

Statement of Purpose

In this series of paintings, my goals are to re-interpret an image, anonymously culled from the internet, using the technologies of representation to further abstract and de-familiarize our most penetrating sign of identity: the face. I use the face as an armature, to destabilize the 'humanist subject' from a posthuman vantage point. My goal is to ask; can a change in our technologies of representation also affect the stability of our identity? With this grant, I will be able to extend my investigations another year.

The subtext of my paintings addresses an age of biotechnologies and its digital re/deconstruction. I paint my subjects as contradictory and unstable, in an un-fixed position (optically and conceptually), courting a felt tension between rupture and rigidity in the construction of the painting. These paintings play with the boundaries separating the organic/machinic, human/non-human, interiority/exteriority, and self/other binaries. In abstracting the human face, I aim to de-familiarize or estrange this culturally created identity in order to critically distance oneself enough to analyze and assess the contemporary subject in crisis.

This grant will financially impact my goals of extending this visual vocabulary of identity by allowing me to purchase materials and studio time to extend my painting series one year. Because my paintings are perhaps antagonistic to market concerns in favor of rigid and critical explorations into the new definition of humanity, this grant will greatly help to keep me painting here in Southern California and further my investigations into (post)humanity.

Justin Bower