Stop. Ask yourself, how many abstract artists do you know? Now, how many of those people are Black? Then do it the opposite way, of the Black people that you know, how many of them are abstract artists? Unless you’re a Black abstract artist, the answers are probably little to none. There are few Black Americans who are seeking abstract art, therefore, there are few prominent Black abstract artists. It seems to be that Black culture has a preference to the more concrete subjects. However, Black culture is not homogenous. In speaking to Naa’Irah Parker, she explained that a majority of people seek art that they can: A. Relate to and B. Easily recognize. Therefore, when your work does not the bill in either aspect, it becomes more difficult to appeal to the consumer. This is a concept that is similar to atonal 20th and 21st century music. While there are a great deal of Black composers of atonal music, they are not composers of a prominent genre in the Black community. Therefore, the difficulty exists in where on the spectrum, an artist one wishes to fall.

Parker however, has an extremely natural process that does not seem to be as affected by the issues of consumers. While painting, Parker explained that she often zones out, and makes the best effort to create her idea to completion. In this particular piece, “Butterfly in Tataurus”, Parker chose to paint in nature, a divergence from her process, and absorbed her surroundings. The piece is interesting to me because the work has natural resting points for the eyes, and there is just enough going on in it to entice the viewer, however, it is not too busy where it is off-putting. In terms of imagery, sometimes I see a zoomed in butterfly wing, sometimes I see a stream, sometimes I see the iridescent glisten of gasoline in water. Whatever one sees in the painting, it is no doubt beautiful.