

ARTIST STATEMENT

As far back as I can remember I have always loved art—drawing, painting, making music. What I like most about it is the freedom to create something—anything—from nothing. As a kid I enjoyed watching my uncle who is also an artist painting in his studio. And eventually, I realized that I also had a talent for drawing and that not only could I make a living from it, it also brought me great happiness.

Like all artists, my work has evolved and changed over the years but what has stayed constant is my desire to express myself as a modern Native American artist. This has allowed me to explore many issues in my work, especially around stereotypes of Native Americans. In the beginning, I made paintings like the “Wagonburner” (2003) and “The Reality of Advertising” (2004, aka “Land o’ Fakes”) to bring attention to stereotypes and to make viewers think about the historical meanings behind them and how they continue to affect our culture and daily lives. Recently, I have begun to consider how those stereotypes affect me personally. And I have started to focus on ways that I can change the internal stereotypes for myself and in my work.

One piece that has come from this is the “Bounty Hunter and Trickster Encounter” (2010). The painting is a “split-screen”-type image with Boba Fett, a bounty hunter from the Star Wars movies, on one side of the canvas taking aim, and a coyote on the remaining half of the canvas. While all of my paintings hold a special meaning for me, I am particularly proud of this piece because it combines my love of science-fiction movies and my Navajo culture with the addition of Coyote, a trickster in Navajo and other Native folklore. It can be interpreted in many ways depending on the viewer but to me, it is as if Boba Fett is protecting a hidden herd of sheep from a predator, coyote. The painting itself is just one moment in the story each viewer creates for themselves.

As is the case with all the paintings and drawings I create, what I have come to enjoy most about art is the process—coming up with the ideas, sketching, and seeing it come to life on paper or canvas. And this is what I hope viewers will take from my art—that something interesting can be created just by taking the time to do it.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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