



## Ramblings, Scattered Thoughts, & Mindful Chatter from the Studio

The paintings are voids, holograms, silhouettes of some-thing, some-one, some-body.....ourselves.

And yet at the same time they are filled-in, coloring book style, cosmetically constructed identities of identities. We all possess many of these personas, revealing them like self-directed actors in cinema. In fact, the theorist Foucault explained 'identity' as something we communicate to others during our interactions with them, a shifting and temporary construction. Leaving it reasonable to accept that perhaps we actually have more than one identity. And that we can call upon any of these identities at any particular time. And Foucault pointed out that identity will need to change in relation to with whom we interact. Like actors and their audience.

I find myself gazing at these paintings in the studio, wondering how they have influenced me as much as I have influenced them, sometimes confused by the blurred line of which came first....the painting, the idea for the painting, or the mediated image subversively burned in my subconscious.

And as I stare at the works, I question whether these are really paintings at all, perhaps they are in terms as loosely defined as painting is today. And so if they are paintings, they seem barely so. They are what the art world has come to be since World War II, advertisements of art. Perhaps they are the stage sets of the theater of Michelangelo and Raphael and Caravaggio and Rubens.



Above: *Narcissus*, Caravaggio  
& Apple iPod commercial  
digital composite

for a moment if Rupert Murdoch or Steve Jobs were the patrons of Caravaggio, what might his work look like today

The Identity Crisis pieces are not painters' paintings, they are nearly void of the artist's hand, they are elementary in skill, and are easily familiar (in a visually cognitive sense). They are not Picasso or Dali or Rothko or deKooning or Pollock or Klee. They are more closely assimilated with Warhol and Lichtenstein and Ramos and Wesselman and Hockney. (I hope that satisfies all the categorists whose own identities lie in the art history books.) It certainly allows me to dispense with the recognition of my own work in such context.

Between the stacks of books of Motherwell, Graham, Foster, Koolhaas, and Debord and magazines like *Flaunt*, *ArtForum*, *Juxtapoz*, *Swindle* and *ArtPapers*, these paintings lean here and there propped-up by the covert intellect inside. And so I wonder where these pieces might find relevance in the def-noize of popular culture...you know the blinding glitter of Hirst's skull, and the deceitful reflection of Koons' inflatables. Perhaps identity, as well, is in the eye of the beholder.

And yet, I believe that if those painters lived today in our blogosphere of reality TV, Facebook, YouTube, and Secondlife, their paintings might perhaps center more on the graphic arts and digital aesthetic. It's not hard to imagine, after all their works were idealized and gentrified, painted facsimiles of their patrons' projected personas. And were, in effect, advertisements of their day. The pieces are equivalent to the corporate spokespersons and brand identities of the patrons themselves. Imagine

