

DAVID McGEE  
In the Studio

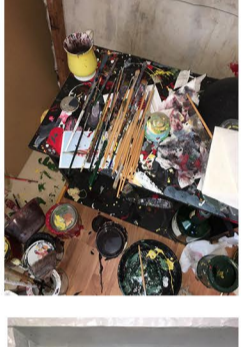
*As I sit here sheltering in place with my family, I think about how America will be forever changed by COVID-19. I am reminded how art can heal, clarify, illuminate, agitate, or calm.*

*In 2017, I began a series of paintings titled 'Urban Dread' which has since become ongoing. The paintings themselves measure 24 x 18", are all oil and mixed medium on burlap, and they use only black and white; no figures exist.*



Installation, 2019, The Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont

*Flat plains of black and white arranged in various compositions are stand-ins for landscape, emotional weight, racial conflict, police cars, hospitals, churches, black hair, graffiti, self-portraits, segregation, city planning, and in a recent painting titled 'Memorial Drops' there are symbols of blood and tears and the blackening coal mining of earth.*



*When asked, "How can the simplicity of the paintings convey such emotions?", I respond by saying our perceived ideas of our own humanity and the warping of all the visuals we take in internally can often be reduced to flattened and vacuumed emotional space; such feelings do affect us externally. In that regard, social distancing has been with us for quite some time. I want the paintings to reflect that intensity of space, to purge dark from light and vice versa. I also wanted to express the real fear of African Americans in urban cities in that we didn't need a pandemic to already feel the health disparities and the economic woes that press upon us.*



Installation, 2017, Texas Gallery



Good Fences (Black)



Good Fences (White)



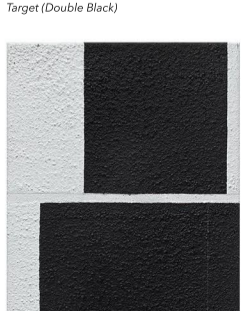
Target (Double White)



Target (Double Black)



New Block



Old Block

*The paintings, like jazz, have a rhythm, a noise, a technology of movement that are like musical notes, which are meant to be read as a whole. No single note can express the collective. The 'Urban Dreads' were made with the intention to express emotional space of the body politic above all. As I continue to paint them during this pandemic, I wonder if I am painting myself into a corner, hmmm, but I guess that's the point.*

David McGee