

Altered, Ardent, Afraid

An Exploration of Trauma

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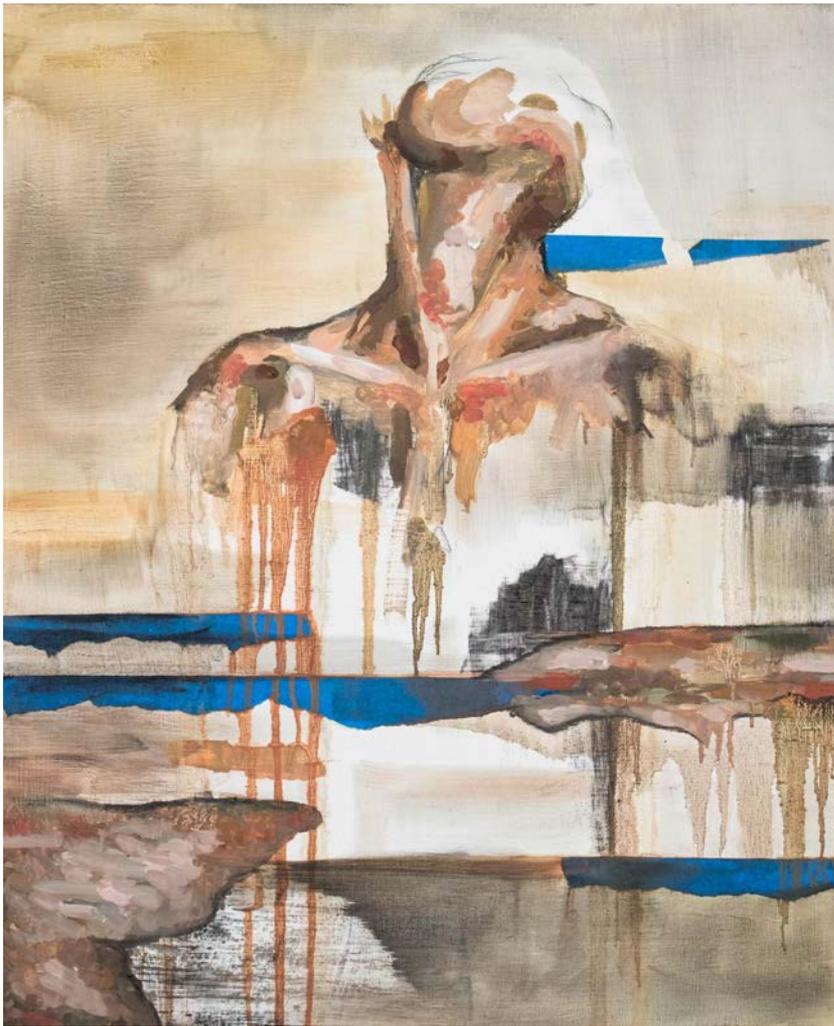
Untitled
Oil and Tape on Canvas
16x18"

Untitled is a directly personal piece, noting on my own out-of-body feelings. In short, I often present this piece exclaiming, "This is what it feels like." As a result of long-term anxiety, stress and trauma, I am often thrown into a disassociated feeling of virtual, dream-like or false reality. As I further analyze this feeling and my own experience with layered or broken reality, I note on the roots of this image. The inspiration came from a simple photo booth app on my iPhone. How is it that seemingly unique experiences of trauma and its mental imprints are so quickly described by visual aspects of modern technology? This piece lead me to question how trauma is different in the digital age, how technology weaves itself into the inner workings of our subconscious, how it creates mental states that feel like virtual worlds, and how I might be able to take advantage of this mental hijack.



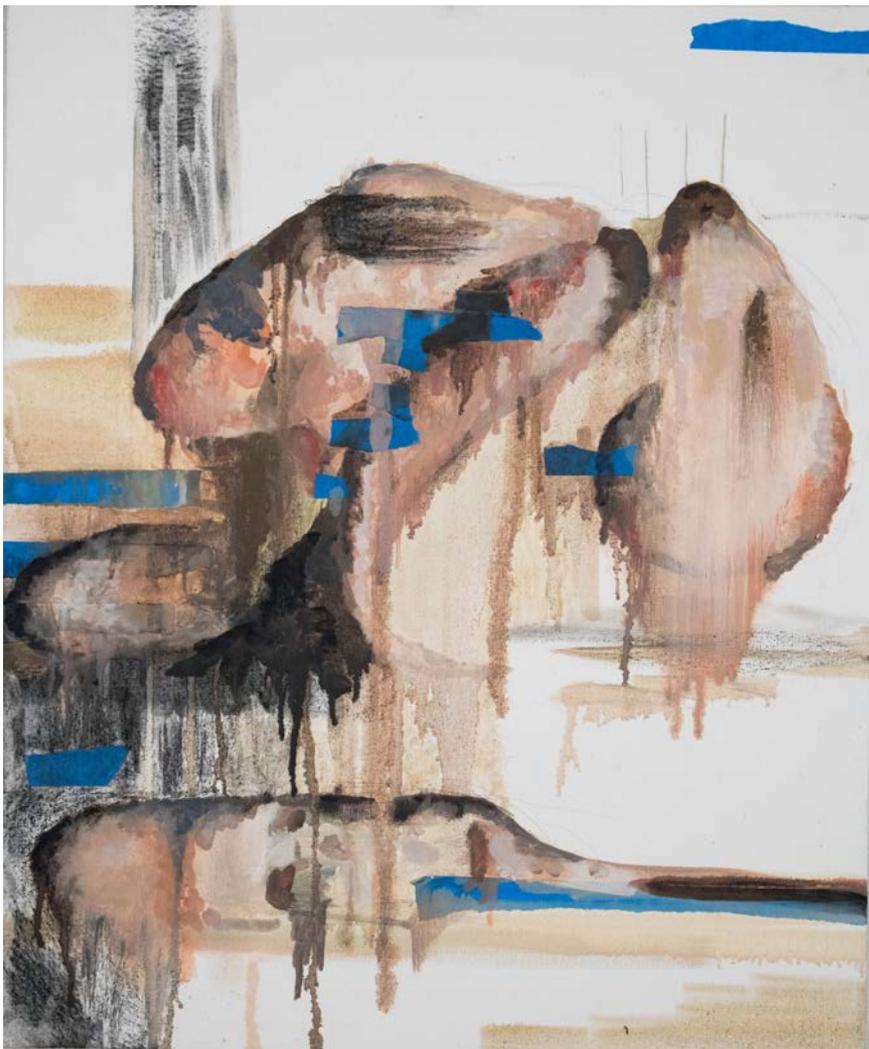
All OVER the Place is my first attempt to dive into the artificial pieces of human experience. I do this in several ways, one being my use of ink and acrylic. There is a sense of flatness in the digital world, both in aesthetics and in conceptual ideas of digital reality. I wanted to capture this digital, plasticity, false feeling of the virtual world by creating flat shapes with acrylic paint that still emphasize specific shapes on the human body. I use ink to emphasize the repetitive, gridded, and coded nature of our current existence. This piece also notes on my confusion with regards to permanence in the art world. The piece is oil based, with acrylic, charcoal and tape on top. I realize that its life will be short, but I wanted to erase that concern from my process and discover how I create without the pressure of longevity, profitability and preciousness.

All OVER the Place
Oil and Tape on Canvas
18x22"



Let Me Go, *Breathe*, and *Wracked* are all part of a series aimed at addressing trauma in both my final image, as well as in my process. I leave tape, negative space, sketch marks and interrupted form on my canvases to emphasize my process. Typically, bright blue painters tape or charcoal would be ripped off or cleaned up for a final piece. I parallel my mark making with my fractured reality by leaving layers of various materials exposed. I also challenge myself to embrace confusion by exploring unique ways of interacting with the paint and the canvas. I use diluted and thinned oil paints to slightly forgo my authority in order to let the paint drip at its own will. This technique not only creates a more distant rendering of the subject, but the process itself resists my personal clarity, control and authorship. My process articulates the detachment, disorientation, and brokenness behind struggling to express personal emotion.

Let Me Go
Oil and Mixed Media on Panel
18x22"

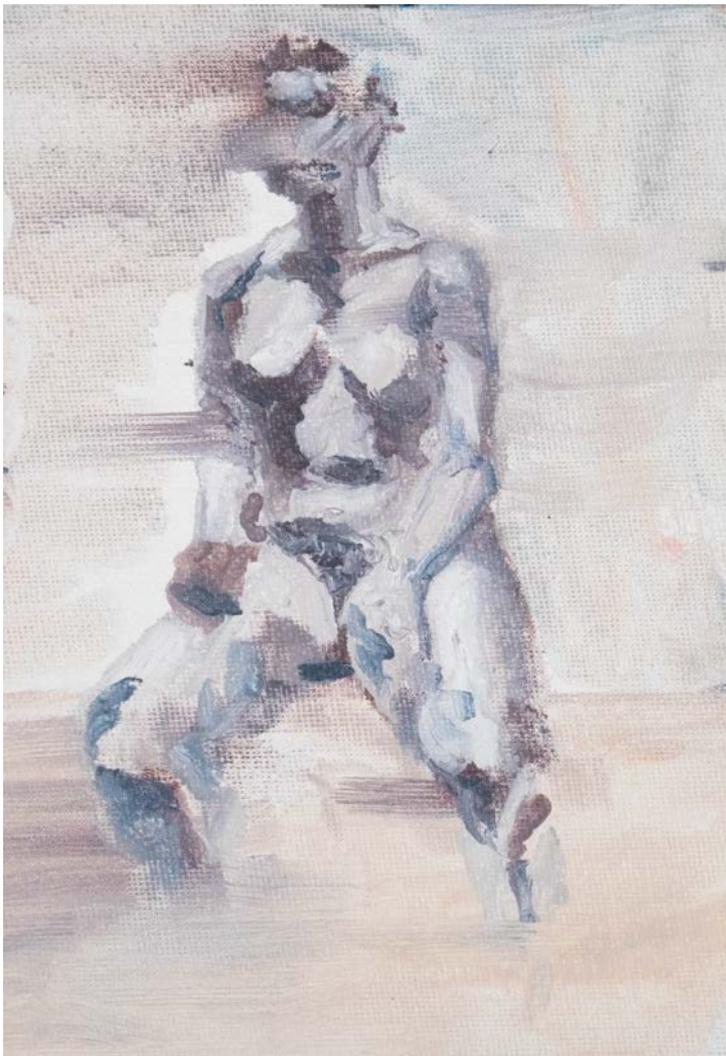


Breathe
Oil and Mixed Media on Canvas
18x22"



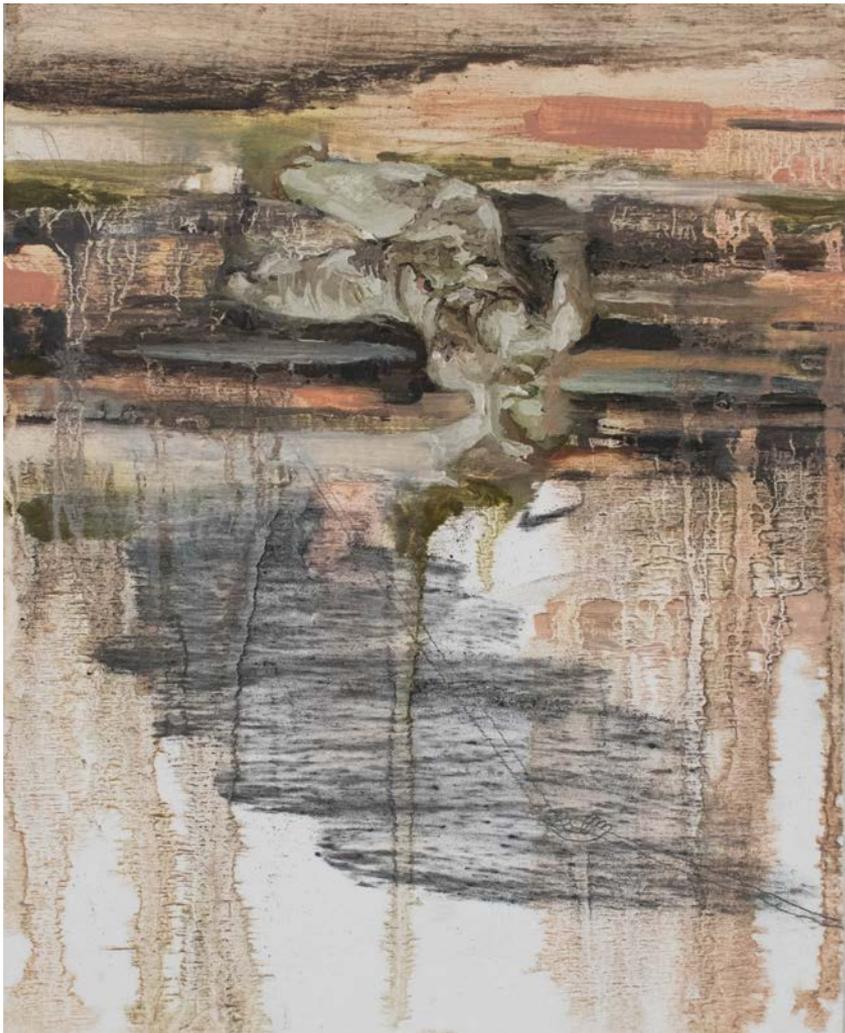
In addition to the meanings discussed in the *Let Me Go* description, the series marks my initial dive into using visual art as a way to capture a wide audience and push them towards unlearning norms that prevent cross-cultural understanding. For example, the pieces are meant to challenge viewers to consider the narrative of dissociative trauma in my own personal life. I believe that literature, music and visual arts have unyielding power to create empathy, which is a key starting point for social change. Whether it is in regards to those experiencing poverty abroad, or in regards to the unspoken experiences of neighbors, humans must be challenged to imagine and empathize with the lived experiences of others. I want my work to contribute to that mission in order to rewire brains and push them towards reacting to other cultures with understanding and empathy.

Let Me Go
Oil and Mixed Media on Canvas
18x22"



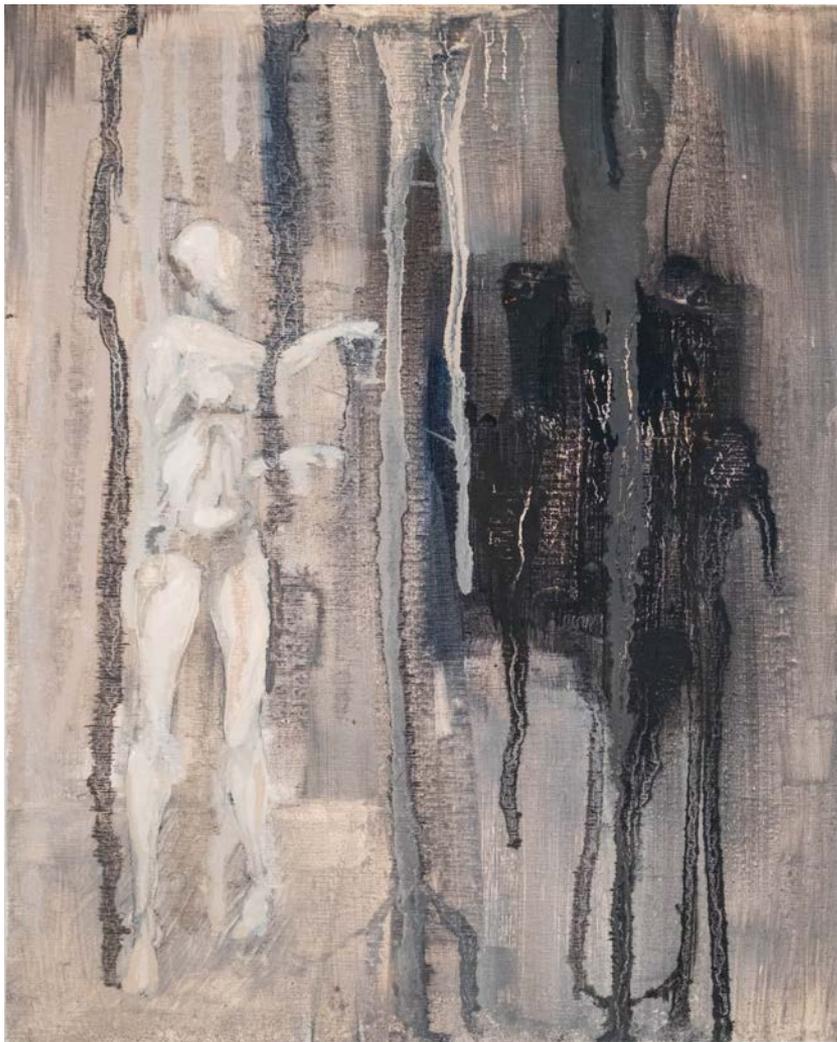
Whispers is less specific in conceptual meaning, and more of an experiment exploring how paint itself can create questionable line, form and shape to create fluid meaning and fuzzy reality. I wanted to blur the image just enough to lift the weight of the figure onto a plane resting slightly above the canvas, but I also wanted to acknowledge the possibility of her being grounded or living in clarity. She exists in an in between state, her form is exposed yet her being is altered by the fluidity of paint.

Whispers
Oil on Canvas
4x6"



Dreams is an attempt to understand the meaning of the physical body in alternate, opposite, and/or virtual realities. This piece denies concrete weight, but embraces enough form and shape to acknowledge the existence of a fully intact body. The title stems from the unrecognizable dimensions that exist in dreams, emphasizing the surreal quality of the layers of different materials used in the piece.

Dreams
Oil and Charcoal on Panel
8x10"



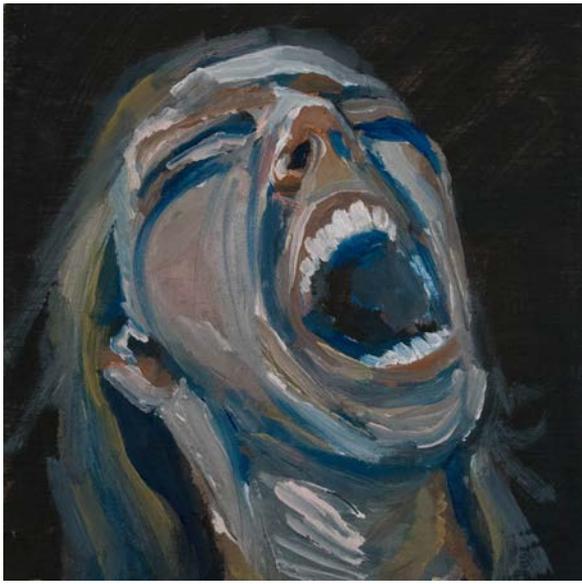
In addition to noting on the same themes of disassociation discussed in previous pieces, *Slippery Obstructions* attempts to make the connection between technology and trauma available to the viewer by placing artificial intelligence into the actual image. The figure in the front moves through the obstructions like a human, but in reality is only a replication of a living being. This is an example of how trauma has existed since the dawn of time, but as a result of the digital age, it only recently displayed itself in feelings of virtual, technological and robotic states.

Slippery Obstructions
Oil on Panel
8x10"



Tired Rain is one of my first pieces made during my search for understanding the meaning of dissociation, trauma, space and the translation of those ideas into paint. I captured these ideas in immediate ways, with the subject's distant expression, the fluidity of her skin, the slightly unnatural colors and the obstruction of her face. The conceptual ideas are more concrete in the outcome of this piece, to the point where the viewer can first understand the image as something that truly exists in their world and in mine. My main goal was to have the viewer connect to the piece through the most recognizable power that painting holds, the power to elicit emotion.

Tired Rain
Oil on Panel
8x10"



Altered Presence Series seeks similar themes as those discussed in *Untitled*, but is more of a technical exploration of how a thick and looser application of paint can still capture motion and form. The blue paint captures the quickness of involuntarily jumping from one state of consciousness to another. This piece represents disassociation, but it also represents the shock, confusion and struggle to understand what exactly the brain is doing, and why it's doing it.

Altered Presence Series
Oil on Panel
6x6", 8x8", 8x8"