

In my paintings, drawings, and photos, I have separated components of my worldview and consolidated them in visual form. In simplest terms, I want to present the force of life—meaning vitality—in struggle with all that slows or stops it. In the painting *memento mori*, death does this. In *Hesitation*, it is overthinking. My exhibition shows aliveness and deadness in contention and manifests the key acceptance that these two poles are intertwined and even interdependent. I focus on this interdependence as a battle going on inside the human personality. As I explore motifs of death, awe at the world, the subconscious, and simple beauty, I set up my exhibition as an investigation of human experience, at what I see as its brightest and dimmest points.

I have searched for techniques which best emit that life force which I have mentioned. In almost all my work, I use strong diagonals to achieve dynamism. I push that technique to an extreme in my charcoal drawing, *Insect Expedition*, an accumulation of images and abstract forms, which uses angled lines to create violent movement that seems to twist and want to explode. I have used forms of the natural world that show energetic generation of life. I have at times used near symmetry to a similar, but more balanced effect. Nearly all of my figurative pieces use a centered composition, which reinforces symmetry and zones-in attention on the figure. I have also explored color as a source of intensity, as with the neon irises in *I Am Here*. Finally, I distort figures. Human living, to me, feels skewed and chaotic—an exaggerated face in off-kilter composition is how I experience delirium; a frenetic person in cut-up photo shards is how I experience the discontinuity of moments. These formal distortions indicate internal battle. I make many studies on smaller scales to test out and gain control over these various tools.

In using inspiration, I follow the words of Salvador Dali: “begin by drawing and painting like the old masters. After that do as you see fit.” So I draw influence from artists like Raphael, Parmigianino, and Rembrandt—specifically the techniques used in their drawn and oil-painted portraits—to give my work a classical foundation. My main goal is observational skill. In this respect I have especially focused on the human face and figure, learning to draw proportions and to represent skin through value and color. 20th century artists like Kokoschka, Wols, and Matisse have guided the direction of my more experimental work. Kokoschka stands out to me as one of the greatest translators of psychological depth into paint; I have tried out a similar loose brushstroke and vibrant color palette to his because I want to attain a similar intensity.

I intend each piece in my exhibition to occupy the viewer’s exclusive attention while they look at it, so I would arrange them one by one with spaces in between. The order would reflect the path of thought which the works trace. I would start with *memento mori* to signify the human limit. With acceptance of death as the premise, the rest of the works must quicken the viewer’s vigor for living. I would make the viewer wander with the works on mental exploration, but show how this can go to excess with *Hesitation* and *Lodovico Capponi*. The exhibition then resolves with works which praise beauty, humanity, and immediate experience. *Symbiosis* would mark the end, as a consummation of the different ideas which I have surveyed: interdependence of life and death, organic generation of form, the subconscious mind, explosive motion as pressure-burst of life. The apprehension of these things through emotion is my goal for the audience.