

Artist Call for Yale Divinity School

Portrait Commission

of

**Rev. Dr. Rena Joyce Weller
Karefa-Smart
(1921 - 2019)**

Yale Divinity School seeks to commission an artist for a painted portrait of an American visionary Rev. Dr. Rena Joyce Weller Karefa-Smart.

Rev. Dr. Rena Karefa-Smart was an extraordinary advocate, faith leader, and scholar. Though born in Bridgeport, CT, she created an international legacy, expanding from the States to Sierra Leone, parts of Europe, and back again. Her passion and tenacity led her to achieve many firsts: the 1st black woman to graduate from Yale Divinity School (1945), to earn a doctorate in theology from Harvard Divinity School (1976), and the first woman to be granted tenure at Howard University School of Divinity (1979).

Rev. Dr. Rena Karefa-Smart was an ordained Episcopal priest and A.M.E. Zion minister. H. Richard Niebuhr is said to have been a major influence on her ecumenist theological vision. In honor of her incalculable contributions, Yale Divinity School presented Dr. Karefa-Smart with the Lux et Veritas alumni award in 2017.



IMAGE: The Rev. Dr. Rena Joyce Weller Karefa-Smart attending a meeting of the World Council of Churches in 1954. After achieving firsts for a black woman at Yale and Harvard, she was a leader in the international movement to bring churches closer together. Credit: John Dominis/The LIFE Picture Collection, via Getty Images

Timeline

Submission Period through **March 15, 2022**

Commission Announcement: **April 15, 2022**

Commission to be completed by: **March 2023**

Expectations and Details of the Portrait

- Mode: Portrait (open to multidisciplinary expressions of 2D portraiture)
- Size: approximately 60 in. x 48 in. (5x4ft)

Source Images and Proposed Portrait Location

One known portrait exists of Rev. Dr. Karefa-Smart. The portrait is a rendering of the photograph above. To honor her impact and acknowledge her legacy, Rev. Dr. Karefa-Smart's portrait will be unveiled for the Yale Divinity School bicentennial celebration in the Spring of 2023. She will be the first black graduate to be displayed in the Common Room. *(Note: portrait will be framed and mounted.)*

Budget

The proposed remuneration for the portrait, including artist's fee and material costs, is \$30,000, with half paid to the artist once under contract, and the other half paid at the completion, review, and delivery of the painting.

Once an artist has been contracted, more detailed information about Dr. Karefa-Smart will be provided by the Divinity School, including a funded visit to the Divinity School to meet staff and to see the space.

Note on Applicant Qualifications and Vetting

All artists who might wish to undertake this commission are encouraged to apply. The Divinity School especially encourages statements and samples of work from artists of color who are current students, or alumni, of Yale University. Open to artists based domestically and internationally.

Submissions will be reviewed on a rolling basis until March 15th.

Please share artist statement & portfolio materials to:

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