

Rethinking our contemporary consciousness regarding Black America is Washington D.C.-based artist Melvin Nesbitt Jr. Through a combination of mixed media and collage works, Nesbitt takes on the role of storyteller as he invites us into the intimate moments of his youth. An exploration of memory, he subverts the notion that the Black experience is inherently filled with trauma and subjugation and instead celebrates the culture and community that perseveres.

Born in South Carolina in the 1980s, he was raised in a public housing neighborhood until the 6th grade before relocating to the more rural environment of Spartanburg. Despite poverty and inequality that still persists today, he found joy in his friends, family, and community throughout his childhood. It was at this young age that he discovered a passion for drawing. For decades he practiced, entirely self-taught he gained the basic foundations of his practice. Determined to find his artistic voice, he took painting and drawing classes at the University of the District of Columbia and Washington Studio School. However, it was not until he took a workshop in collage, as a means to better prepare his painting compositions and save the costly resources that kept him from experimenting with his work, that he found his creative stride. In the textures, patterns, and found material his distinctive style emerged.

His evocative works have led to his exhibiting throughout the United States at institutions such as the Museum of Contemporary African Diaspora Art (MOCADA). He has also been an Art Bank grantee, a fellow with the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and has worked in permanent collections including the Spartanburg County Public Library in South Carolina. He is currently represented by Richard Beavers Gallery in New York.