

*Narrative Study: An investigation of social and cultural perceptions shaped by contemporary influences, personal experiences, and development of self-awareness.*

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### Series Overview

The following paintings are a body of work that investigates the topic of human perceptions. My goal for each painting is to use typography to demonstrate the different ways we perceive our environments. In each painting I used a limited color pallet of black, gold, white, and blues. I incorporated newsprint to keep the words simple but show how the style of the text changes the dynamic between font types. Perceptions are so hard to define in general, so I decided to use a mixture of words and mediums to help represent the different ways people perceive life.

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Searcy (2013) *Perceptions*. 6"x6" mixed media: gesso, matte medium, acrylic paint, ink, newspaper clippings

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This painting is entitled *Perceptions*; I see this work as the theme of the overall series and it is reflective of my research on personal experiences in life. The lines, curves, and colors all blend together to show how perceptions can become complicated and sometimes hard to interpret. This is due to our own experiences; they are individualized and are

unique to us. In this painting I tried to represent the beauty of flowers, but through what looks to be wind sweeping across the page, the idea of the flowers become distorted and unrecognizable as they are exposed to outside influences. Perceptions in general are formed by these external influences: our experiences with others, life happenings, our goals and ambitions, our beliefs, our insecurities, our strengths, our weaknesses, and our upbringings. No one person has the same experiences, which means we all share one thing in common – we are unique in our sense of being.






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Searcy (2013) *Perceptions: Self- Image, Self-Judgment*. 12"x12" mixed media: gesso, matte medium, acrylic paint, ink, newspaper clippings

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Out of all of the paintings I completed for this series, I find that I am most attached to my *Self-Image, Self-Judgment* painting. I developed this idea over several weeks as I explored my study on perceptions of culture and society. The concept originated when reading about the Gestalt Principles of Visual Perception. I wanted to play off the ideas of visual imagery, representing the positive and negative spaces on the canvas by signifying two forms (the faces and a vase). The purpose of this painting represents how one person sees

something differently than another. The point that I was trying to accomplish is that we all see and hear things through our own filters, and while we may be looking at the same image, we are both experiencing two different understandings.

This painting is an inside look into my own experiences with people and how they perceive me as a person. While this painting is not a theme song for my life, I can say that this painting is reminiscent of my experiences in high school. At the start of my freshman year in high school I was dealing with my father going through chemotherapy, he had testicular cancer. It was a rocky year and it was my starting point of feeling insecure and emotionally challenged with all of the setbacks that my family had to face. In the center of this painting I wrote a hand written journal entry, reflecting on how I felt: broken and hopeless. The entry reads,

“I fear their judgments, why do they think of me that way? They don’t know me. They don’t understand me. They don’t know where I have been or how my life has been. Who gives them the right to give me those labels? They don’t know how they affect me. If they only knew...Life is hard enough without having to worry about those people and how they perceive me. I can...”

The center is symbolic on the emotions I experienced during a venerable point in my life, a point in my life that has shaped my being and how I respond not only to others but how I face the world today. I am a fighter and in those last words I reaffirm my commitment to myself that “I can.” As an overlay to this piece, I added words that were used in newspaper articles that represent the different perspectives of writers and how they interpret their world. By changing the context of the words, I have given them new

meaning and in a collection of words they deepen the message of the artwork – telling the viewer that the vase is filled to the brim with insecurities of how perceptions affect our personal state of mind, emotions of brokenness and fears of judgment. One last element that I added to this painting is, the use of a feathering stroke on the backs of the faces. I wanted to represent the symbolic meaning of masking our face from our insecurities. I have always been in love with the beauty of feathered masks, in part because when behind the mask no one can see the pain and frustration you are experiencing. In essence, these figures are being masked from reality, safeguarding our inner secrets and fears.

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Searcy (2013) *Perceptions: Rolling Ambition*. 4x4" mixed media: gesso, matte medium, acrylic paint, ink, newspaper clippings

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*Rolling Ambitions* was my first piece of this series. I knew I wanted to explore perceptions but I was not exactly sure how I was going to go about it. I began to paint, moving the brush around the canvas hoping that something would pop out at me, and it did. Growing up on the shoreline I have always found peace and serenity when visiting the water. It was a place for sweet release of all of the stress I felt from my daily



life. On those days by the water, I can recall looking out at the waves crashing on the shore thinking of how the shells slowly get washed up onto the bank of the beach and slowly roll back down into the water as the tide moves in. I can recall thinking that each time the shells made it forward the waves would put the shells back under again. It was a viscous and endless cycle, but as each wave rolled over the shells they pushed them a little bit further, slowly giving the shells the momentum to keep moving up on the beach. I reflect on this now as a way to understand how in our struggles to get ahead we find the motivation to keep going.

At the center of the wave I painted a shape of an eye. This shape is symbolic as a reminder of where I have my eyes when feeling the pull of the wave as it crashes over my back. The motivation, the confidence, and the hopeful spirit push me back again, taking another leap into the world of unknown.




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Searcy (2013) *Perceptions: Committed Faith*. 4x4" mixed media: gesso, matte medium, acrylic paint, ink, newspaper clippings

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*Committed Faith* reflects on my spirit of being. As a Christian I see life through the lens of walking through life with God as my driving force. My perceptions on how my faith has pushed me in those times of uncertainty have made me want to represent this belief system in my perception study. Faith in general is a complicated interpretation; each person in society understands faith differently. When asked why I have faith, I have to say I do not know any other way. Since birth my Faith has been ingrained in my life. While points in my life I struggled with my faith, I

have always found my way back again to trust that all things are possible if I just believe. This reflection stands as a representation of how faith has shaped who I have become as a person. It is a genteel reminder of my journey and how to live through my moral foundation, which was developed by the people in my life.

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Searcy (2013) *Perceptions: Confusion through Visual Culture*. 4x4" mixed media: gesso, matte medium, acrylic paint, ink, newspaper clippings

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*Confusion through Visual Culture* is an appropriate concept in understanding perceptions. Every day we are challenged to interpret everything we see and hear. Visual stimulation shapes our experiences through the anxiety of feeling confused and overwhelmed by the ways in which we are meant to process what we see. In addition to processing what we see we must analyze and interpret all visual representations. In this process our perceptions can change overtime. Like art movements, perceptions are not concrete, they have the ability to fluctuate and move as the times change and as the people change with the times.

