

Artist Statement: 27th Annual Exhibition of Artists in Michigan Prisons

Artist Name: Michael Dean

I like to paint allegory images. I want the viewer to come up with a story. The forms and exact replica of a person or animal are not rendered exactly as they should be. But that is part of the story. My images are both real and fantasy. The first image that I painted is titled "Beautiful Noise." This image is of my friend as he plays his guitar. The bird sings along as God intended them to, and the angels join in with the band. The noise is beautiful to God. The next image, "Life's a Picnic," is of a mother holding her son as animals eat ice cream and enjoy the day that God has made. A picnic is a joyful moment trapped in time. We inmates are the animals facing a day of joy and also heartache. We long to be free to enjoy a life with our friends and loved ones. But we are trapped in this place, unable to escape a reality that we have made. The last image, but far from least is called "Never." It shows a white man sitting on his horse as Black people pick cotton. The bird looks on as the workers slave away. The sad fact is that this has occurred in life, and people treated others like animals and property. I do not know which ones will be picked but these are the ones I painted.