

I often work intensely from series to series, moving through bodies of work like completing thoughts. Currently I am developing two bodies at once, and just as one thought flows into another, these two series speak to and inform each other. "Broken Logic" (*Midi's Sister Under Oath, Hal at the Witness Stand, Johnson's Purgatory, etc.*) is an ongoing series of paintings about the traumatic murder of my great-aunt in the mid-1930's, and how her murder and the internment of Japanese peoples during WWII caused my family to splinter for the next 90 years. The series also investigates recollection and memory as necessary tools to center one's ethnic and racial identity. My intent behind the work is not only to begin healing and reunifying my family, but to also inspire other *nikkeijin* to remember their ancestors and connect. My other current series, "Ox.", explores the many expressions of gender fluidity and mixed-race identity. I created Ox in 2017 when I was questioning my gender identity before coming out, and continue to paint Ox today. "Broken Logic" is expressive of a broader connection to the Japanese diaspora, the relationship between the United States and Japan, both countries' capacities for violence, oppression and exploitation, and the concepts of dual and uniform cultural identities. "Ox." is expressive of the self as a world in its own right: a place where one can exist in multiplicity. "Broken Logic" extends outward to the larger world, and "Ox." focuses on the internal thoughts and feelings that make up Person and Perspective.

Before ever touching the surface of the canvas, it's important to me to spend time researching. I gather photographs, readings, interviews, testimonies, and stories to contextualize peoples' experiences in the time they lived in, and ultimately to understand their perspectives with a holistic approach. When I am ready to start, I loosely reference a variety of photographs and use the canvas to layer compositional elements in transparent washes, adding and subtracting them until the painting emerges.

When painting representations of myself as Ox, (*To Hold a Blessing Hand, Shadow Play*) the process is more journalistic. I begin spontaneously with no references or readings, and allow myself to paint intuitively. Ox represents the concept of the body as a vessel for the soul, as opposed to an indicator or monolith of gender, and the canvas serves as a safe space to observe and express gender flux. As a result, Ox is depicted in a wide variety of forms and environments. Painting Ox is a means of making my internal thoughts and feelings around identity external, and the viewer becomes a confidant.

My two favorite times of day are early morning and sunset because of the light's capacity to make anything it touches glow like fire. I am interested in what this specific quality of light can convey when being emitted by figures, and how the meaning behind a "human glow" can change when contained, controlled, or threatened. When I start, I take the golden glow of the sun and imbue it in the surface of my paintings— a ground made up of indian yellow and burnt sienna. To let the warm ground shine through, I paint in transparent washes of color and remove a little at a time with a rag until the imagery bursts from the canvas. When it is ready, I build up thicker layers of paint around it, wiping frequently to create halos and highlights from the layers underneath. In this way, drawing is an important process for the way that I paint, and leads the oil paintings to resemble watercolor. The results are imaginary scenes that are surreal and coded, in a dark yet saturated palette.