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U S A
PHILADELPHIA



SOUL OF THE BLACK BOTTOM

This mural in West Philadelphia is titled *Soul of the Black Bottom*. It comes from the neighbourhood's history of demolition and displacement and quotes part of the semi-autobiographical text *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* by W.E.B. Du Bois. As a sociologist, Du Bois wrote the first sociological study on African American community in Philadelphia and as an author, he addressed civil and political rights through both fiction and non-fiction. This work particularly addresses issues of segregation and racial inequality in the United States after the abolition of slavery.

Du Bois was an activist who wanted equal rights for his community and it was important for me to use his words because I too consider myself an activist. In every place I paint, I search for the words most pertinent to those around them. No matter if the Arabic text can be understood by those who see it or not, it is still important for me that those who take the time to discover my meaning, find something valuable and meaningful. I also believe that art can bring people together and that art can unify societies, communities and even nations. For the people in Philadelphia, I wanted them to remember these words, written almost 100 years ago in 1920, yet timelessly relevant.

"I believe that all men, black and brown and white, are brothers, varying through time and opportunity, in form and gift and feature, but differing in no essential particular, and alike in soul and the possibility of infinite development." –
excerpt from Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil published in 1920

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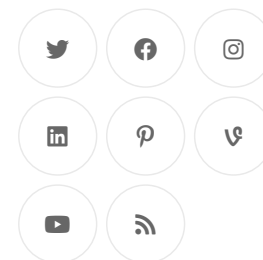
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