INTERVIEW

**A: You Say that your work is based upon your anxiety with other people, so in this particular piece are you drawing people that you personally know?**

*B: The painting that I am working on right now is three guys I know plus myself. These portraits are of people who are emotionally influential in my life. The point is to connect us on paper and process our relationship. The people in this piece with me I consider brothers. I am 21 one of my brothers is 26, the other is 30, and the last is 35. We have met each other at different points of our lives, and two of them I met as a RA at Alabama School of the Fine Arts. The other brother was a friend of our friends. None of us have real brothers, but we do everything that brothers do to form this bond. I have a lot of people that fall into my life for a reason, but it is still hard for me to subside to weakness and be vulnerable with people. It is not so much of problems with sharing stories about myself it is more so like sharing yourself allowing people to trust you and you trust them.*

**A: So, it seems like each one of these for you are an exploration of yourself and it is going to become a lesson. Is there a lesson about yourself that maybe you have learned while creating this piece?**

*B: Not so much something that I didn’t know, but definitely confronting some things that I did know about myself. It forces me to think about my physical insecurities, which leads to me thinking about my emotional insecurities.*

**A: I understand that you are switching it up possibly for the next one, but if you did a second one would it be like this one and offer the anxiety of bodies all crammed into this one space?**

*B: The cramming is more about intimacy than anxiety; I never thought of it in that way that’s an interesting point. The next ones I don’t want to focus on our bodies as much because it is not necessarily the important part. The process is the most important part because it is the process of processing emotions through painting. I do enjoy the physical body though, specifically the black body. I have become fonder of black bodies as I get older seeing the importance and the beauty with the connection. Most of the artists I am drawn to are from the Jack Shaman Gallery and they all have their own take on black bodies. I admire that and want to be a part of that, but not so much as creating political art. Mine is more about work that uplifts the black body. However, I do want to focus now more on the emotion and be open and transparent about how I portray that.*

**A: One Thing I find interesting is you describe your fear of intimacy, but at the same time you are putting it on such a permanent plane because it is there for everyone to see. So when you are doing it does it add on to the fear or release it?**

*B: It is more of a release my fear is not necessarily always there; it is more like I am confronted by our relationship. When I am around my brothers or people in general I have anxiety. When I am around people I have a hard time talking to them and with letting things go and being open. The canvas just allows me to actively think about our relationship without the anxiety of the relationship.*

**A: Since you are on this path of discovery or acknowledging what you are subsiding, have you discovered a moment in time that made you have this anxiety side? Or do you think you were born that way?**

*B: Thinking about it, all throughout my life I have grown up in a house where my parents didn’t really let me out of the house. So, I was never really around other kids. I really just sat at home and my parents really wanted me to focus on academics rather than play. I was doing homework more than interacting with others. I was never really big on interaction with people until I moved away for school in ninth grade. Then I was forced to be with people, but even then I was still stuck in a cemented box. I was not really getting out much then either and never forced to make these long lasting friendships created outside of some institution. There is a lack of I really don’t know how to do that at all.*

**A: Do you think that when the series is complete that you will look back and say that you have improved the relationships with the people who inspired the artwork?**

*B: Not at the moment, I don’t think that I have progressed enough through the series to make such a claim. I think at some point I will because I have been discovering things along the way. On the simplest level, it just makes me more mindful of these relationships rather than when I am in conversation with them. The artwork acts as a reminder to be more open and communicate in those relationships.*

**A: I am curious since this next piece is going in a different direction what will the size be? Will it be a painting or a print?**

*B: It will be a painting, but it might be more abstracted. I have said from the beginning that I have wanted my work to be more abstracted, but something keeps holding me back pushing me to focus more on the body itself, even though I am not interested in it necessarily. It may come from my troubles with painting the body itself. I am intrigued by the nuances of skin, but I do want to paint abstractly. I think it is time to reconcile with that.*

**A: I am not a painter, but what I am seeing in this piece the skin has this orange tone to it. Will the final color have the orange hue or will their skin be painted over really dark?**

*B: That is pretty much how the tones will be. I wanted to portray the differences in the skin tones. I didn’t want to paint them really flat, but I am a dark skinned guy. We all have different tones though actually one of them has a medium skin tone and another has a really light one.*

**A: Are you going to be doing any work involving people that you are not close to anymore because they chose not to be close to you?**

*B: I have not thought about that. Maybe, I mean it just depends on what I am thinking about before I begin a piece. For someone with such a lack of intimacy, I tend to think about people a lot. I am really emotional person so there are times were I am dwelling on my emotions. Maybe I could explore that though. There are people in my life who have made a big impact who are not necessarily as influential as they used to be, especially the ones not involved at all anymore. I may do that in the future.*

**A: Are you going to be focusing on any point of your childhood or are you going to just continue with you as you now?**

*B: I don’t know, in the past I have made a lot of work that is really personal. I do think art should be personal, but it should also be relatable. I do not like to be supper personal especially when it comes to my childhood. I do not like dwelling in the past as much as I do shoving forward. I have had troubles in my past that have led me to the problems that I have today, but I do not like to dredge them up. So no, I do not think I will be exploring that in these pieces.*

**A: What would you say is the pace of these? Do they come quickly? Are they something you visualize finished before you start or do you start them and watch them unfold?**

*B: I have an image in my head and understand how it should be. I really like layering things and that is hard to do in my head. On this last piece I saw the composition of the figures and had my brothers come pose for them based off of that. However, I do not know how the background will look. This piece focuses on the body, but that is only the surface of what I want to do. I think what I initially visualize gets created, but it has some differences due to the process.*

**A: You say that the foundation for this piece is the body. So, what do you want the audience to experience second with your work?**

*B: I am not sure. I have always been fascinated with artists who make work that is not so forward. People might never understand what they are portraying or seeing, but it is personal symbolism. I want to be one of the people who has the guts to do that. For me, my work used to need to be very forward and less ambiguous to show my concept, even though I don’t want to do that anymore. I want to become more spontaneous with what imagery I want to be there, but also be more honest about it.*

**A: Would you rather your audience feel vulnerable or feel your vulnerability in the work?**

*B: Both I guess. I feel like they will feel my vulnerability because the bodies including my self-portrait are nude. There is a lot of issues with nudity like masculinity and insecurities. I do want them to feel vulnerable themselves though. As an artist I have always wanted to create a threshold to reach their emotions. I think of art as a three-way conversation me to my work, my work to me, and my work to the viewer.*