



JOHN W. WHITEHEAD

Freedom Amputated

Selected Works, The Joe Center for the Arts, 2025

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work emerges at the intersection of abstraction, symbolism, and social critique. I paint to grapple with the central question of our age: what remains of humanity in a world increasingly dominated by technology, surveillance, and dehumanizing systems?

Pieces such as *What Is Humanity?* explore the fragile boundaries between flesh and machine, spirit and circuitry. Eyes proliferate across bodies, figures are fractured into geometric forms, and the human face becomes both recognizable and alien. These hybrid beings reflect the tension between individuality and control, freedom and conformity.

Although rooted in abstract expressionist energy, my work engages the visual language of the present — circuitry, algorithms, digital distortion — to confront how modern life strips away empathy and identity. Each canvas is less a picture than a question, an invitation to the viewer to consider whether our humanity can endure under constant mechanization and commodification.

I aim for my paintings to feel unsettling yet urgent, a mirror held up to a society sleepwalking into technological servitude, and a reminder that resistance begins with reclaiming what makes us human.

— John W. Whitehead

ABOUT THE ARTIST



John W. Whitehead is an American painter whose work fuses abstract expressionist technique with a contemporary critique of technology and dehumanization. Drawing on his lifelong engagement with questions of freedom, surveillance, and human dignity, John channels these concerns into visual form.

His paintings are populated by fractured figures, proliferating eyes, and geometric fragments, reflecting both the inner turmoil of modern existence and the outer pressures of a society increasingly governed by machines. Whitehead's works range from intimate meditations on the fragility of identity to larger social critiques of authoritarianism and the erosion of liberty. The narrative running through his body of work continues to evolve as part of his broader mission to challenge audiences to question authority, confront conformity, and rediscover the essence of humanity.

Whitehead lives and works in Port St. Joe, Florida, where he divides his time between painting, writing, and advocacy, exploring the fault lines between technology, control, and the human spirit.



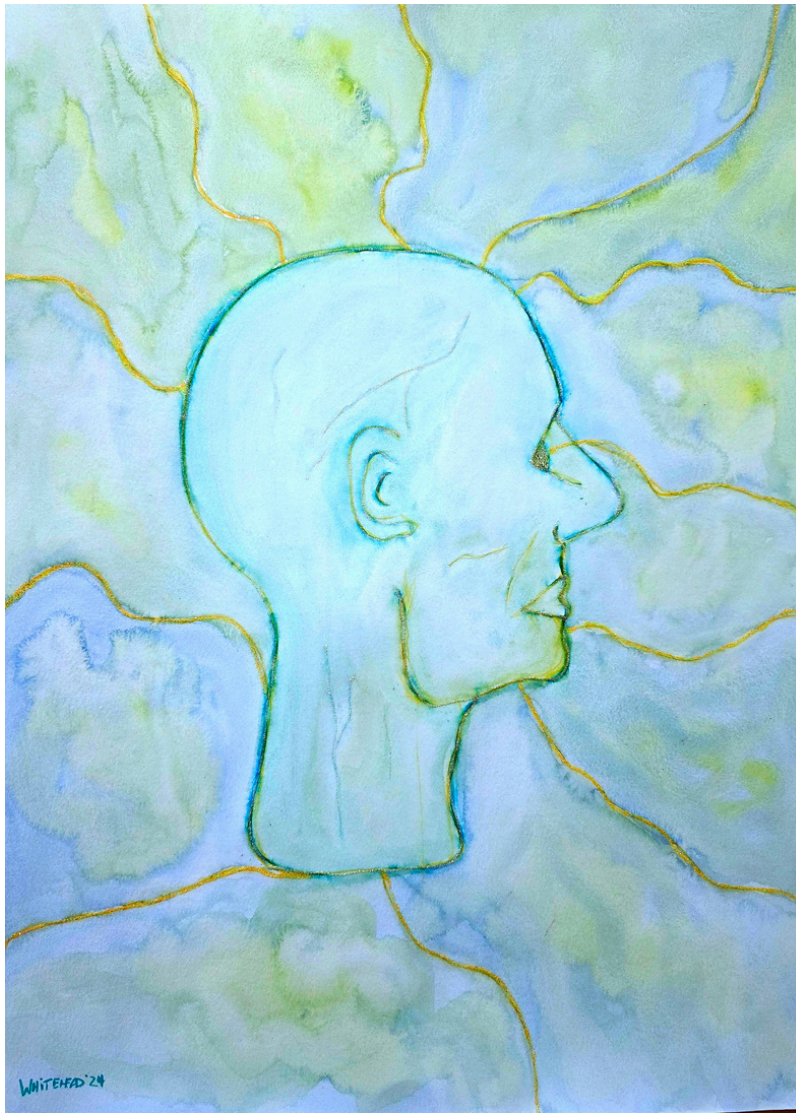
Watching You

Medium: Mixed media on paper (watercolor)

Dimensions: 18" x 24"

Price: \$1500

In *Watching You*, a fractured visage emerges from a swirl of color and shadow, its lone eye staring directly at the viewer. The gaze is unrelenting, piercing, and impossible to escape. What begins as a portrait becomes a meditation on surveillance and the collapse of private space. The work asks: when the act of watching becomes perpetual, do we lose the ability to truly see? The eye becomes both mirror and weapon—reflecting our complicity and warning of the dangers of a world without shadows.



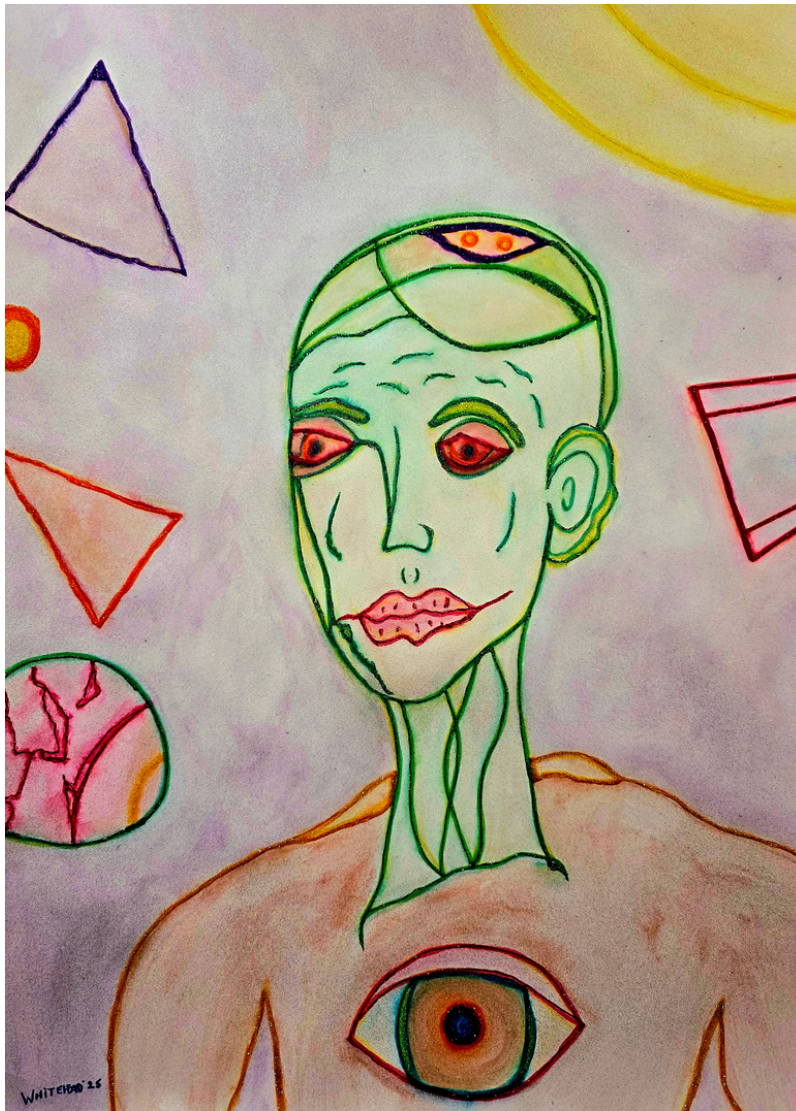
Reception Unit

Medium: Mixed media on paper (watercolor)

Dimensions: 18" x 24"

Price: \$1500

Reception Unit presents the body as a conduit—less flesh than antenna. Geometric shapes, wires, and signal-like markings suggest a human figure repurposed for transmission rather than expression. In this vision, identity is tuned to external frequencies, absorbed into systems of control and broadcast. The work warns that when people are reduced to receivers, individuality is drowned in the static of collective programming.



What Is Humanity

Medium: Mixed media on paper (watercolor)

Dimensions: 18" x 24"

Price: \$1500

What Is Humanity fragments the human form into jagged lines and splintered planes, as though the very idea of personhood were being shattered. The figure is recognizable yet incomplete, as if caught mid-erasure. The work questions whether humanity can persist when reduced to data points, algorithms, and images. In its fractured form lies both a warning and a plea: that to forget the wholeness of the human spirit is to lose it entirely.



Humanity in the Remaking

Medium: Mixed media on paper (watercolor)

Dimensions: 18" x 24"

Price: \$1500

In *Humanity in the Remaking*, the face dissolves into circuitry, its contours rewritten by technological lines of force. The transformation is neither triumphant nor whole—it is grotesque, partial, unsettling. This is not evolution but deconstruction: the human spirit recoded into something unrecognizable. The painting embodies the anxiety of a world in which technology does not merely assist humanity but overwrites it, redefining what it means to exist.



Freedom Amputated

Medium: Mixed media on paper (watercolor)

Dimensions: 18" x 24"

Price: \$1500

In *Freedom Amputated*, the familiar icon of the Statue of Liberty is reimagined as a battered, mournful figure. Her eyes bleed blue tears, her lips drip with blood, and her torch is grotesquely transformed into a stump leaking red. What was once a symbol of enlightenment has become a portrait of mutilation. This work embodies Whitehead's indictment of modern authoritarianism and the erosion of democratic ideals. It is both elegy and warning: liberty can be undone not by external attack, but by internal decay. The grotesque symbolism forces viewers to reckon with what is being lost, and whether freedom can survive the amputations inflicted upon it.



I Am Here. Are You?

Medium: Mixed media on paper (watercolor)

Dimensions: 18" x 24"

Price: \$1500

In *I Am Here. Are You?*, eyes meet the viewer with a mixture of defiance and vulnerability. The directness of the gaze is disarming, a plea as much as a challenge. This work embodies the struggle for presence in an era of absence—where distraction, distance, and screens mediate every connection. It asks not just to be seen, but to be met, to be answered. The silence that follows becomes part of the piece itself.



Biochip Entity

Medium: Mixed media on paper (watercolor)

Dimensions: 18" x 24"

Price: \$1500

Biochip Entity fuses flesh with circuitry, the human face inscribed with the lines of a machine. A triangular “third eye” glows with surveillance, more sensor than symbol, while the electric blue skin suggests a body that has been rewired for the digital age. The glowing background radiates both energy and menace, hinting at the seductive yet destructive allure of technological power. The painting offers no resolution—only the eerie coexistence of human fragility and technological permanence. It is a vision of humanity remade as machine—stripped of individuality, reprogrammed for obedience.



Infinite Eye

Medium: Mixed media on paper (watercolor)

Dimensions: 18" x 24"

Price: \$1500

In *Infinite Eye*, sight multiplies beyond measure—eyes spiral outward in an endless cascade, a cosmos of unblinking vision. What begins as symbol becomes suffocating: there is no escape from the gaze. The work captures the essence of a surveillance state in visual form—total, omnipresent, and devouring. It is not simply that we are seen, but that the possibility of privacy itself disappears.



Alligator Man

Medium: Mixed media on paper (watercolor)

Dimensions: 11" x 14"

Price: \$1500

Alligator Man merges the familiar and the grotesque, depicting a hybrid figure that is part predator, part human. The creature is unsettling precisely because it is recognizable—it reflects back our basest instincts in monstrous form. The painting becomes a metaphor for unchecked power, appetite, and domination. In its reptilian hunger we see the danger of abandoning reason for brutality, and the ease with which humanity can regress into predation.



What Surrounds Us

Medium: Mixed media on canvas (acrylic)

Dimensions: 37" x 24"

Price: \$1500

In *What Surrounds Us*, a solitary yellow figure stands against a vast field of deep blue. Around it drift fragmented faces, spectral outlines that seem to press in but never fully connect. The work conveys the tension between individuality and the forces—social, cultural, technological—that define and encircle us. What surrounds us is never passive; it shapes our identities as surely as our inner lives do.

For Inquiries & Purchases

All works in this catalog are available for purchase exclusively through The Joe Center for the Arts during the exhibition.

Works may be viewed in person at:

The Joe Center for the Arts

201 Reid Avenue

Port St. Joe, FL 32456

Exhibition Dates: September 19 – October 31, 2025

For inquiries, pricing confirmation, or purchase arrangements, please contact:

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A portion of each sale benefits The Joe Center for the Arts.