

Artist Statement

When I begin a series of work I come to a piece with a vague idea of what I hope to achieve, and immediately start working. After I have something down, I begin the process of reacting and responding to what I have begun. By cutting out and collaging pieces together; I am allowed to build and let the piece grow as I work on it. Adding more paper can alter the scale of a piece or an aspect can be edited by covering it up. This process is very similar to a story that starts with a key element such as a character or an environment, and is allowed to grow and expand as the story goes on. This approach to making a story easily translates in the work I do. I believe this process of making art comes from my exposure to storytelling as a child.

My first recollections of drawing are of my mother handing me a pen and paper while sitting in church. It was a sure-fire tactic to keep my brother and I quiet for the duration of the service. With not much around that two young boys would find of interest to look at, we often used our imaginations to invent scenarios that we would illustrate and elaborate. Since my father was always the pastor of the churches I attended, I spent a good portion of my life sitting and listening while drawing. Not only did the hours of illustrating my ideas affect how I make work today, I believe that the stories my father told also had a large influence in how I began to relate to the world. My father often used stories to elaborate points he was making in his sermons. It seemed that everything in life could be understood through the use of stories.

Then and still today, I find that my work is inherently narrative. While I don't have a singular story in mind when creating my work, many of my pieces come from my observations of the world around me as I interpret them. I begin with an idea, and then let the stories my pieces tell evolve and grow as I create them. Often I find my pieces ponder a moral dilemma, as do most parables and fables. I believe they are my personal search for the "right" and "wrong" in issues that aren't easily labeled as "good" or "evil."

My pieces almost always incorporate human figures, and are often based on my observations of people's behaviors both individually and collectively as a culture. Many pieces are fueled by discussions I have had with people from various countries and how they view American people's behaviors from an outside perspective. These conversations often led me to ponder: "If I or the people of America were characters in a story, would we be heroes or villains?" I can hear the voice in my head (which sounds a lot like my father's) say, "It depends on who is telling the story."