

Seattle Artist Transforms Memory of 'Ghetto Food Culture' Into Powerful Commentary on Food Justice and Cultural Survival

Visual artist Deycha Nhtae's commissioned work explores how marginalized communities create sustenance and identity when industrial food systems fail them

SEATTLE, WA, UNITED STATES, May 22, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In Southeast D.C. housing projects, pickled eggs and sunflower seeds weren't just snacks—they were survival. Now, Seattle-based visual artist Deycha Nhtae has transformed that childhood memory into a stunning abstract still life that challenges how we think about food, culture, and resilience.

Nhtae's commissioned artwork, created for Northwest Harvest's #ArtistsForFoodJustice series, illuminates a rarely discussed aspect of American food culture: how communities create nourishment and meaning when systemic inequities leave neighborhoods "desolate of whole and less processed food."

"My abstract still life addresses a memory of the sustenance that pickled eggs and sunflower seeds provided in low-income projects in Washington, D.C.," explains Nhtae, a queer, Black visual artist whose work fuses abstraction and collage to explore ancestral memory and cultural reclamation. "This is an element of ghetto food culture that nourished me when the industrial food system and manufactured inequity left our neighborhoods desolate."



Artist Deycha Nhtae's abstract still life interpreting the theme 'Food is Culture,' reflects how food traditions become sacred through repetition, storytelling, and shared experience—particularly in diasporic and displaced communities.

The piece is part of Northwest Harvest's year-long campaign The Meaning of Food, which explores how food shapes identity, connection, and justice across Washington state communities. May's theme, "Food is Culture," examines how culinary traditions preserve identity, resist erasure, and nourish community across generations—particularly for communities historically marginalized in food systems.

A New Lens on Food Justice

Nhtae's work offers a perspective often missing from mainstream food justice conversations: the reverence and ingenuity embedded in survival foodways. Rather than viewing corner store staples through a lens of deficit, the artist celebrates adaptation and community care.

"My goal is to highlight the issue while shedding beautiful, reverential light on the ways we adapted to feed ourselves well despite it all," says Nhtae, who contextualizes these food systems as part of a broader disconnection from land stewardship that began with the displacement of both African Americans and Indigenous peoples.

The artist's interpretation has already resonated powerfully across digital platforms—Northwest Harvest's behind-the-scenes Instagram reel featuring Nhtae's artistic process became the organization's most-shared post ever, suggesting hunger for these nuanced conversations about food, culture, and survival.

Addressing Food Insecurity Through Cultural Understanding

The collaboration comes as food insecurity remains a persistent challenge in Washington and nationwide, with Black, Indigenous, and immigrant communities facing disproportionate barriers. Northwest Harvest distributes food to more than 350 partners throughout Washington state while working to address hunger at its systemic roots.

"Part of that effort requires shifting the narrative—broadening understanding that hunger results not from poor choices but from inequitable systems," states Natasha Dworkin, Northwest Harvest's Director of Communications.



Deycha Nhtae is a self-taught, multidisciplinary visual artist, teacher, and cultural worker. Her abstract figurative work draws on ancestral memory and the revolutionary spirit of Ghetto culture.

#ArtistsForFoodJustice: Amplifying Voices at the Intersection

The monthly collaboration series highlights Washington-based BIPOC artists whose work amplifies connections between food, equity, and culture. Each artist brings their unique perspective to monthly themes exploring different aspects of food's meaning in community life.

Nhtae, a self-taught, multidisciplinary artist who teaches at Pratt Fine Arts Center and has collaborated with Seattle Art Museum and Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, represents the kind of voice the series aims to center: artists whose lived experience informs powerful commentary on systemic issues.

Getting Involved

Community members can learn more about the yearlong Meaning of Food campaign and the #ArtistsForFoodJustice initiative, view Nhtae's interpretation of May's theme "Food is Culture," and share their own food stories at northwestharvest.org/meaning-of-food. The campaign continues through December 2025, with a new artist collaboration announced each month. Follow the campaign, meet the artists, and submit stories to Northwest Harvest on Instagram at [@NWHarvest](https://www.instagram.com/NWHarvest).

About Deycha Nhtae

Deycha Nhtae (she/they) is a self-taught, multidisciplinary visual artist, teacher, and cultural worker based in Seattle. Born and raised in Southeast D.C., her abstract figurative work draws on ancestral memory and the revolutionary spirit of community survival. She teaches at Pratt Fine Arts Center and has collaborated with Seattle Art Museum and Seattle Office of Arts and Culture.

About Northwest Harvest

Northwest Harvest is an anti-racist, anti-oppression organization committed to transforming an unjust food system into one that is more responsive and accountable to communities most impacted by discrimination. Beyond food distribution, the organization works to shift public opinion and impact institutional policies that perpetuate hunger and poverty in Washington state. Learn more at www.northwestharvest.org.

High-resolution artwork and artist interviews available upon request. Media interested in sustained coverage of this year-long community dialogue can email media@northwestharvest.org.

Natasha Natasha
Northwest Harvest
+1 2067151696

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/815158251>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.