

Artist Statement

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The faces come first, and they rarely come alone. They crowd the canvas, pressed against each other and against the edges, eyes open and aimed at whoever is standing in front of the work. Thick black ink holds each figure inside a hard outline. The color behind them runs hot and saturated, refusing the calm that the outlines seem to promise.

I paint people who are close together and trapped by it. Proximity is not warmth in these canvases. A face surrounded by other faces is held in place by them. The eyes look out because looking out is the only direction left when every other side is occupied. Connection and entrapment turn out to be one arrangement seen from two angles.

The marks stay raw on purpose. I do not sand the line down or correct the proportion into something agreeable. Street painting and the art brut tradition taught me that a clean surface lies about how a face actually arrives, which is fast, pressured, and unfinished. The outline is thick because the boundary between one self and the next is the real subject, and a thin line would not carry the weight of it.

“Splitting.” “Fractured.” “Fake Fake Fake.” The titles name conditions, not moods. A self splits under pressure it did not choose. The face manufactured for an audience stops being a face and becomes a surface. These are not metaphors I reached for. They are what the painting was already doing while I worked.

The signature is small, two letters in the corner. Figures take everything else. They are not portraits of anyone. Each one records what happens to a person who is seen too much and known too little.