

Apocalypse Family Pt. 1
by Casey Hallas

At the end of my contract at Big Image Systems, where I worked a production artist creating textile backdrops and scenery, and in light of COVID's impact on live entertainment - I sold my house in Boise, ID and moved to a small RV park in Eastern Oregon. Vale is located about an hour and fifteen minutes from The Gem Center for the Arts in Boise where I kept my music and AV studio. I lived in a camper for about a year, painting in the yard and bathing in a local hot spring at Owyhee Reservoir.

Some of the paintings shown in this group were started many years ago in Pittsburgh and finished in Boise prior to 2020 but have not been exhibited or have changed significantly enough to be shown again and included in this collection.

My medium is generally paint - though I am incorporating techniques I learned as a theatrical production artist. My studio in Boise for 2018-2019 was located at the Midtown Business Plaza in Garden City. A man by the name of Gino White kept a shop across the parking lot where he produced art objects using a CNC routing machine. Many of the stencils used in these paintings came from Gino. I've also incorporated textile printing and printing on paper from Big Image and others as collage elements.

The paintings presented here are generally abstract - but as I progressed they went from unconscious and expressionistic to abstractions about something. I realized that painting without an idea used a lot of the medium before I figured out what I was trying to say with a piece. I would work on multiple pieces at once laid out across the yard until something emerged - a symbol, or a theme that I could work toward. I started to enjoy painting outside as an activity - the sun and breeze - and even the dirt became part of my process, at least, my companions.

A friend and mentor in Pittsburgh - Mark Gualieri - said to me at Pengilly's Saloon in Boise while he was visiting with my sister, "abstraction is often abstraction OF something." And based on this I started making works that began with an idea or emotion instead of working from just raw gesture or my unconscious.

I found that once I started working on painting and music full-time and developing my new website, Infinite Tapestry Co., which is also the name of my music label and production company, the reflection on my personal history and state of being - coupled with the reality of COVID 19 - I had entered a kind of personal apocalypse. I spent most of my days remembering the people I loved, considering the events and perceptions of my ambition, and contemplating the ways in which my communication had been obtuse, absurd and difficult for some of the people in my life to understand. At least, relationships ended in ways I didn't predict or desire.

These people, the ones I loved the most - are my Apocalypse Family. And most of the paintings in this group will be about those people and the themes of a philosophy that did not necessarily produce the life that I wanted. I learned to communicate through painting and song-writing, where in life it was much harder to reach out and connect and in dealing with "normal" people I was often unclear and closed off.

Making art is what is normal to me so my normal life is filled with activities related to the spiritual and emotional need to create. In the end, the loneliness of this time, the elation and inspiration as well, becomes the subject of these paintings. It's been a life that got me very close to poverty, and for many of us who see the arts as a means of survival - we realize - also put me in proximity to people who were abusive and dismissive, just as I had put myself into the arts because I was traumatized.

This is my story. I am telling it through paint. But I also want to share the meaning of the paintings when I exhibit them, as well and make my studio an open venue for sharing and storytelling. This is both because I feel the meaning of the paintings is best understood as I am able to explain them, and because I lost my voice in the past. In part, the art speaks for me when I was not able to speak for myself.

I'm working on a documentary series with my friend and colleague Andy Brooks (TruTV) - something we're calling Painting with Paint so the creation of many of these works were captured on digital video. We're using some of my original music and compositions by Sam Saunders based on the names of these paintings. The final show will also be documented and turned into a feature film - called Apocalypse Family.

Cumulatively there will be close to 75 works included in this collection. These early pieces demonstrate learning to control abstract aspects of the medium as I work toward a body of figurative pieces using models and still lifes I've photographed. This is also how I express love and I hope will show you what I love about art.

Scale Map of Finished Paintings





Brighton Holiday (Those Cats Had Fun at the Sea) - 60" x 72" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Just Enough for the Stimulus - 72" x 48" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Squares Dropping Color Bombs - 72" x 48" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Cernunnos (Lord of Wild Things) - 66" x 54" mixed media on canvas, 2023
The Trees are Bleeding - 48" x 24" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Physical Graffiti (with Sam Saunders) - 52" x 37" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Beatlejuice Beatlejuice - 31" x 24" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Astroidea - 48" x 78" mixed media on felt-lined plastic tablecloth, 2023
Baby Shower - 46" x 74" mixed media on felt-lined plastic tablecloth, 2023
Summertime Sadness - 46" x 74" mixed media on felt-lined plastic tablecloth, 2023
Three Sisters (1 of 3 from triptych) - 42" x 54" mixed media on printed vinyl, 2023
Contrecoup - 38" x 54" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Kubrik's Opus 1 - 46" x 80" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Kubrik's Opus 2 - 46" x 80" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Leif Buffet (sold) - 21" x 74" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Dortmund Connection - 21" x 44" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Quinoa (triptych) - 3 at 16" x 12" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Quinoa (detail) - 16" x 12" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Apocalypse Family (horizontal) 4 at 30" x 15" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Apocalypse Family (vertical) 4 at 15" x 30" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Burial at Sea - 52" x 22" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Twin (w/ Rascal) - 24" x 12" textile collage on canvas, 2023
Geezer Butler (Blas Cain) - 23" x 32" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Wide Open Spaces - 20" x 16" mixed media on canvas, 2023
Barley (diptych) - 2 at 20" x 16" mixed media on canvas, 2023
White on White (Mr. Owl) - 34" x 48" mixed media on printed canvas, 2023
Light in the Desert - 32" x 54" mixed media on printed canvas, 2023