

NICHOLAS WOLFSON

Nicholas Wolfson lives and works in New York City and Rincon, Puerto Rico. He is a graduate of Columbia University in New York, and served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in West Africa. His paintings hang in private and institutional collections in the United States, Europe, Latin America, the Near East, and Asia.

Artist's Statement:

My painting style is figurative expressionism and explores two primary themes.

First, it takes a critical view of social, political, and cultural issues. I often use humor to portray creepy villains and political buffoons. I want to make the tragic, the ghastly, and the venal in contemporary life complex and attractive to the viewer.

The second theme in my work relates to Buddhist sacred painting. I explore primal spiritual and emotional states - mostly relating to bliss and fear. These heightened sensations make the work almost hallucinogenic for me. A varied assortment of characters appear, helping to enhance the experience. Some are clearly human, others are gargoyles, imagined totems, or grotesques.

The tension for me as a painter lies between the creation of boisterous, intrusive work while also maintaining a high quality of artistic execution. I intend for my painting to be well-crafted yet sardonic, even rude. Using a light and humorous touch, I hope to transcend the sand-traps of heavy-handed grandstanding, melodramatic sentimentality, and soon-outdated mockery.

I have relied on the traditional use of drawing and composition combined with a free and liberal use of color. I think bright colors act as a foil for the satirical and creepy aspects of my work and make them more palatable and attractive to the audience.

I am influenced by surrealists such as Rene Magritte. Frequently I deliberately make the story of each painting difficult and obscure. This allows viewers to participate in unraveling the narrative of the painting for themselves, and perhaps to have new insights. An unhurried look at these paintings can reveal hidden references and surprising relationships.