

Brian Mathus Artist Statement
Mixed Signals

In my artistic practice, I have embarked on a mission to challenge and dismantle societal prejudices that distort our perceptions of ourselves and others. It all began with a realization that I had been unconsciously drawing my own nose larger than it actually was, exhibiting my own imposed prejudice. Determined to reclaim my true vision, I meticulously measured and drew my nose, thus unmasking the insidious presence of racism within my own self-perception.

This transformative process led me to confront other distorting notions that clouded my vision. As I dismantled these distorted perceptions, I discovered a newfound ability to see the world with emotional clarity, unburdened by societal filters. I recognized that this vital energy courses through every individual, and when we are fully present, we can deeply feel its existence. To evoke this sense of presence, I employ lines and stripes as visual metaphors. This artistic representation symbolizes how we filter and contain our natural energy and the tension that arises between our inner selves and the external world.

I share this vision through mediums such as canvas, wood, and paper. Using graphite and conte crayon, I intricately draw the interconnectedness between objects, environments, and people. Through composition and color, I shape meaning and create an atmosphere. With each brushstroke, I infuse my marks with emotion, then step back to thoughtfully construct the composition. Layers of paint lend depth and a sense of history, scratching into them to reveal hidden layers. My artistic language incorporates elements of fauvism, cubism, abstract expressionism, and African art, resulting in a unique fusion of styles and marks. I continue to paint until I experience an overwhelming sense of ecstasy at the sight of the work.

When envisioning these works I found there is a vital energy that lives inside us—debunked ideas about vibrating strings and movement. These colors vibrate as if to vibrate into the picture or off the canvas. There is a hole in our perceptions of each other that can never truly be filled except with presence. We carry the energy of our past and our nature, containing it in multiple ways. The stripes represent that energy and where it is directed- a manifestation of how we filter ourselves, our natural energy, and the tension that surfaces because of that containment- and its interaction between systems of people.

Our minds rely on images to navigate and comprehend the world around us. By actively shedding distorted images and moving towards emotional clarity, I allow light to penetrate thin layers of paint- symbolizing an illustrative process of revealing truth. With each layer, the artwork builds towards the ecstatic and the sublime. By manifesting these mental images onto canvas, I strive to transform the world- making the truth as unmistakable as the nose on my face.

Summarized:

In my art, I challenge the societal prejudices responsible for the distortion of our self-perception and that of others. This began with the realization that I had been unconsciously drawing my own nose larger than it actually was, exhibiting my own imposed prejudice. Determined to reclaim my true vision, I meticulously measured and drew my nose, thus unmasking the insidious presence of racism within my own self-perception.

My transformative process in this series seeks to confront these notions, thus fostering emotional clarity and recognizing vital energy in individuals. Using lines and stripes as metaphors, I explore the tension between inner and external worlds. Through various mediums, I intricately define a sense of interconnectedness, shaping meaning with emotion-infused brushstrokes. My unique artistic language incorporates elements of fauvism, cubism, abstract expressionism, and African art.

The works symbolize a hole in our perceptions of each other that can never truly be filled except with presence. We self-contain this energy of our past and our nature in various ways. The stripes represent that energy and where it is directed- a manifestation of how we filter ourselves, our natural energy, and the tension that surfaces because of that containment- and its influence on interactions between systems of people.

By shedding distorted images, I strive to transform the world- making the truth as unmistakable as the nose on my face.