

# SISTRUNK *Art N Soul*

**FORT LAUDERDALE, FL - -** Sistrunk Boulevard is getting a face lift starting with six local artists from the Art N Soul organization. Al Huggins, the artists' representative and founder of Art N Soul, indicated that the plan is to have six murals painted on buildings throughout the boulevard. Huggins is working with the business owners to start the beginning of an art renaissance for the community.

It is duly noted in city planning that art is a major factor in the revitalization of neighborhoods and the culture within a community. "Our mission at Art n Soul is to work directly with artists to bridge the gap between the artists and the community, by encouraging partnerships with key community members as an outlet for exposing our artists' masterpieces. It is Huggins' hope that the already established Art Walks with FATVillage and the MASS District will eventually move westward onto Sistrunk and become a vibrant community both for business, the community and the artists.

Hazel Mitchell and her husband Rev. Lonnie Young are the founders of the Little Leaders Learning Academy LLC WWJD. They are the first business owners to partner with Huggins and the artist. Mitchel says, "We are praying that other Black and white business owners in this community will see this vision and allow and help this organization "The Art N Soul Artists" to spread the art through the community."

The Little Leaders Learning Academy LLC currently adorns the art work of Wilbert Simpson Jr.. This work was completed in the month of February and each month a different business will be partnered with an artist.

Simpson is the first art to complete work in this partnership. I asked Simpson what was the source of his inspiration for the mural. He indicated that he wanted to send a message to students that they should study, work hard, imagine and laugh.

Simpson's artist statement shares his first experience with art: "At the age of 11, I developed my love for art from watching my older brother draw. I begged him to teach me how to draw, so he gave me a pencil and paper, and then told me to draw what I see."

"Since then, I've been drawing what I see, what's in my head, and what's in front of me. I strayed away from drawing while I was in school, until I reached high school and took an art 2D class to fill my electives. When time came to pick a college, I was looking into music schools, and then I prayed about it and asked God to give me some sort of direction and help me decide if I should pursue music, sports, or art.

"I was accepted at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale, so I took a chance with my art. I went for graphic design, but enjoyed the hand drawing classes and fine arts more than I enjoyed the graphic design classes."

"I never got the chance to take a class in painting, but I was in love with the idea of one day making it a part of my life. I bought some paint brushes and began to paint. I admit it was very challenging at first, because I was used to seeing results within the first few minutes. Through painting I learned how to be patient."

To see the work from Simpson, simply visit the Little Leaders Learning Academy. We will continue to follow the Art N Soul Project as each business and mural is completed.



Visit [www.myartnsoul.com](http://www.myartnsoul.com) to learn more about the artists and the Art N Soul Mission for its artists' and the community.

**Artists of all ages have a message to share in helping eradicate this epidemic that is affecting our community. Broward County has the highest AIDS Rates in the USA!**



Choreographer Alvin Ailey is renowned for popularizing modern dance through his world-famous company, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. He passed away from AIDS-related diseases at 58. SOURCE: Blackdoctor.org

**Alvin Ailey (January 5, 1931 – December 1, 1989)**

