist Greta Thunberg and the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, among others.

The artist also has an abstract painting practice in which she explores the freedom that nonrepresentational work allows. The abstract paintings retain the exuberance of the portraits while elevating color and form to the role of principal subjects.

Boisson currently divides her time between Southampton, New York, Santa Barbara, California and Paris, France.

