

# Artist Statement

## Psychological Hieroglyphics

Joshua Michael Schwartz makes paintings that treat abstraction as a psychological record. Working primarily in acrylic and mixed media on canvas, he builds each composition through a cycle of pressure, interruption, revision, and restraint. Repeated figures, circular emblems, lattice structures, thresholds, and compressed spaces form a visual language he describes as psychological hieroglyphics: marks that do not illustrate a single story so much as register states of endurance, fracture, recurrence, and release.

The paintings begin without preparatory drawings. Gesture sets the initial velocity, but the final image is not casual or improvisational. Schwartz slows each surface through sustained editing, erasure, redirection, and hard decisions about when to stop. Saturated color provides immediate access, while the architecture of the composition holds emotional charge in place. Bodies appear, split, repeat, or dissolve; they function less as portraits than as carriers of psychic pressure moving through systems that feel bodily, symbolic, and social at once.

Although the work is informed by lived experience, it is not presented as autobiography. Schwartz is interested in the point where private intensity becomes legible as a shared condition. These paintings ask how abstraction can hold conflict without collapsing into chaos, and how a picture can remain open to projection while still feeling exact. The result is a body of work that rewards sustained looking: vivid on first encounter, then increasingly structured, unstable, and human over time.

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