

Jonathan Molvik

While studying abroad in Yogyakarta, Indonesia I came to understand a different idea of space and identity. When I returned, I heard a ringing. My refrigerator sounded like a gamelan orchestra of subtle bells, drums and gongs filtering through my space. Sounds, smells, and sites affected me differently than before going to Indonesia. I felt the layers of experience and memory affecting my perception. I realized how layers of past experiences overlap the present, creating different masks of meaning and how one small smell, sound or color can transport one's experience of being.

Different definitions of masks create layers of meaning in my artwork. A mask works as a disguise that transforms an object. The transformative power of masks manifests most powerfully when connected with another identity. A mask also is a purposeful block, where color cannot be applied, selectively preserving a portion of the image. The result of combining different types masks in regards to the paintings is a new synthesis of color, pattern and identity in the subject matter. Forms and surrounding space become the basis of masks in my paintings.

The idea of the mask is central to both my process and my subject matter. The base layers of my paintings are created from various identities. My latest paintings began with large non-representational abstract images. Some of my mixed-media pieces began as discarded ethnographic photographs from past museum exhibitions. Other pieces began as my past paintings that I have cut apart and re-purposed. Images are masked and selectively painted over. With all of these images the original identity remains a significant part of the composition, forming new relationships with the images that overlay each piece.