

**vanessa german**

*ET AL, or The Child Plaintiffs as Power-figures: Courage and Play, Love and Hope, Grace and Compassion, Will and Might, Serenity and Music, Light and Joy, Warrior and Intellect, Creativity and Vision, 2024*

Love and research, plaster, wood, wood glue, plaster gauze, rage, wire, multiple conversations with historians Sherrita Camp and Donna Rae Pearson, tears, shock and the understanding that these children made a new world, auto body paint, pedestals so tall that the figures MUST be looked up to, love, prayer for a crack in the world to bleed new light, ceramic and porcelain birds and figures as finials, cloth, twine, strands of beads, buttons, keys put together by the community of Topeka: the beads are an acknowledgement of our African Ancestry and the wealth, power and creative force of Africa in relationship to the crime of stealing African bodies to build a new world in which the descendants of enslaved Africans have continued to be systemically, strategically, tragically dehumanized, stomped on and denied full access to true liberty. The buttons speak to the power of MENDING—for how many of our mothers, aunties, and homemakers had a button box, knowing that it is always possible to find a button that fits the missing space into a mending. The keys are forgiveness — internal and external forgiveness.

Courtesy the artist and Kasmin Gallery, New York

This artwork, which was originally presented as part of *CRAVING LIGHT: The Museum of Love and Reckoning*, an exhibition commissioned by ArtsConnect to coincide with the 70th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, and considers the legacies of that 1954 Supreme Court case declaring segregation in schools unconstitutional. Additional selections from this exhibition are on view at the Mulvane Art Museum at Washburn University, the Brown v. Board National Historical Park Site, and the Great Overland Station, all in Topeka, through 2024.



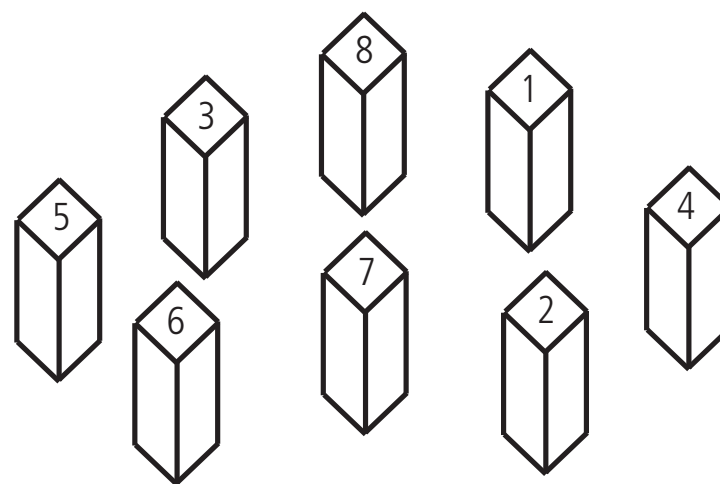
"The plaintiffs of Brown v. Board and their children," 1953

Front: Vicki Henderson, Donald Henderson, Linda Brown, James Emanuel, Nancy Todd, Katherine Carper  
Back: Zelma Henderson, Oliver Brown, Sadie Emanuel, Lucinda Todd, Lena Carper

**Plaintiffs and Children, Brown v. Board of Education**

- Oliver Leon Brown and daughter, Linda Carol Brown
- Darlene Brown and daughter, Saundria Dorstella Brown
- Lena Carper and daughter, Katherine Louise Carper
- Sadie Emmanuel and son, James Meldon Emmanuel
- Marguerite Emerson and sons, Claude Arthur Emerson and George Robert Emerson
- Shirla Fleming and sons, Duane Dean Fleming and Silas Hardrick Fleming
- Mrs. Andrew (Zelma) Henderson and children, Vicki Ann Henderson and Donald Andrew Henderson
- Shirley Hodison and son, Charles Hodison
- Mrs. Richard (Maude) Lawton and daughters, Victoria Jean Lawton and Carol Kay Lawton
- Alma Lewis and children, Theron Lewis, Martha Jean Lewis, Arthur Lewis, and Frances Lewis
- Iona Richardson and son, Ronald Douglas Richardson
- Vivian Scales and daughter, Ruth Ann Scales
- Lucinda Todd and daughter, Nancy Jane Todd

"Kansas Plaintiffs," *KU Libraries Exhibits*, accessed May 8, 2024, <https://exhibits.lib.ku.edu/exhibits/show/education/kansas-plaintiffs>, Images from <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/brownvboard/brownimages.html>



- 1. Courage and Play
- 2. Love and Hope
- 3. Grace and Compassion
- 4. Will and Might
- 5. Serenity and Music
- 6. Light and Joy
- 7. Warrior and Intellect
- 8. Creativity and Vision