**Artist Statement**

Esther Delaquis-Baidoo

Adinkra symbolism of Ghana, West Africa was very apparent in my artworks in the past. These symbols are a form of language in my opinion, as each has a distinct meaning and are a way of communicating without the need for speech. They are very popular in Ghanaian textiles.

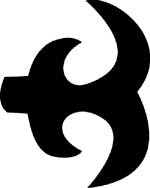
I am drawn to the female adinkra symbols such as Duafe (comb) which symbolizes beauty and cleanliness; akokonan (hen feet) symbol of mercy and nurturing; fafanto (Butterfly); symbol of gentleness, tenderness, fragility.

My artwork took a different direction when I moved to the United States. Distortions started happening with the symbols such that their distinct forms were no longer recognizable as my works became more abstracted. This transition i believe made my artworks less ethnocentric, which in fact was one of my goals for traveling outside my home country to pursue a graduate degree in art. They became more open to diverse meaning allowing audience of any caliber to engage with them.

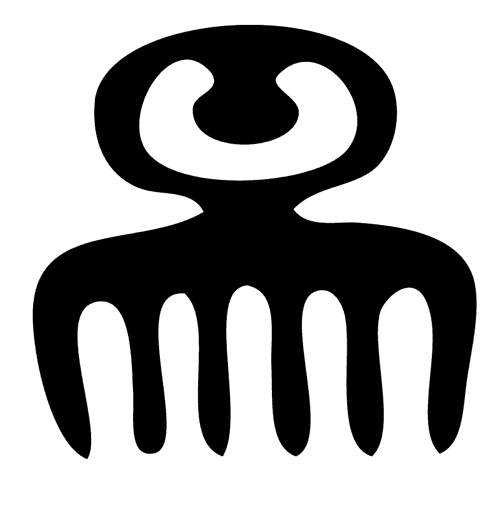
I gravitated more towards the Fafanto (butterfly) adinkra symbol when I happened to stumble upon a dead butterfly in Lubbock, Texas. Its beautiful wings blew me away. I thought to myself, my fascination with female symbols from my native home and this experience could tie together. I started exploring with the patterns of the butterfly and moths in my works. The butterfly to me represents the rebirth in my works since my migration into the US as well as the beauty, strength and yet the fragile nature of a woman.

My paintings get even more abstracted than my Monotype prints. The butterfly patterns in the paintings are less conspicuous except the venation found in their wings. Both the reductive monotypes and paintings have layers and layers of colors and images superimposed on each other. The paintings create this mysterious world that can be explored and each time something new is discovered by the audience. I hope my audience can engage into it and find something intriguing to relate to.

*ADINKRA SYMBOLS*

 Akokonan(Hen Feet) Symbol of mercy and nurturing

Fafanto (Butterfly) Symbol of gentleness, tenderness, fragility

 Duafe (Comb) Symbol of beauty and cleanliness.