

Man Made
Bryan McGinnis

“Man Made” is a series of inkblot-like designs depicting late American icons such as John F. Kennedy and Abraham Lincoln. Their legacies have impacted me for their admirable leadership qualities and their accomplishments in terms of social rights. Both are men that I chose to reference as I begin to question what defines me as man.

My paintings are birthed from found photos manipulated into designs reminiscent of inkblots. As I paint, I’m fascinated by distorting symmetry and alternate applications of abstraction with color. In terms of material I am utilizing wood, canvas and clay as conventions of earthy resources that will extend surfaces and allude further into my examination of a complex masculinity. The hard edge and firm textures executed through my materials adds physical weight to each painting, mirroring my idea of a masculine embodiment. These dramatic underpaintings often enhance the contrast of the deep browns and laminate the high intensity between the individual and the masculine world.

Along with the paintings are quilt-like ceramic tiles sewn together to form other ink blot designs. These creations were made to mimic the paintings; however, they pay tribute to design aesthetics and materials interacting together. I was inspired by the quilt work my mother created when I was a child. I felt that this body of work needed to focus on characters that exude masculine qualities, therefore the fathers of the icons were included as well to play on the influences that my mother had on me.

In conclusion, Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy are honorable and noteworthy through their masculinity because they show the strength to fight, the desire to live a life filled with adventure, and the ability to appreciate atypical displays of beauty. Consequently, I am redefining and then expressing my own masculine qualities and building an appreciation for my masculine-self through the importance of theirs.