

**Bo Joseph Artist Statement:**

I employ abstraction as a means to explore and reconcile vast systems of widely disparate world-views, mythologies and cultures. From reproductions in books and auction catalogues on ethnographic art and antiquities, I make stencils that I use to transcribe and layer silhouettes and outlines of objects, abstracting them to strip off any inherent meaning or point of reference and withdraw any cultural context. I use deconstructive, chancy techniques like rinsing, sanding and masking to mirror a transient reality. The resulting hybridized imagery reflects contemporary cultural interdependence.

Central to the techniques I use are two important devices: stencils and resists. One way I make stencils is by cutting out objects on two sides of pages from auction catalogues. The resulting hole or void creates an unexpected hybrid of the objects reproduced on both sides of the page. The stencils have a paradoxical purpose: cutting the stencil voids form, applying the stencil yields form.

Resists come into play in two ways. I either draw directly with a water-soluble tempera, or apply that tempera over a stencil to transfer a silhouette to the work surface. Once that dries, I layer on top with a waterproof media, such as acrylic based ink. Later, I rinse the piece, dissolving and releasing the tempera below, revealing lower layers. Voids appear solid and positives appear negative. By burying these masked-off tempera shapes, I insert phenomena that will later reveal unexpected results.

With techniques described above, I "mine" the layers of universality underlying disparate cultural sources. I embrace the inevitability of cultural intermingling by scavenging and hybridizing archetypal forms. I also "mine" the layers of imagery in the unfolding image, "unearthing" unexpected contexts and new understandings.

