

PATRICIA SWEETOW GALLERY

77 GEARY STREET MEZZANINE SAN FRANCISCO CA 94108 415.788.5126 F 788.5207

JULIE WEITZ

Artist Statement

My current body of work began with a literal, if not impractical, attempt to represent, as accurately as possible, the portrait of an individual hidden from view, disguised by the covering of a mask. This direction in my work was driven, in part, by my incessant interest in collecting images from the newspaper and the Internet. It was through this process of gathering and sorting through images of individuals wearing masks, gleaned from a variety of contexts, that I discovered the metaphorical potential of these images to represent, through a careful and deliberate method of painting, the desire to understand what remains hidden from view. By meticulously rendering a portrait of an individual whose identity remains concealed, I intend to present a contemplative way of understanding an already loaded and overstated image, while taking into account the contradiction indicative to the representation of a hidden individual.

As my practice has evolved, I have become increasingly interested in breaking apart the traditional form of the portrait and complicating this tidy form of representation by conflating multiple masks into a singular form. I think about these hybrid portraits as a coming together of opposing forces. I construct a space where each form, or individual identity, retains a relative distinctiveness while forced to merge with the contrasting identities around it. This imagined space of coexistence takes the form of repeating layers of pattern and unsettling contrasts of color, which eludes an immediate recognition of individual heads, or identities. In making it difficult to discern what one is looking at, my intention is to make the viewer more aware of the act of looking in the very act of doing so, an informed awareness of the limits of any type of representation to describe complicated and historically loaded relationships.