



Adlai E. Stevenson High School

VISITING ARTIST: JOSEPH RENDA JR.

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Website: www.jrenda-art.com

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Artist Bio

Joseph Renda Jr. is a Chicago-based artist whose paintings capture the inherent connection humans have with the natural world. His work is highly realistic, bringing detailed depictions to life by juxtaposing them alongside surrealistic imagery. He urges his audience to surrender to nature's "pull" and connect with their roots while viewing his paintings.

Inspired by leaders in surrealism including Salvador Dali and Rene Magritte, Renda often depicts the human form interwoven with illusive natural elements. His use of classical oil painting methods combined with modern mediums, such as spray paint, provide his work with a distinct combination of old and new artistic techniques. Some of his pieces are transferred to large scale murals, placing his work alongside its most significant inspiration—the outside world.

Renda first attracted attention for his work while in high school, claiming first-place honors in the 2012 Congressional Art Competition. He entered the American Academy of Art with a focus on illustration, but embraced fine art and oil painting at the urging of his instructor and mentor Anthony Adcock, earning his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2018. Renda is represented by Chicago's Vertical Gallery and has recently exhibited his debut sold out solo exhibit "Biophilia" this past June. Renda has also curated and shown innumerable group exhibitions both at home and abroad, created public murals and graced the pages of magazines including New York's Creative Bloch. In addition, he owns and operates ArtBuilds LLC, an artist service and woodworking company.

Artist Statement

My work captures the innate human desire to connect with nature through a surrealistic lens and tells a story that looks toward a greater collective future. My work transforms landscapes into intricate pieces that blur the lines between the physical separations of humans and the natural world. Human subjects are depicted with characteristics found in nature, portraying flora and fauna in an illusive, 'dreamlike' world. In this way, I emphasize that nature is a welcoming setting for the human form thus urging my viewers to explore the human race's continuous impact on nature, and call to mind our duty to keep this connection thriving for generations to come.