Biographical Statement

I was born and raised a Black/Latino man in the primarily white Christian south of Bristol VA/TN. I felt culturally isolated and that the narrative that was given to me was not my own. Lacking a personal cultural narrative led to difficulties finding a community and understanding my bi-racial identity. Within this fraught environment, visual art became a bridge of understanding for initiating dialogues and introspection. As a result, my work blends mythologized observations of the Appalachian region of America, personal narrative and the shifting socio-political landscape to explore the limits of identity and the human condition.

I am continually inspired by contemporary and past artists. After working with Kara Walker, I better understand the implications of having one’s subjectivity relate to the work and the skill of relieving one’s artwork of having to carry all the answers to every conversation. I feel akin to Michael Armitage’s representations of oppositions, as his depictions of multiple vantage points highlight the totality of the region's discourse. Finally, Honoré Daumier is someone I cannot ignore. Daumier’s scathing caricatures and deft hand helps me understand how a drawing can control a narrative and create social change.

Each work begins as a piece of writing or a photograph that I have taken or found. The process of translating the research materials into a visual language becomes a meditation on the subject and removal of bias; As I work, I only seek to compare, empathize and understand these observations. Upon completion, I refer to the finished entry and even compare it to other works.

This diaristic approach allows me to shed light on and create a discourse around veiled narratives such as humanization of black diaspora and facets of power structures in the historic South. Furthermore, by engaging the language of graphic novels, each piece is an aspect of a larger narrative furthering the story in different ways by their juxtaposition to other works. I wholeheartedly believe that imagery is passed down as information and becomes an agent of change through creation and dissemination. That by creating the work, I can further my horizons of understanding, push for emotional vulnerability and hope to inform viewers of these struggles.