

The art that will welcome visitors to the Obama Presidential Center Museum



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Hi there,

When the Obama Presidential Center opens, artist Julie Mehretu's stunning painted glass window on the side of the Museum Building will anchor visitors' experience as they enter and travel through the Museum exhibition floors.

Titled "Uprising of the Sun," the piece is inspired by a quote from President Obama's speech during the 50th anniversary of the Selma marches. This multi-story glass painting will draw on themes of time, place, and historical transformation.

We recently caught up with Julie to learn more about her inspiration for this piece and how she found her passion for creating. [Check out the profile now.](#)



From the White House to the Obama Presidential Center, President and Mrs. Obama have used the arts as a tool to inspire, empower, and connect people from around the world. When the Center's doors open, the campus will feature a diverse slate of artists who, like Julie, are inspired by their unique lived experiences.

Julie's journey from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to becoming a renowned abstract artist is a testament to the transformative power of art and the deep connection between personal history and creative expression. Born in 1970, Julie experienced the upheaval of the Mengistu revolution and the Red Terror, which led her family to move to the United States in 1977.

Julie's work is known for its abstract nature, utilizing architectural elements and blurred photography to create a "social ground" for her paintings. Mehretu believes that art's role is to provoke thought and reflection and to express the contemporary condition of the individual and society at large.

In developing her recent work, Mehretu has drawn from a process of sourcing and manipulating photographic images from broadcast media as points of departure for the social grounds of her paintings. She says her approach allows her to engage with broader human experiences beyond traditional representational art.

We're excited for you to see Julie's piece at the Obama Presidential Center when its doors open, but in the meantime, [learn more about her work and her inspirations here.](#)

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