

Artist Bio

Pat Marino, b.1986 in Plainfield, New Jersey, is a Visual Artist. He has embarked on a career shaped by a profound appreciation for cultural diversity, exploration, and multimedia expression. His works can be found in many cities globally, such as Ningbo, Hangzhou, and Shanghai, China; Bali, Indonesia; Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago, USA; and Seoul, South Korea..



Graduating from The College of New Jersey in 2009, Marino's transformative experience in Florence, Italy in 2008 immersed him in its rich artistic heritage, vibrant culture, and European politics, profoundly influencing his voice and engendering a wanderlust that has broadened his cultural acumen.

In 2016, Marino relocated to Ningbo, Zhejiang, China, embracing the complexities of Chinese art and incorporating them into his own expressions. The Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 disrupted his life in East Asia, displacing him from his home and ending his tenure, leading him to return to the United States, where he

currently resides in the Finger Lakes region of New York, USA.

Despite the pandemic challenges, Marino adapted and found inspiration in his new-old surroundings, enrolling as a Studio Artist at Mana Contemporary in Jersey City, NJ in 2022, where his work flourished within the exceptional environment and support among fellow artists.

Reflecting on a fusion of diverse cultural influences, exploring the complexities of contemporary human existence, Marino aims to acknowledge social divides, provoke introspection and dialogue on its common tenets, and serve a communal representation through his art, encouraging viewers to dialogue on their own perspectives and narratives.

Marino's work is characterized by an unwavering curiosity about the world, a thirst for knowledge, and an inclination for visual storytelling that invites audiences to contemplate the intricacies of the modern human experience via Conceptual Expressionism. His work explores the socialization of contemporary identity, namely in the following contexts: Its conception and projection of both the physical and digital world; the rapidity of the expansion of intelligence and communication in human communities; globalism and its influence on physical and digital life; transcendental biology/sexuality; Theosophy; and the relationship between text, imagery, and silence as equal employments of knowledge, wisdom, critical thinking, and holistic expressionism.

Project Statement: *Bunny and the Bear: A Modern Relation* (2023-__)

In planning this collection, which started with the desire to devote a series to themes on modern relationship structures, a natural progression of theme in our Post-pandemic socialization, I looked to answer the essential question: "What has been the impact on our socialization after communal experiences of transgression, such as 9/11 and the Covid-19 Pandemic?"

The focus on which seemed most obvious: How have they affected our interpersonal socializations, and what can we glean from these experiences and changes?

In conceptualizing my semiotic expression of these concerns, I found an old Sioux proverb that lent great context to the possibilities therein, called "The Rabbit and the Bear with the Flint Body," from Myths and Legends of the Sioux by Marie McLaughlin (1916):

The Rabbit and his grandmother were in dire straits, because the rabbit was out of arrows. The fall hunt would soon be on and his quiver was all but empty. Arrow sticks he could cut in plenty, but he had nothing with which to make arrowheads.

"You must make some flint arrowheads," said his grandmother, "Then you will be able to kill game."

"Where shall I get the flint?" asked the rabbit.

"From the old bear chief," said his old grandmother. For at that time all the flint in the world was in the bear's body.

So the rabbit set out for the village of the Bears. It was winter time and the lodges of the bears were set under the shelter of a hill where the cold wind would not blow on them and where they had shelter among the trees and bushes.

He came at one end of the village to a hut where lived an old woman. He pushed open the door and entered. Everybody who came for flint always stopped there because it was the first lodge on the edge of the village. Strangers were therefore not unusual in the old woman's hut, and she welcomed the rabbit. She gave him a seat and at night he lay with his feet to the fire.

The next morning the rabbit went to the lodge of the bear chief. They sat together awhile and smoked.

At last the bear chief spoke. "What do you want, my grandson?"

"I have come for some flint to make arrows," answered the rabbit.

The bear chief grunted, and laid aside his pipe. Leaning back he pulled off his robe and, sure enough, one half of his body was flesh and the other half hard flint.

"Bring a stone hammer and give it to our guest," he bade his wife. Then as the rabbit took the hammer he said: "Do not strike too hard."

"Grandfather, I shall be careful," said the rabbit. With a stroke he struck off a little flake of flint from the bear's body.

"Ni-sko-ke-cha? So big?" he asked.

"Harder, grandson; strike off bigger pieces," said the bear.

The rabbit struck a little harder.

"Ni-sko-ke-cha? So big?" he asked.

The bear grew impatient. "No, no, strike off bigger pieces. I can't be here all day. Tanka kaksa wo! Break off a big piece."

The rabbit struck again -- hard! "Ni-sko -- cha?" he cried, as the hammer fell. But even as he spoke the bear's body broke in two, the flesh part fell away and only the flint part remained. Like a flash the rabbit darted out of the hut.

There was a great outcry in the village. Open-mouthed, all the bears gave chase. But as he ran the rabbit cried: "Wa-hin-han-yo (snow, snow); Ota-po, Ota-po -- lots more, lots more," and a great storm of snow swept down from the sky.

The rabbit, light of foot, bounded over the top of the snow. The bears sunk in and floundered about helpless. Seeing this, the rabbit turned back and killed them one by one with his club. That is why we now have so few bears.

This parable closely mirrors my observations of our society at present, where community has eroded and transactional relationships are status quo. The action mirrored my thoughts regarding social technology, social fear, anxiety, and trauma, and a general regression in physical socialization, and, most importantly, the distance created by our digital world has hindered our ability to address the social challenges of this century, particularly this decade.

Since the pandemic, I've become increasingly concerned about our social interactions. It seems that we've reached a point where communal values are being replaced by a focus on consumption and products. This trend has been growing for most of my adult life. Additionally, many of today's relationships feel overly transactional. These concerns inspired me to create Bunny and the Bear: A Modern Relation (2023-2024), a series exploring potential outcomes of these changes. The following textually extrapolates my visual work on these matters in response to the essential questions that have guided it:

Modern relationships are intricate, often commencing with a spark that can organically evolve within the interplay of physiology, chemistry, and cognition. Initially, infatuation surfaces, marked by a superficial admiration and attachment that may arise from a desire for control or projection of idealized perceptions onto the object of desire; however, this infatuation remains incomplete until true intimacy is attained.

On the journey to intimacy, individuals frequently grapple with anxiety and doubt, leading to impostor syndrome and fostering misinterpretation, miscommunication, and self-doubt. Pistanthrophobia, an anxiety disorder stemming from a fear of trusting others, extends beyond romantic relationships, impeding communal development and social intimacy. Avoidance of relationships due to fear or past trauma hampers personal growth and understanding.

Intimacy, defined by closeness and trust, transcends romantic contexts to encompass various forms such as physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and social connections. Despite its scarcity in contemporary society, genuine intimacy fosters validation, learning, and growth. However, societal pressures and the allure of superficial aesthetics corrode communal bonds, rendering vulnerability and true intimacy elusive.

True intimacy, however, necessitates vulnerability, even amidst societal turmoil. Embracing vulnerability is vital for navigating modern relationship challenges and rebuilding communal bonds post-contemporary upheavals like the Covid-19 pandemic. As social beings, humans thrive on connections, with intimacy offering opportunities for mending and growth. By embracing vulnerability and fostering genuine connections, we can heal societal divides and reclaim the depth and authenticity inherent in true intimacy.

Recognizing the inherent fallacy of loss is crucial as we navigate its complexities. While genuine growth often emerges from loss, the unreliable nature of human memory complicates this process. Our minds tend to exaggerate both positive and negative associations with loss, a phenomenon known as rosy retrospection, distorting our perception of reality.

Despite the methodology of loss, such as socially acceptable yet morally dubious practices like "ghosting," understanding its cognitive fallacy is imperative. While rose-colored glasses may momentarily boost self-esteem and well-being, they also perpetuate dissociation from genuine human connection. This raises questions about the societal implications of such practices and the erosion of community and intimacy – the killer of bears.

Perhaps what we are left with in the aftermath of these collective traumas eroding trust in community are exactly where we are headed as a species, a transition to, as Noah Harari often alludes, “the new Sapiens,” a hybrid of the physical and digital, most evidenced by our most prominent relationship dynamic at present, the Parasocial Relationship – along with its challenge, like endemic loneliness.

Many of us are lost in the superficial associations populating our current dynamics of socialization; yet sooner than we think, most of our interactions will be a brand of passivity we’ve yet to experience. But if

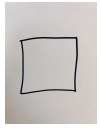
you're one that is not served by this transition, like myself, don't be. Though unrelenting and inevitable, these trajectories still do largely require an active participation that at present one may still reject. Do so. Be yourself and find people who like genuine physical connections and the natural world, while we still have the ability to tolerate it – or, rather, the natural world tolerating us.

Don't get caught up in the traps of digital inclusion, particularly excessive expression, virtue signaling, dissociation, and persona-obsession (methodology offering behaviorisms to do so are readily available today). Not everything in this digital world is important or meaningful on such a compulsively-attuned frequency. Moderate your usage and give effort to direct, human connection. To reclaim what has been lost in our socialization and collective traumas, we must return to community – this is both a conclusion of my work and a plea for what is of the utmost essential.

Symbol Key*



Media - “Antenna Head”



The Great Algorithm(s) - “Empty Cube”



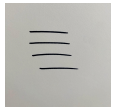
Gov’t / Socio-Politics - “Cube w/ Bars”



Mental Health Disenfranchisement - “Cube w/(facial)Expressions”



Self (creator) - “Insignia”



Stasis: Personal/Civil - “Parallel Bars”



Interpersonal Socialization - “Bunny / Bear”

*Variations present, but core structure represented accurately

A.

“Serendipity”

152.4x 121.92 (60x48)

Acrylic, Tempera, Acrylic Gel, Charcoal, Oil Pastel on Primed Cotton

2023

In each and every iteration, the modern relationship begins with a spark. The most incendiary of modern relationships, however, form organically, within the happenstance of oblivion, the ignition occurring at the intersection of physiology, chemistry, and cognition.

B.

“Infatuation”

152.4x167.64 (60x66)

Acrylic, Charcoal, Gouache, Soft Pastel, and Tempera on Primed Cotton

2023

Infatuation, a surface admiration of unreasonable power and attachment. But what's more unreasonable? the power or the attachment (perspective)?

When the layers of the object of our desire, be it an actual object, person, or an idea, have yet to be revealed, we project our ideals most strongly.

Perhaps infatuation is a likely attempt at control, an unintended consequence of passion, on what we might want to see, what we hope it to be, or what we've been made to see, as we align in a repetition of will, in patterns of our proclivities.

Cartoonish and incomplete, infatuation's unreasonable grasp paints a piercing superficial visage, an artifice, at once incomplete and lacking of the proper depth we unconsciously seek, shrouded in the modes of appreciation that attract us, like beauty, deference, and the hope of something or someone, an objectification that relents only when we progress to the knowing of true intimacy.

C.

“Doubt / Generalization / Fallacy”

140x140(55x55)

Acrylic, Charcoal, Oil Stick, and Cotton Collage on Primed Cotton

2023

On the path to intimacy, from serendipity to suffusion, we often, some of us more than others, experience an anxiety of doubt, an imposition that detains our will and reality, leading to fallacies in value, perception, and acceptance in the absence of a true and certain reality.

In the context of relationships, particularly those of great importance, such as professional networking of higher ordering or the impact of intimacy in budding romance, this anxiety can be seen materializing as an imposter syndrome of sorts, causing misinterpretation, miscommunication, and self-doubt. We may question our worthiness or fall into a “too good to be true” mindset.

Doubt may arise due to investment, excitement, and social constructs, leading to negative ruminations that cloud our perceptions, brought on by negative-scenario-based generalizations that “discolor” our perceptions of both ourselves and others and persist a circuitous thought pattern of misguidance.

Continuing to allow these ruminations to persist (when “allow” is a privilege) leaves us in a monstrous emptiness of our own dismayed design.

We simply can't know everything.

D.

“Pistanthrophobia”

152.4x162.56 (60x64)

Tempera, Acrylic, and Semi-hard Pastel on Primed Cotton

2023

Pistanthrophobia, an anxiety disorder that presents as a persistent, excessive, often irrational fear of trusting others or being hurt by someone you love.

Considered a “specific phobia,” unique to situational or thematic stimuli, often the result of experiencing a serious disappointment or painful ending (a trauma) to a prior relationship.

While the context for Pistanthrophobia centers on interpersonal, romantic relationships, it seems to me there’s a more general, social application here. You can feel it in our society as a collective consciousness, shared in our collective spaces, regarding our collective communal relationships, be it interpersonal, familial, vocational, etc.

Our social-culture, driven by the constraints of parasocial relationships (technological media, our most divisive social accelerants), is suffering from a great phobia of trustworthiness, a prime social principle. Perhaps because we’ve taken each and every opportunity to arrest community development, socio-emotional cohabitation, and social intimacy.

The anxiety we possess in avoiding adverse loss, whether that’s destitution, hate, mis-identity, or general emotional affliction, has seemingly rendered us indifferent, apathetic, and unperspicacious.

Sadly, when you avoid relationships, you also limit yourself from experiencing the positive aspects of one, neglecting the opportunity to develop what might help you gain perspective or understanding as to why the prior simply didn’t work.

Easier said than done.

E.

“A Secret Garden”

152.4x167.64 (60x66)

Satin, Acrylic, and Plaster on Primed Cotton

2024

Intimacy, at its core, is the sense of closeness and trust that allows individuals to share privileged information with others. While commonly associated with romantic relationships, intimacy extends beyond, manifesting in various forms, such as physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, experiential, social, creative, conflict, and aesthetic phases of our lives.

These connections are not confined to long-standing relationships; even brief encounters can foster intimacy if they allow vulnerability, the true prerequisite for achieving intimacy.

The myriad colors of intimacy provide a comprehensive view of how connections manifest, encompassing physical touch, emotional expression, shared intellectual interests, aligned spiritual beliefs, common experiences, open social interactions, collaborative creativity, respectful conflict resolution, shared aesthetic appreciation, and supportive work relationships.

As inherently social creatures, humans thrive on connections, as intimate relationships provide a sense of validation, learning, and growth. Given the impact that intimacy has on our mental and emotional health and socialization, even in its loss, intimacy provides us with the greatest opportunity for mending and growth. Losing a relationship of great intimacy renders us in a grief of unimaginable profundity, offering the most substantial opportunities for unbridled social and personal progression.

Real intimacy, however, is seemingly rare. At present, where the lure of positive social and professional outcomes linked to optics overall is a perpetrator of our collective dissociation, born on the aesthetics of control, we've taken every opportunity to distance ourselves from each other to contribute to a greater social image of largely superficial aesthetics and experiences, dissolving community and the social contract. Intimacy seems like an island amidst rougher waters than those of the North Sea, making true vulnerability as fearful as ever in the disruption of our contemporary social constructs and implications.

But real intimacy is only achieved in vulnerability. Perhaps vulnerability, true, physical-world vulnerability, is a way out of the social tumult we've engendered since the Covid-19 Pandemic and other hits of the 21st century.

F.

“Casper Rose”

152.4x140 (60x54)

Satin, Acrylic, Plaster, and Hard Pastel on Primed Cotton

2024

Contemplating lost plans, nostalgia, and the fragmentation of dissociation prompts reflection on what occurs when connections break, whether intentionally or not. Uncoupling, regardless of its scale or emotional investment, represents an event in itself – a link severed from a chain.

What becomes of the plans made? The memories retained? And how does retrospection unfold? Over time, faces fade, and words become increasingly inaudible, falling into the realm of forgotten recollections.

As we grapple with the complexities of loss, it's imperative to acknowledge the fallacy inherent in its aftermath. While genuine growth often emerges from loss, navigating this process proves challenging due to the unreliable nature of human memory. Our minds have a tendency to magnify both the positive and negative associations with loss, a phenomenon known as rosy retrospection, distorting our perception of reality.

Despite the method of loss, such as the modern phenomenon of "ghosting," which is often socially acceptable yet morally dubious, understanding its cognitive fallacy is crucial. While viewing events through "rose-colored glasses" may temporarily boost self-esteem and well-being, it can also perpetuate detachment from genuine human connections, prompting reflection on the societal implications of practices like ghosting and their impact on the erosion of community and intimacy.

Is ghosting truly as devastating as it initially seems, or is it merely a product of contemporary terminology? While it may appear as a newer social phenomenon, the act of ghosting is not entirely novel, as people have severed connections long before the advent of 21st-century communication technologies. At its core, ghosting represents a simple act – a sudden and abrupt break in communication, devoid of the usual niceties or genuine closure, leaving behind a lingering sense of confusion and pain.

G.

“The Great Regression”

147x106 (58x42)

Satin, Acrylic, Oil Stick, and Hard Pastel on Primed Cotton

2024

Parasocial relationships have become increasingly prevalent over the last decade. These one-sided connections, often with celebrities or public figures, have evolved from traditional forms of celebrity worship to a more democratized phenomenon. The advent of smartphones and socialized media has turned our socializations on many platforms into “Little Hollywood(s).” As a youth of the eras of centralized media, like the film industry, network and premium television, and other popular mediums gate-kept by singular moguls, the ambition of fame had a significance of “making it,” measured by the exclusivity and vacancy afforded of the aforementioned mediums.

The ubiquitousness of contemporary media, the localization of fame, big or small, and its greater shift to full monetization, has created in us a “Main Character Syndrome,” because how could it not? It’s a screen, same as any before it, accessible to anyone you can get it in front of, which today, especially for our youth, is not a difficult task, if you’re popular of course – sound familiar?

I doubt anyone would disagree with this, nor find it particularly insightful or cutting edge in discourse. But the framework of our discussions on the topic speak a great deal to the psychological effects of this phenomenon, as mentioned above regarding narcissism and, too, the dissociations of reality that one risks engaging too deeply in such relationships. What concerns me, however, in this discourse is the effect this phenomenon has had on smaller-form socializations, like communications and intimacy among friends and family.

Social estrangement is a greater concern to me in this arena. Take for example the friend of yours, should you be an active social media user, that strictly communicates view photo dumps, twitter shares, and memes, the friend that leaves monologues and diatribes on vast subjects, yet doesn’t text, call, or hang out? If any of that sounds familiar, it’s because many of us active social communication users have these types of relationships at present.

I get it; in contemporary life, where work/life balance has outpaced survival, active, direct communication with friends and family can be a chore, an extra to-do that can often be loaded with heavier tones, triggers, and other energy-expending trials that we simply don’t have the energy for. So we post our snack, our reservation, share our location – broadcast our lives rather than socially reciprocate them.

As an early user of most social media, many of our parent platforms in this regard, ironically, were created to meet people, forge relationships, and connect. We’ve abandoned these

original intentions in lieu of consolidation, competition, traction, establishment, and monetization.

Rarely do we stop to consider what this “Like” or “Heart” means, what it represents. Most of the time it’s passive, simply a response to the content we’ve just viewed, a thank you or an acknowledgement. Do we ask “What’s in a “Like?”” Doubtful, as the “Like” has become synonymous with all other social merits we’ve created to establish a separation between the haves and have nots, the first major Classist weaponization of the digital world, operating on a level of propaganda akin to any tool for conformity, production, and social theft, ripe with its terminology of disenfranchisement.

It is difficult today to physically communicate your goings-on and achievements to each and every one of your friends and family, but is that because posting it is easier or because we’ve lost the nerve to do so? Can we get that back? Can we post and connect? Consider the Like.

H.

“Abyssmaltude / Agoraphobia”

60.96x40.64 (24x16)

Satin, Acrylic, Charcoal, Hard Pastel, and Oil Pastel on Primed Cotton

2024

Loneliness is as much bound to the quality of one's relationships as it is to the number of connections one has. It doesn't only stem from heartache or isolation. Currently, supported by clinical services and practices like those of Weill Cornell and the US Surgeon General, we are facing an alarming loneliness epidemic affecting half of American adults. This epidemic, exacerbated by increased human mobility, online interactions, social media, and the COVID-19 pandemic, poses significant public health hazards, linked to more than a 25% increase in the risk of premature death. We are on the precipice of a considerable psycho-social disease, ever-increasing in pathogenesis.

Our collective isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic further deepened a social abyss that had been building since the major advent of social media in the early 2010s. This period, colored by post-9/11 shock, fear, distrust, and trauma, gave way to an era of overstimulation, cheap dopamine thrills, misinformation, and a digital-cultural dependency that stunts our mental wellness sustainability. We have become addicts constantly craving the cotton-candy distractions from our real-world turbulence. But how do we remedy this condition?

While professionals urge communities to create social spaces, encourage personal interactions, and individuals to use support networks and engage in communal activities, more collective efforts from healthcare providers, policymakers, and individuals are required to foster meaningful social connections. Combating this epidemic in these ways often feels like the same old band-aiding and posturing—“subtraction by additions” and hope—rather than implementing true measures of change. We need actual social healthcare and socio-economic aid that targets the roots of our collective despair and the factors perpetuating our declining well-being, such as the monetization of our every waking moment in the name of power, defense, and production.

If that's the case, our condition is highly unlikely to change. So where do we go now? We go where we always do: to each other. Look to direct one-on-one interactions that you have on a daily basis, affecting the life of a total stranger, student, family member, or friend. Endeavor to make connections physically whenever possible. Ask questions, learn facts, accept feelings and opinions—whether in unison or dissent—work on it, and give a damn.

The truth is, not everyone is faring well in this transition to digital life, losing themselves in the parasocial chasms of modernity. Socializations will soon be ubiquitously artificial, rendered, and disseminated by the technocrats who perpetuate our condition. That's okay. If it isn't for you—which you can tell by how it makes you feel—make your own way socially. Be yourself and find your people. Seek out those who appreciate direct communication, the natural world, openness, humility, failure, and vulnerability. Destroy the notions that suspend you in cultural pitfalls like FOMO, the vanity of oversharing, objectivism/individualism, and the obsession with winning. Not all assimilation is necessary, sufficient, or meaningful. Your life actually depends on it.

I.

“Communion”

50.8x38.1 (20x16)

Acrylic, Acrylic Plaster, Gesso on Cotton

2024

With the advent of integrated and ubiquitous Ai for both business and personal usage, as well as the integration of technology in all facets of our daily lives, we are living in the society of our future visions. It's not pretty, and I reckon it won't be in our lifetimes. And while resistance, as wide-scale social revolution, to this individualist, virtual social framework is ultimately an empty and futile gesture, we are left with the aching existential pang of how to maintain our humanity when it seems to be, by the day, waning further and further. Humanity is medicine. What we have left are the individual interactions of the physical world in which we still exist. The antidote to this New World and its sterile, automated functions is to take advantage of each and every opportunity to delight in the humanity of the smaller things: Interactions with strangers; quality, physical time with friends and family; phone calls and coffee dates in lieu of texts and emails; feet in grass and walks in nature; an onus on the activities that are uniquely human. Much like in the 90's, when we had deliberate space and time for virtual life (“going online”), as a novel detour to our everyday, we can invert this landscape and enrich ourselves in communal offline practices. We cannot eradicate social media or Ai or Zoom at this time, but we can rise above this tectonic social shift in bits and pieces by negotiating our time and place in it, carving out the space to exercise that which is uniquely us.

A.



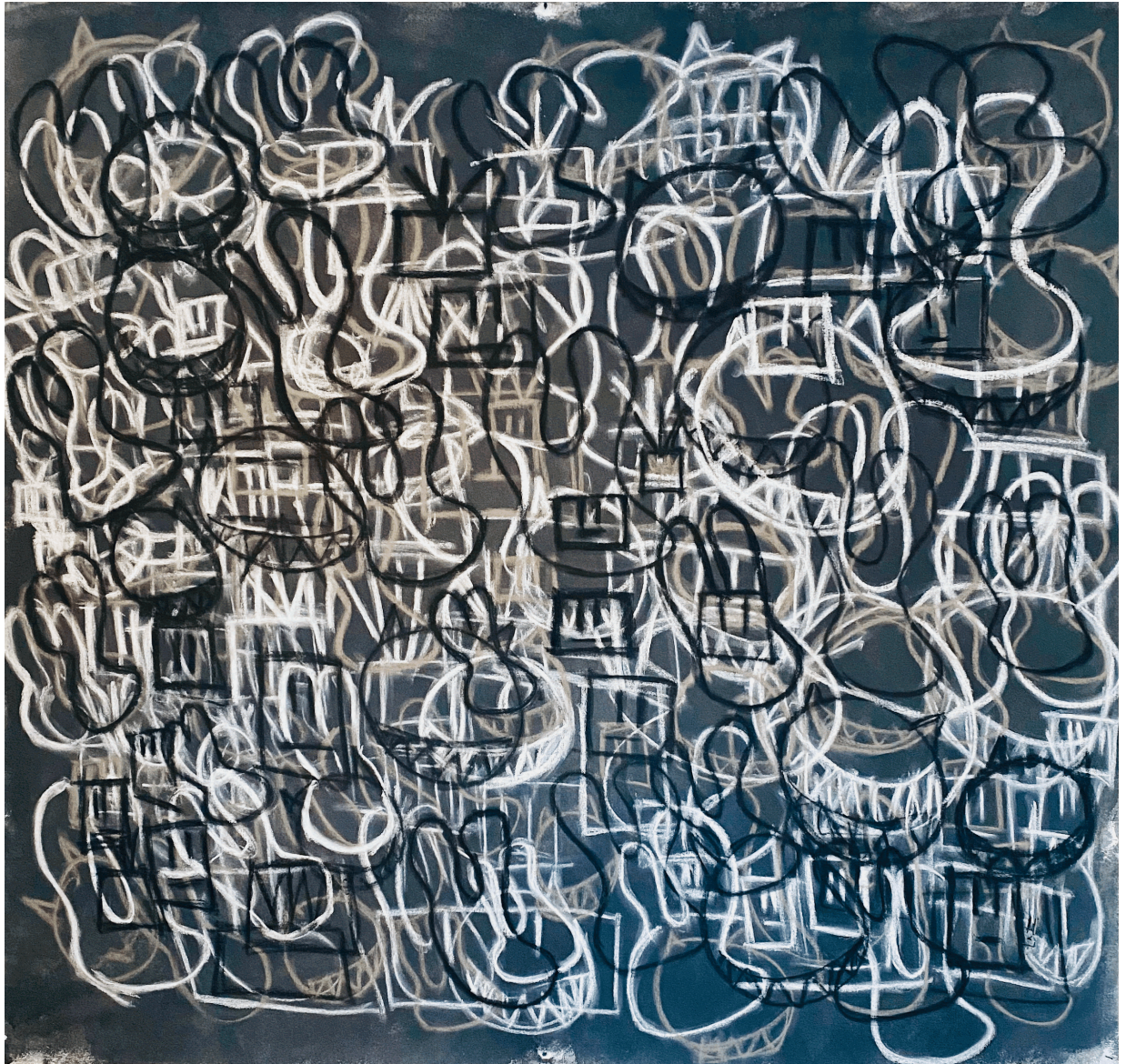
B.



C.



D.



E.



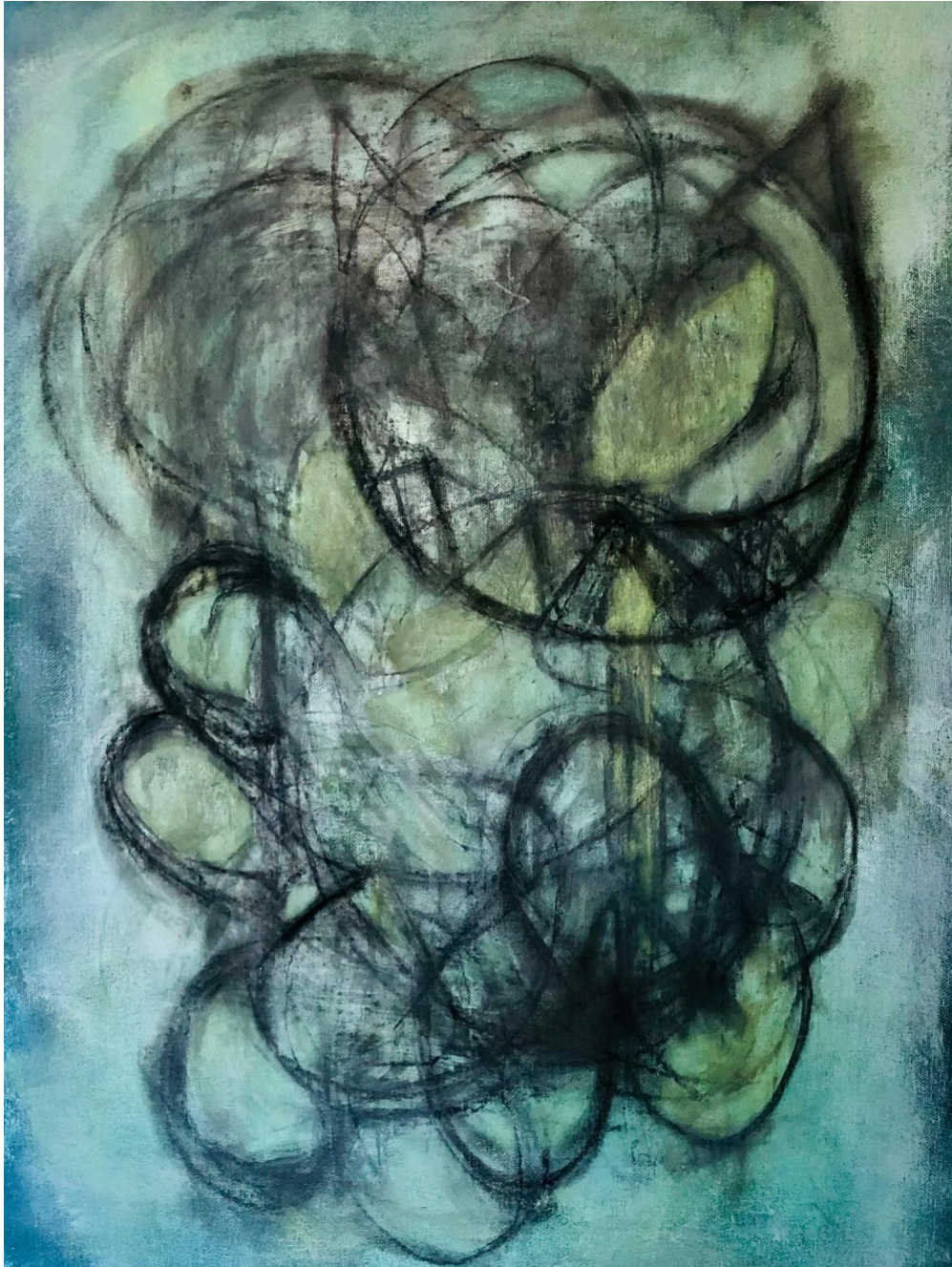
F.



G.



H.



I.

