

# CHECK OUT THIS

# SUCCESS

# STORY!



## Glennisha Dawkins, **The Art of Purpose**

On the homepage of Glennisha Dawkins' website is a self-portrait: wheelchair and sip & puff mouthpiece prominent, hands and feet lax, her body propped up. But the subject is faceless. Many artists are truth-tellers. On any given day this portrait could be me, or you.



Glennisha Dawkins, Artist and Author

Fifteen years ago Glennisha was a high school basketball star. Her skill and promise had earned her an athletic scholarship to Florida A&M University. She dreamed of playing basketball overseas after graduation.

In 2010, her freshman year, driving home from university, a collision catapulted Glennisha twenty-five feet from her vehicle. She woke up in the hospital unable to use her arms and legs.

Adjusting to life as a quadriplegic is a challenge no one expects. While Glennisha eventually returned to college to earn her BA in psychology she struggled to find a way to express her ambitious and optimistic nature. Voc/Rehab presented options, mostly careers with call centers. Glennisha appreciated their guidance but felt it was limiting, too "hidden". She wanted to be seen.

In a dark moment, Glennisha searched on YouTube for inspiration and found a video of a quadriplegic artist who painted with his mouth. Although Glennisha had no artistic experience, the familiar and perpetual fire she had felt playing basketball was reignited.

## **Glennisha Dawkins, *The Art of Purpose*** Continued

Glennisha discovered she was a good artist, but she wanted to be great. Valuing learning by doing - so much of her progress post-accident was through trial and error - she took to social media for feedback. The response was positive. People asked if her work was for sale. Glennisha posted a portrait she'd painted of a popular musician. To Glennisha's surprise, the musician responded with praise. The post went viral. The uptick in audience was rewarding but the validation of Glennisha's work and unique perspective from someone she had admired since childhood made her heart soar.

Moving forward, the desire for purpose, fulfillment, and financial security became Glennisha's North Star. She sought guidance from artist friends who advised her to create a website and logo and taught her how to set price points and protect her work through LLCs and trademarking. She posts on social media regularly; scans pop-ups for local art events accepts opportunities to showcase her artwork. Ever reaching to be seen, inspired, and inspiring.

"The proudest moment of my career is my growth as an artist, which in turn influenced my growth as a person. To know that people see me beyond my wheelchair as an artist who's just trying to motivate others to do the "impossible" or to do something that appears unattainable or something that appears too challenging is a moment I appreciate and am most proud of. It tells me that I'm scratching the surface of my purpose. It's just the beginning right now.