

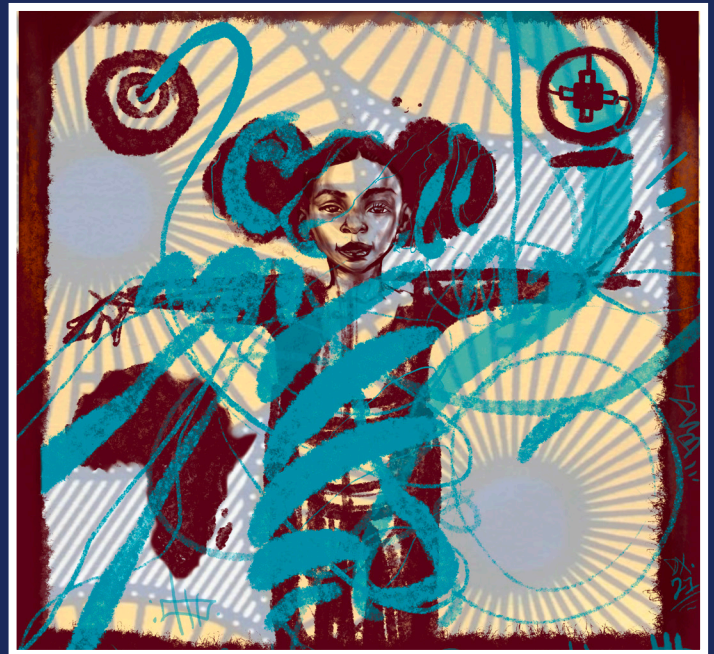
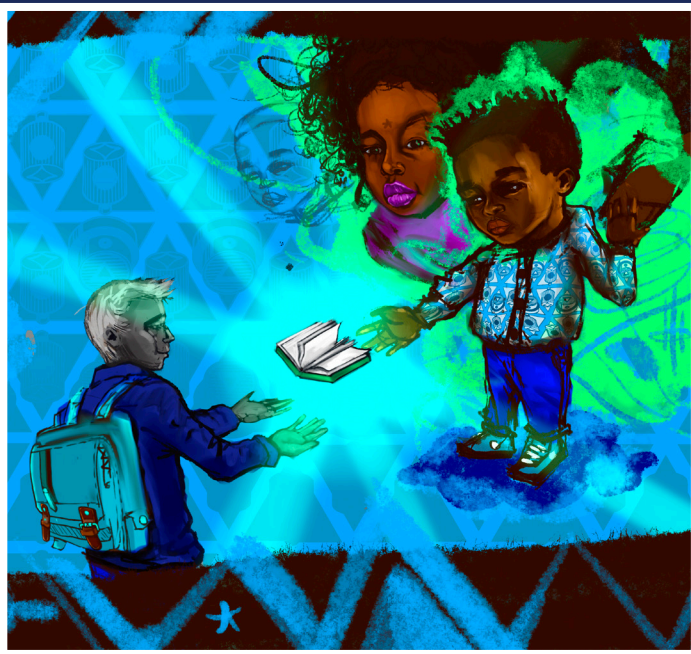


Ontario  
College of  
Teachers

Ordre des enseignantes  
et des enseignants  
de l'Ontario

# Artistic Representation

## Addressing Anti-Black Racism to Change Pedagogy and Practice



The statements and descriptions that accompany the artwork produced for the Additional Qualification (AQ) *Anti-Black Racism* guidelines by Danilo Deluxo have been co-written by Danilo Deluxo McCallum (he/him) and Rukiya Mohamed (she/her).



[oct-oeeo.ca/fb](https://www.facebook.com/oct-oeeo.ca/fb)



[oct-oeeo.ca/tw](https://www.twitter.com/oct-oeeo.ca/tw)



[oct-oeeo.ca/ig](https://www.instagram.com/oct-oeeo.ca/ig)



[oct-oeeo.ca/yt](https://www.youtube.com/oct-oeeo.ca/yt)



[oct-oeeo.ca/pi](https://www.pinterest.com/oct-oeeo.ca/pi)



[oct-oeeo.ca/li](https://www.linkedin.com/company/oct-oeeo.ca/li)

---

## Danilo Deluxo McCallum

Artist | Toronto, Ontario



Danilo Deluxo McCallum (he/him) is an award-winning Toronto multidisciplinary artist, graphic designer, Afrofuturist and cultural curator. His creative practice explores the multiplicities of Black identity through the lens of Afrofuturism.

In 2020, Danilo Deluxo was honoured by the city to create the artwork for the new Toronto Sign at City Hall. The project was in celebration of the United Nations International Decade of People of African Descent (IDPAD) and represented the diversity and brilliance of Black people in Canada. In 2013, he created and curated Black Future Month, the annual Afrofuturism Exhibitions. The exhibitions ran from 2013

to 2017 and generated international recognition while building bridges across the Black Arts and Afrofuturist community.

Deluxo has been committed to creative collaboration with art organizations, artists and communities for more than 15 years. He is a member of the Collective XYZ, who produce public art works, murals and large-scale art projects across Toronto and internationally. He is a creative collaborator with The Black Speculative Art Movement (BSAM Canada) and is currently in a two-year fellowship with Wildseed Centre for Arts and Activism. For 2021 to 2022, Deluxo is one of the hub curators for ArtworxTO – Toronto’s Year of Public Art.

---

## Context

The process to develop the artwork for the Additional Qualification (AQ) *Anti-Black Racism* was multi-layered and complex. During the initial stages, Danilo Deluxo sat in while the writing team brainstormed perspectives and conceptual frameworks that would underpin and support development of the guidelines. He documented the ideas, experiences, concepts, and critical components to inform a visual narrative of the story behind each of the guidelines within this AQ. By the end of each session, Danilo shared drafts of his creations, demonstrating the interconnectedness of his artistic process and the foundational elements of the guidelines. The intentionality and precision of Danilo's creative process guided the creation of the artistic works provided within the guidelines.

Danilo limited his use of white in these works, which is in line with the conceptual frameworks that underpin the guidelines. This choice explicitly decentres whiteness in the histories, experiences, and legacies of people of African descent. For these artist statements to most effectively support an informed integration in K-12 and professional learning contexts, it is important for educators to develop their understanding of the following components that flow throughout all of Danilo's artwork:

---

### **Principles of the Nguzo Saba:**

The Nguzo Saba are the Seven Principles developed by Dr. Maulena Karenga in 1968. These principles were developed to reinforce aspects of African cultures and laid the original foundation for Kwanzaa. The Nguzo Saba contribute to an understanding of the social, ethical, and political ways people of African descent build and support family, develop community, and sustain the culture and heritage of African, Afro-Caribbean, and Black communities. Symbols and elements within the various pieces represent knowledge found in teachings, pedagogies, practices, and philosophies centred in the Nguzo Saba and legacies of the African diaspora.

---

### ***The Invisible Thread* (Wane, 2021):**

Throughout the pieces, the *Invisible Thread* is highlighted in diverse ways based on the context of the visual story being told. *The Invisible Thread* (Wane, 2021) depicts the ways people of African descent are connected with and to the natural world, the African continent, and practices, beliefs and customs that are embedded within the experiences of African peoples. For more information regarding the *Invisible Thread* (Wane, 2021), please refer to the AQ guidelines.

---

### **Colours:**

Starting with a deep maroon in all his pieces, Danilo develops a colour relationship centring shades of brown that highlight the beauty and complexity of ancestral lineage. This ongoing depiction of the richness of complexion continues throughout the artworks. The various hues of blue signify calmness within people of African descent, an ethereal portal to a community of ongoing learning which lies in a vault of African, Afro-Caribbean and Black peoples' experiences, knowledges and consciousness.

---

### **Adinkra Symbols:**

Various pieces also feature images of West African, chiefly Ghanaian, symbols known as Adinkra. Adinkra are a representation of African knowledge systems. As noted within the guidelines, it is important to recognize there is no singular African identity, and as such there is no one African knowledge system that represents all African peoples and communities. There are many Indigenous Africentric organizing principles that carry wisdom, histories, values and spirituality, conveyed through proverbs, cultural stories, songs, and fables.

---

### **African Fabric Patterns:**

Many patterns feature prominently in the frames of Danilo's artwork. Patterns and colours often shift from culture to culture, and the stories behind them provide insight into the heterogeneity of the African diaspora. Throughout the pieces, Danilo has incorporated stylized and minimalist interpretations of African fabric patterns. These repeated shapes, colours and lines, also referred to as African wax prints, are represented in diverse arrangements.

---

### **Danilo Deluxo's artistic logo:**

Throughout the various pieces are the pillars and purpose that guide Danilo's exploration and celebration of the multiplicities of African, Afro-Caribbean and Black identities through an Afrofuturistic lens: creativity, communication and legacy surrounded by a circle of energy rooted within a spiritual source.

---

## Repositioning the educator learning from students, family and community



*Anti-Black Racism, 2022*

***Repositioning the educator learning from students, family and community* represents the role and relationship of the learner as a collaborative process shared among students, educators, families, and communities. For learning to be genuinely responsive to the identities, experiences and needs of students, educators must engage in authentic, reciprocal relationships to reposition how they view the teaching and learning process, and who holds and produces knowledge.**

.....

Learning is a collaborative process that is shared among learners, educators, families and communities. It is essential to centre and teach through the experiences, knowledges and cultural legacies of people of African descent.

.....

This artwork depicts the *Invisible Thread* as energy emanating from African, Afro-Caribbean, and Black students sharing wisdom with the educator. The educator represents the institution, wearing a backpack referenced in the other images packed with the knowledge of the teachings, pedagogies, practices, and philosophies centred within the Nguzo Saba and legacies of the African diaspora. The artwork centres the significance of educators who continue to be open to knowledge and experience provided by the community, which is represented by the book highlighting the exchange of knowledge.

The top right corner shows the hand of a caregiver being held by the brilliant Black

boy, denoting the importance of building relationships with families and communities to support the ongoing development of both the educator and the learner. The contributions of people of African descent span civilizations and cultures. Beside the boy is another student, highlighting the community of learners and voices that walk alongside each student, engaged in the journey of becoming. This further demonstrates the heterogeneity of people of African descent and the richness and complexities of peoples and their communities. There is also a faint image of a child in the background, signaling the ongoing presence of the historical context of anti-Black racism within the education system and the echoing of concerns from past generations within schooling practices. It also represents the guidance and wisdom of ancestors and the ways people of African descent reclaim their past and reflect on their present hopes, desires, passions, and experiences. The patterns prominent in the frame of the artwork are stylized and minimalist interpretations of African fabric patterns. The personalized print on the boy's jacket, designed by Danilo, is a modernized representation of those patterns.

***The Invisible Thread – the connective tissue between and among peoples of African-descent***



*Anti-Black Racism, 2022*



***The Invisible Thread* depicts the ways people of African descent are connected with and to the natural world, the African continent, and the practices, beliefs and customs that are embodied within the experiences of African peoples.**

.....

People of African descent come with the knowledge and wisdom of their ancestors.

.....

The choice of the young Black girl as the centerpiece demonstrates the relationship of women as producers and carriers of knowledge, traditions, and the ongoing nurturing of communities. Within the education system, there continues to be a silencing of the schooling experiences and adversities African, Afro-Caribbean, and Black girls endure. Educational contexts often simultaneously contribute to and reproduce society’s existing racial and gender disparities. In this artwork, the image of a beautiful young Black girl is being enveloped by the *Invisible Thread* (see AQ Guidelines) celebrating the histories and legacies of African heritage and identities.

The background depicts a large African fabric print of sunbursts reminiscent of the widely known traditional pattern of la cible (the target). The print creates a visual

language of continuity with self, community, land, spirituality, and African ancestry. The earth tones within the artwork depict the natural world and the spiritual connection that many people of African descent have to their ancestral heritage. Described by Dr. Njoki Wane (2021), the *Invisible Thread* is the embodiment of the African spirit, “[it] thread runs from the continent of Africa, to the Americas, to all the nations of the world where people of African ancestry are and have been. ... This invisible thread is the backbone of [people of African descent] and embodies the strength and courage that [they] emanate at different points of [their] lives.” As with the history of the African diaspora, the *Invisible Thread* transcends humanmade boundaries further highlighting the relationship and connection that African peoples and communities have with their natural environments and ancestral lineage.

The Adinkra symbols *Adinkrahene*, which means “King of the Adinkra symbols,” are placed on the left side of the artwork. These symbols denote authority, leadership, and charisma. On the right side of the artwork is *Dame Dame*, which represents intelligence, ingenuity, and strategy.

---

## Reimagining schooling to better serve African, Afro-Caribbean and Black children and communities



*Anti-Black Racism, 2022*

**Reimagining schooling to better serve African, Afro-Caribbean and Black children and communities** depicts the centring and infusing of African, Afro-Caribbean and Black stories, narratives, philosophies and thought as sites of valid knowledge in the reimagining of schooling.

Transformative change will not occur within the education system within the voices of African, Afro-Caribbean and Black learners.

There is an evident Afrofuturistic essence to this artwork whereby Danilo reimagines a completely new future of education for African, Afro-Caribbean and Black learners. The centrepiece of this work, a beautiful Black girl full of radiance and grace, has flipped the school upside down and inside out and changed the colour to a glowing pink that emanates from her imagination.

The young Black girl has uprooted the school from societal constructs that can chain her mind and spirit. She has examined it from multiple angles while enveloping it in a transformative sphere that reflects her energy and passions. The school has been unchained from all that binds exclusionary educational values, practices and beliefs.

This artwork depicts the power and genius that is revealed when we listen to the voices of African, Afro-Caribbean and Black children, allowing for changes to the education system that were once considered unfathomable.

Glimpses of the *Invisible Thread* are prominent throughout the piece. The spiraling of her hair represents how ancestral knowledge guides her identity and exploration of transformative educational practices. The celebration of her physical appearance highlights the politics of Black hair, the manifestation of cultural identity and the countless ways that Black girls and women have been at the forefront of societal change.

The halo that encircles the girl includes a tapestry similar to the pattern of the jacket worn by the Black boy in – *Repositioning the educator learning from students, family and community* (Figure 2). This is meant to depict the connections within the African diaspora and further the prominence of the *Invisible Thread*.

---

## Developing an Anti-Racist Identity as a Leader to Centre and Serve African, Afro-Caribbean and Black Students, Families, and Communities



*Anti-Black Racism, 2022*

***Developing an Anti-Racist Identity as a Leader to Centre and Serve African, Afro-Caribbean and Black Students, Families, and Communities*** depicts the interconnectedness of African-centred practices. The painting features a backpack which represents a toolkit, of strategies, pedagogical practices, leadership competencies and philosophies that centre African, Afro-Caribbean and Black learners. The *Invisible Thread* that weaves together people of African descent is illustrated with green lines.

.....

This course has been designed to equip you with a cohesive understanding, strategies, pedagogical practices, leadership competencies and philosophies of how to address anti-Black racism in pedagogy and practice. It is educators' collective responsibility to honour, affirm and reimagine futures centred around African, Afro-Caribbean and Black learner achievement and excellence.

.....

This artwork is the unifying piece that brings the concepts, strategies and pedagogical practices acquired throughout Part 1 and Part 2 of the *Anti-Black Racism* Additional Qualification. The green flourishes emerging from the backpack symbolize how the *Invisible Thread* forms its woven fabric as a physical embodiment of the *Nguzo Saba*. Given that the journey of learning is guided by multiple sources and stories, the diverse representations of the *invisible thread*

denote the non-linear nature of knowledge production and dissemination. It further symbolizes how educators can co-create learning experiences and spaces with learners, families, and communities.

The Adinkra symbol representing *Umoja* appears on the backpack, highlighting the ongoing professional development that is necessary for educators to create educational futures that honour the experiences, identities, and knowledges of people of African descent. By putting on this backpack, the educator signals engagement in self-reflection, pedagogical development, and personal growth. The educator must acknowledge – and not debate – the presence of anti-Black racism in the education system. In acknowledging the systemic inequities and institutional disparities that limit the well-being and achievement of African, Afro-Caribbean and Black learners, the educator can readily identify the collective role and responsibility (*Ujima*) all individuals have to shape outcomes and reimagine new futures for African, Afro-Caribbean and Black learners.



**Ontario  
College of  
Teachers**

Ontario's Teaching Regulator

For additional information:  
Ontario College of Teachers  
101 Bloor St. West  
Toronto ON M5S 0A1

Telephone: 416.961.8800  
Fax: 416.961.8822  
Toll-free in Ontario: 1.888.534.2222  
Email: [info@oct.ca](mailto:info@oct.ca)  
**oct.ca**