My work is informed by a transient culture where experience is democratized. Raised in a hotel on the Las Vegas Strip, I witnessed a city constantly working to reinvent itself, absorbing popular culture into its preexisting fabric. My surroundings were that of an urban environment where access transcended location and reproductions offered standardized experiences tailored to collective understandings of beauty and pleasure. Las Vegas is a simulacrum that reflects the contemporary American vernacular; devoid of specificity, it is a cultural melting pot ripened with kitsch sensibilities and saturated with excess. It is this lack of specificity, a byproduct of excess and immediacy, which inspires my current studio practice.

Operating in a space between comprehension and discomfort, I investigate familiarity as a framework for introducing new interpretations of preexisting subjects. Beginning with found representation, such as stock photography, I contextualize a vocabulary on the peripheral of contemporary culture within the lineage of art history. I explore generalized understandings of beauty and representation in my work as a response to the loss of specificity fostered by our current jpeg-circulating culture.

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/* Style Definitions */table.MsoNormalTable {mso-style-name:"Table Normal"; mso-tstyle-rowband-size:0; mso-tstyle-colband-size:0; mso-style-noshow:yes; mso-style-priority:99; mso-style-parent:""; mso-padding-alt:0in 5.4pt 0in 5.4pt; mso-para-margin:0in; mso-para-margin-bottom:.0001pt; mso-pagination:widow-orphan; font-size:12.0pt; font-family:Cambria; mso-ascii-font-family:Cambria; mso-ascii-theme-font:minor-latin; mso-hansi-font-family:Cambria; mso-hansi-theme-font:minor-latin;}Engaged in an art historical dialogue that includes the evolution of observational painting into abstraction, my work raises questions of authorship and individuality in collective value systems. Incorporating process as a form of content I employ an arc of mark making techniques used throughout the 20th century in conversation with painting history.
Collapsing the space between photomechanical and handmade representation my work undermines perceptual understandings of exclusivity and reproduction in the arts.
ERIK BEEHN