

# BOYCE CUMMINGS

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Born and raised in Denver, Colorado, Boyce Cummings moved to Chicago in 1992 where he was awarded the Merit Scholarship from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago, which he attended from 1992 - 1995. He moved to New York in 1996 and maintained a studio in Brooklyn. After studying painting at The School of Visual Arts in NYC, he received an MFA in studio art in 2002.

Cummings, then living in Manhattan, maintained a painting studio in Long Island City, Queens, NY from 2002- 2008. Boyce Cummings has exhibited steadily in galleries and museums throughout the United States and abroad, including several solo exhibitions.

In addition to the Merit Scholarship, he has been awarded grants from ARTISTSPACE in NYC and The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. He was given the Stacey S. Sussman traveling fellowship from the School of Visual Arts and was a finalist for the 2008 Ida Applebroog Award from EXIT ART.

In 2005, Cummings was awarded the Rome Prize, a much-coveted award offered by the The American Academy in Rome. As the Chuck Close Fellow in Visual arts, he took residency at the Academy in Italy from 2005-2006.

Upon returning home to NYC he has continued to exhibit. He has also been included on panel discussions as well as lectured and conducted fine art and critical analysis seminars for New York's School of Visual Arts, Temple University, Florida Atlantic University, and The Crossing Cultural Center in Queens NY. He has also conducted slide lectures on his work at The School of Visual Arts, NY, the American Academy in Rome, and Temple University in Rome. In addition he has lead art classes for at risk teenagers in association with NY Public School System and Rush Philanthropic. Cummings organizes and conducts a studio criticism group consisting of many art and art world professionals in NYC.

Cummings work has been published most recently in 2008 by Luxe Books as illustrator for the book Fliesche Geworden by poet Craig Arnold.

# Personal Statement

The Concept of Versus dominates my work.

Man vs. animal, Machine vs. nature, realism vs. abstraction, old vs. new, finished vs. unfinished, high art vs. low art and losing vs. winning. I use a combination of abstraction, traditional representational painting combined with graffiti and cartoon elements, all pushed through a somewhat surrealist filter. In many cases I feel that this perception that certain things are at odds, can in some ways be the very glue that connects them. I feel that this apparent confusion is what makes the world interesting.

I am the product of a biracial marriage my mother is Norwegian, my father Black. Having been brought up as I was, I have always had an ability to see both sides of the fence. I tend to avoid using people as subject matter, I try to avoid the common argument of racial politics. I grew up in Colorado and have always had a close connection to nature. I use animals and symbolic elements as stand ins, By doing so I am trying to create something that I hope, has the ability to be more universal. That said I focus almost entirely on my own interior world. Each painting for me is a highly personal matter.

I believe that for my work to be meaningful, even if it is only meaningful to me, it must be true. One of the ways that I attempt to do this is by using a somewhat rigid system of personal symbols; for example, I use the image of a trumpet as the symbol for arrival, or the ellipse' as a symbol for trap. Blue birds were originally a symbol for oppression {appropriated from Disney's "Song of the South"}. Some symbols remain as constants while others are cycled out, changed or invented anew. This is how I am trying to tell a truth.

Truth is a relative concept dependant upon consensus. Therefore what is true for me is not necessarily true for the viewer. The viewer must rely upon they're own personal experience to understand what the painting is about. By staying away from issues that are based in fact, which is similar to truth but lacking room for interpretation, I create an ambiguity, which I hope has the ability to "speak " with out having to literally be spoken. In other words,... "If you can say it don't paint it!" This mantra, of course I apply only to myself, but I do use art as a way to talk about things that I feel are true but have no words to support their existence. I use art as a way to sort and sift through my surroundings. Art for me is a is a bi-product of my life.