

ON THE COVER

Planet Storm by Courtney Worley

This article is based on a video interview with the artist on August 2, 2022.

Courtney Worley, the artist who created *Planet Storm*, the cover art for this issue of *American Psychologist*, has spent nearly all her life in Alabama; yet, her art transports us and asks us to explore far broader inner and outer destinations. Some of Worley's work focuses on the human body and inner sensations such as hunger and explores dimensions of our cognitions and inner lives. Other pieces prompt us to engage with the broader world outside ourselves.

As an example of the outer world, *Planet Storm* utilizes fluid art (sometimes called pour art) in which liquid is added to acrylic paint to thin it and allow it to flow more easily across the canvas. This painting, like planet Earth, suggests many types and intensities of weather. It conveys the process of being weathered and gradually changing. The presence of landmarks, identifiable features in the geography, hints that they too will change over time. The picture asks us to perceive the movement and change in the planet, and to contemplate whether we can, should, or must tolerate those changes. This piece is very timely as we experience the impacts of climate change across our own planet and grapple with its effects and our actions, past and future.

Worley's art integrates vivid colors seen in nature with an eye to their universal connotations. For example, her color choices are often inspired by her international travel, to places such as the Caribbean and Iceland. Blue, a favorite color of the artist, is presented in its diverse shades and tones, as we reflect, for example, upon warm seas or ice caves. She approaches art as therapeutic and healing and wants us to experience it mindfully, without judgment, by attending to positive and negative reactions and the introspection that it prompts.

Worley showed early promise artistically, winning prizes in elementary school. She describes herself as self-taught, with mentors who help to guide her work. Early in her

journey, she focused on realism and landscape painting inspired by the natural beauty of rural Alabama. In the last several years, she has moved to abstract forms inspired by places, experiences, and natural colors that seem unreal in the environment. She posts some of this artistic journey on her website courtneyandacanvas.pixels.com and on social media (@CourtneyandaCanvas).

The artist, who creates under the name Courtney and a Canvas, is also a board-certified clinical psychologist, Courtney Worley, PhD ABPP, MPH, whose work as a psychologist focuses on evidence-based psychotherapies in veterans. She delivers care exclusively via telehealth in the Department of Veterans Affairs at the VISN 4 Telemental Health HUB. Worley also has a special detail assignment with the National Center for PTSD as the training program coordinator for the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs' dissemination of written exposure therapy. Her undergraduate degree is from Samford University, and she has a master's in public health from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her PhD in clinical psychology is from The University of Alabama. She completed her internship in health psychology at the University of Florida Health Sciences Center.

There are, of course, many ways in which being an artist and a psychologist can be related with creativity and purpose informing both practices. Worley understandably balances these roles and the boundaries between them in her daily life, professional practice, and her art. Embodying the artist's mindful approach to *Planet Storm*, we can observe, experience, and reflect upon the changes in nature. We can ponder the very real implications of these changes for ourselves and our planet.

 Anne E. Kazak
Art Editor