



MANLY-MANifest destiny, 80 x 36 inches, Mixed media, \$6,000.

Joshua Hicks

Artist Bio

Joshua Hicks is a Cherokee mixed media artist based in Arkansas. Raised in a rural working-class environment, he studied art and filmmaking at the University of Oklahoma before moving to Los Angeles, where he worked in film production as a key grip and gaffer.

His background in filmmaking developed an interest in composition, lighting, visual narrative, and the construction of images. Hicks later built a career in advertising and marketing, working as a Creative Director and creative strategist for agencies and major national brands. That experience in commercial image-making, storytelling, and popular culture continues to inform his perspective as a painter.

Throughout his career, Hicks has maintained a visual art practice. Working primarily in gouache, watercolor, acrylic, and mixed media, he creates detailed works on paper that often evolve into larger paintings on canvas, plywood, and reclaimed surfaces.

His work draws from his Cherokee heritage, rural upbringing, popular imagery, and the visual language of American culture. Sardonic humor plays a central role in his approach to messaging, allowing his paintings to address identity, appropriation, representation, and cultural contradiction without becoming overly didactic. Hicks has exhibited his artwork in Los Angeles and currently lives and works in Arkansas.

Artist Statement

My work explores Native identity, cultural appropriation, and the contradictions of representation through humor, irony, and visual storytelling. As a Cherokee mixed media painter, I draw from both my heritage and my rural working-class background, using familiar figures and iconography to question how Native people and cultures have been portrayed, consumed, and reimaged.

I often begin with detailed drawing or gouache / watercolor paintings on paper, then transfer and reinterpret those images on larger canvases or wood surfaces. Recycled paint, salvaged plywood, and other found materials are central to my process. Their wear and history become part of the narrative, reflecting resourcefulness, memory, and the realities of growing up with limited means.

My messaging is intentionally indirect. Sardonic humor, and the collision of different media create space for discovery rather than explanation. Unlike my work in advertising and marketing, where messaging is often designed to be immediate and precise, my paintings resist a prescribed conclusion. I want viewers to bring their own histories, associations, and learned understanding into the work. That personal interpretation becomes part of the piece itself, giving the viewer a sense of ownership over the narrative and allowing meaning to emerge through the viewing experience.