

## ARTIST STATEMENT

Eric Kersten

It was not until halfway through my environmental engineering degree that I realized I had given up on one of my most unique characteristics. All throughout my life I had excelled at art and yet I was two years through my college career and had not seen the inside of a studio. Although the logistics were difficult I was determined to incorporate my love for art into my time at Lehigh. After meeting with an art and architecture advisor I decided upon minoring in studio art with a focus in painting. Painting is a way for me to represent my feelings, emotions, and philosophy through color. I feel a sense of belonging when I am making art, whether it be painting, designing, or creating clothing

My goal for this exhibition was to develop my own distinct style as an artist. I pull inspiration from all corners of life for my art. Whenever something catches my eye, I pull out my phone to capture it—whether it be the striking figure of a building against the sky, a cobweb encasing a flower, or a blurred picture of my friends. The artistic movements that helped bring my vision to life are Bauhaus, Tachisme, and Abstract Expressionism. My creative process involves intentionally taking blurry photographs, then manipulating them in photoshop. Although, once I put paint to canvas my work transcends the source imagery. Many times, I will start in one direction and at the completion of the painting I will have ended up in a different direction. That is why I love painting; it is fluid and feels natural.

For this body of work, I used acrylic paint on stretched canvas. Acrylic paint is conducive to my artistic process because it allows me to build a multitude of layers in a short amount of time. The theme of my work is abstraction from reality. Within my paintings, I explore the abstract aspects of life such as the passing of time and my perception of reality. Through shape

and size I quantified time and using color I invoked a sense of movement. However, the beauty of abstract art is that it cannot be objectively defined or categorized. The experience is solely dependent on the observer's own thoughts and feelings.