

Artist Statement

Pat Marino, b.1986 in Plainfield, New Jersey, is a Visual Artist. He has embarked on a creative journey shaped by a profound appreciation for cultural diversity, exploration, and multimedia expression.



Graduating from The College of New Jersey in 2009, Marino's transformative experience in Florence, Italy in 2008 immersed him in its rich artistic heritage, vibrant culture, and European politics, profoundly influencing his artistic voice.

In 2016, Marino relocated to Ningbo, Zhejiang, China, embracing the complexities of Chinese art and incorporating them into his own expressions. The Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 disrupted his life in East Asia, leading him to return to the United States.

Despite the pandemic challenges, Marino adapted and found inspiration in his new surroundings. Enrolling in the Studio Artist lot of Mana Contemporary in Jersey City, NJ in 2022, his work flourished within the exceptional

environment and among fellow artists.

Currently residing in Jersey City, New Jersey, and Seneca Falls, New York, and reflecting on a fusion of diverse cultural influences, exploring the complexities of human existence, Marino aims to bridge cultural divides, provoke introspection, and challenge societal norms through his art, encouraging viewers to question their own perspectives.

Marino's work is characterized by an unwavering curiosity about the world, a thirst for knowledge, and a natural ability for visual storytelling that invites audiences to contemplate the intricacies of the human experience. His work explores the socialization of modern identity, namely in the following contexts: Its conception and projection of both the physical and digital world; the rapidity of the expansion of intelligence and communication in human communities; globalism and its influence on physical and digital life; transcendental biology/sexuality; Theosophy; and the relationship between text, imagery, and silence as equal employments of knowledge, wisdom, critical thinking, and holistic expressionism.

Project Statement: *Existential Sigh*

Curiosity is a basic human trait that affects our learning and decision-making. I guess that's precisely what has drawn me to a concept called "Active Sampling" or intentionally seeking information through exploration. "Active Sampling," and curiosity overall, is crucial for adapting to new situations. I've always been curious.

As one with Existentialist inclinations, I haven't found anything as fascinating or impactful to propel my curiosity as my experiences with psychedelics, namely one big-time experience in late Autumn 2021.

We have found (once again) recently that Psychedelics, like psilocybin and LSD, have shown promising results in treating mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Clinical trials and studies have demonstrated that psychedelic-assisted therapy can have profound and long-lasting therapeutic effects, potentially revolutionizing psychiatric treatment.

Beyond the purview of mental health, however, psychedelics may positively-affect cornerstone-processes, such as decision-making and communication, which is influenced by various factors like social context, reward processing, and cognitive control. Understanding the neural basis of decision-making can provide insights into social cognition, empathy, and interpersonal relationships.

In late 2021, I had a significant experience with an extraordinarily high dosage (70mg) of psilocybin, known colloquially as "Ego Death." It was a powerful and transformative experience that I still think about every day, as it brought forth deep connections, vivid imagery, and a transcendental passage to a deepening spiritual/humanist context – the latter on which I have been teetering my entire life.

Over the months since, I've expressed my experience through a series of visual works. In gestating the experience, I've created a series of mixed media paintings in an attempt to capture and convey the essence of my experience.

I've questioned whether this expression is a contemplation, a construction, or a deconstruction of not just the experience but of my own self and projections of self; however, as I continued working on the series, it became clear to me that it is, simply, a conduit to a universal form of communication.

When I regained a more approachable and navigable state of consciousness in the physical world, I knew that it didn't necessarily require extensive understanding. Instead, it served as a new pathway, guiding me through personal progressions and personal enlightenment.

By sharing my experience, I hope to contribute to a broader societal acceptance of psychedelics as a means of self-care and exploration of “treatment,” namely as an antidote to our contemporary world, as Psychedelics have the potential to become cultural touchstones for individual spirituality, transcending religious or ideological affiliations – namely the “cult” in our modern **culture**.

These substances, which have coexisted with us long before our present or contemporary periods, offer holistic nourishment. One particular experience with psychedelics changed my life, and these works represent my best attempt at communicating their power and wonder.

A. "EgoDeath I: Burnout, by design"

143x147 (56.25x58)

Acrylic / Acrylic Paste / Spray Paint / Acrylic Ink / Soft Pastel on primed cotton

2022

The precursor to the experience: Burnout. We've all been there, be it work, play, family, etc. After having endured the first two years of the Covid-19 Pandemic, I had concluded 2021 finally settling my family's estate, a long-gestating and embittered task left vacant to familial strife. I was elated, relieved, and prideful of this accomplishment, but I was quite burned-out. I had spent the first year of the Pandemic dabbling in therapeutic micro-dosages of psilocybin as "backyard science," but the conclusion of a major portion of my life – and saying goodbye to my roots – seemed no better of a time to consume a "Hero Dosage" of psilocybin mushrooms.

B. "EgoDeath II: Consumption Division

75x139 (29.5x54.72)

Acrylic / Pigment Stick on Primed Cotton

2022

At the onset of a psychedelic experience, just when you are realizing the substances are beginning to take hold, there is a moment when you are straddling a line of the reality of the past and the contemporaneousness of the "trip," a division of space and time that you can see, feel, hear, and perhaps even touch begins to unfurl in front of you. In the case of my experience, it was a division bell of consumptive restoration: An amalgamation of context and a cacophony of sensuality takes hold, like a portal to your experience. Your worlds are divided in front of you in a make-or-break moment of acceptance of the experience.

C. "EgoDeath III: Candy-colored Clown"

59 x 115 (23.25x45.25)

Acrylic, Acrylic paste, Pastel Stick, and Collage on Primed Cotton

2023

"What did you see?" - the answer to which is impossible to articulate. On this occasion, deep into the apex of the experience, I lost consciousness for a brief period (to me, a lifetime; according to my friend, mere minutes) and was enveloped in an exclusively sensory experience that I've only read about in documentary works on the subject: I had no thoughts, no consciousness or conscious expression or inner-monologue, as if I was an observer, privy to something at the core of a great brilliance of light, color, and warmth, strictly the boldest of sensual features. The exclusive, centric self-reference was a warmth the likes of which I had only experienced enraptured by love. It's a cliché, but clichés are apt for a reason: They are accurately depicted. I giant fiery star like that of the sun as sat on a wealth of fire-hued fluidity, like a river of fire. Just love. The only reference to this experience I could muster was the enrapturement of pure, true, deep love - as they say. What may seem to the non-initiated as perhaps scary or garish - hence "this is fine," like the dog cartoon meme - was not at all; it was life-altering, better, it was life-affirming.

D. "EgoDeath IV: You Look Like a Gerhard Richter Painting"

52x45 (20.5x17.75)

Acrylic and Acrylic Marker on Primed Cotton

2023

It's a real trip to see yourself when you're peak-deep on a psilocybin hallucination. The work acts as the mirror in this case, reflecting the often bizarre, very often amusing, sometimes terrifying occurrence of your face, the figurative face, staring back at you. After 70mg of psilocybin, the visage was a peeling back of the layers, in exposition, much like a GR painting features layers of exposure and deconstruction, highlighted by layers of chromatic tones and hues layered in darkness and light: Disjointed, layered, and, most importantly, excavated. Reporting this to a friend, you often hear the response: "Why would you do that? You never look in the mirror." Unless you want a laugh.

E. "EgoDeath V: I Sing the Body Analog"

Acrylic, Acrylic Plaster, Gesso, Charcoal, and Raw Cotton on Framed Canvas

61 x 91.5 (24x36)

2023

An axon, or nerve fiber, is a long, slender projection of a nerve cell, or neuron, in vertebrates, that typically conducts electrical impulses known as action potentials away from the nerve cell body. Each of our cells is alive with a purpose, driven by chemicals, chaos, gradients. We are alive as a whole, striving for connection of some sort - at any level available. This work represents the importance of sponsorship and guardianship in one's psychedelic experience. The presence, support, and accountability of a "trip partner" is invaluable, not just for the aforementioned criteria, but one's own revelations from the experience yields an overwhelming focus on relationships and their importance to human satisfaction and fulfillment. Making a connection is paramount in our lives.

F. "EgoDeath VI: Set and Setting / Perceptual Blending"

121.5x90 (54x40)

Acrylic, Soft Pastel, Acrylic Gel, and Luster Photo Print on Primed Canvas

2023

Synesthesia is a neurological phenomenon in which stimulation of one sensory or cognitive pathway leads to experiences in another unrelated pathway. It is a condition where individuals may involuntarily perceive a blending or overlapping of senses. For example, someone with synesthesia may see colors when they hear music or taste flavors when they see certain shapes.

It's a unique and often vivid experience that varies from person to person; however, when psilocybin is consumed and is converted into psilocin, the empathogen compound in psychedelics, synaesthesia is referred to as "perceptual blending," as the manufacturing of these connections builds a greater, stronger congress of ordinarily benign or non-existing connections, well beyond a natural occurrence of synaesthesia.

This work depicts the "set and setting," or the environment, tone, and vibe of one's psychedelic experience, the highway to "perceptual blending," which, in my case, was a deeply personal pathway to the release of my roots, depicted here by the massive Sugar Maple tree anchoring the visage of my environment that night.

Given the nature of the experience, its set and setting, this event, profound not just in its consumption (the 70mg of psilocybin ingested), but, also, in its purpose: The sale, the relinquishing, of my family's multi-generational home.

To express the therapeutic effect, the hallucinatory effect of and within itself, I cropped a portion of another work from the Post-Pan series, "Untitled 2020: Home," which anchors itself in the narrative as a return to roots, as a self-referential explication of "goodbye," referencing both the thoughts and feelings of the return to the past and simultaneously the closing of it.

G. "EgoDeath VII: An Oceanic Boundlessness (self portrait)"

22.5x22.5 (18x18)

Acrylic, Acrylic Paste, Raw Cotton, Pastel Marker, and Pencil on Framed Canvas

2023

Reproducing a work I made as Karma Art in 2022 for the @jc_artandstudiotour event at Mana Contemporary dedicated to the virtue of consumption, it struck me as being inseparably linked to the lasting effects of my oversized "Herodose" experience in November 2021.

One of the great impressions of that event was the refraction of self in the face of the contemporaneous pressures of modernity.

Seeing myself in the mirror was strictly sensual, an aesthetic exploit and machination serving merely the "tricks" of hallucination.

When you enroll in "herodosing," synaesthesia becomes an internalized state - I do realize how abstract and even counterintuitive that statement may be.

"Seeing yourself" becomes more a spiritual experience than sybaritic (a major characteristic of self-consumption in the Hyper-industrial Western world) - more intolerant than indulgent.

As the final work in this series, it is important in this attempt to synthesize my experience to share the ultimate insight: What costs is not of value, but what is of value costs a paradoxical amount of everything.

A.



B.



C.



D.



E.



F.



G.

