

Chanelle René

Statement

My practice has long lived in the language of painting—layered, atmospheric, and rooted in figurative storytelling. With *Fractured*, I extend that language into sculpture, translating my interest in texture, emotional depth, and narrative into a fully dimensional, tactile form. This work marks a deliberate expansion: a shift from surfaces that suggest touch to a structure that actively invites it.

Fractured takes the form of a deconstructed bird wing, enlarged and broken open to reveal its internal tensions. Constructed from wire mesh, plaster, up-cycled fiber, and semi-precious gemstones, the piece holds a duality—strength and fragility, adornment and rupture. The materials are intentionally varied: rigid mesh against soft fabric, rough plaster against reflective surfaces, each element contributing to a layered sensory experience. Touch becomes a way of understanding, not just observing.

The work is inspired by *Why Does the Caged Bird Sing* by Maya Angelou, reflecting on the emotional

and psychological dimensions of confinement and the persistent, embodied yearning for freedom. The fractured wing suggests both limitation and resistance—what it means to be held back, and the quiet, enduring impulse to move beyond. This tension echoes throughout my broader practice, where I explore identity, belonging, and emotional presence, often through the lens of Black cultural narratives and lived experience.

Participating in *More Than Touch* feels deeply aligned with my evolving practice and values. I believe art should be accessible—not only conceptually, but physically and sensorially. Much of my painting work already leans into texture, layering, and atmosphere to evoke feeling; this exhibition offers an opportunity to push that intention further, engaging the body as an active participant in the work. It also gave me the space to step into sculpture in a meaningful way, something I've been called toward but had not yet fully realized.

In *Fractured*, I aim to create an experience that slows the viewer down, encouraging curiosity, closeness, and connection. By engaging touch, the work asks us to move beyond passive viewing

and into a more intimate exchange—one that mirrors the emotional depth and vulnerability at the core of my practice. Ultimately, this piece continues my commitment to creating spaces where people can feel, reflect, and recognize parts of themselves—now, not only through sight, but through the language of the senses.