

# MAKER



**January 17 – March 17, 2023**

**Alice R. Rogers Gallery and Target Gallery  
Saint John's Art Center**

Erik Benson is an artist whose process-based paintings are informed by architecture and everyday objects found in urban landscape. The paintings attempt to deconstruct the hierarchy of high and low by placing everything within the same proximity with equal value. They are about impossibility and impermanence. The idea of mending an ancient vase with duct tape and stickers. Monuments of invention that speak to the fragile nature of our current American moment.

## CONNECT

TOPICS AND THEMES THIS EXHIBITION ENGAGES WITH:

- Painting tropes (landscape, still life)
- Architecture
- Living Courageously
- Graffiti street art
- Political unrest
- Thinking Globally

## ONLINE RESOURCES

<https://www.csbsju.edu/fine-arts/visual-arts/maker-erik-benson>

<https://www.erikbensonstudio.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/erikbensonstudio/?hl=en>

## ENGAGE

Erik is interested in making paintings in an analog, physical sense. He believes that painting is a visual language made up of thinking, seeing and making. He believes the responsibility of the artist is to listen and be present.

- What do you think Erik is thinking about when he is creating his work?
- What are the subjects of the work and why do you think they are important? Or not important?
- How has Erik incorporated classical artworks into contemporary images?
- What types of emotions do you feel when looking at the art?

Erik creates his paintings by employing a process of pouring acrylic paint onto sheets of glass. Once the shapes have solidified and acquired elasticity, they are peeled off and collaged into larger compositions. These collaged constructions create a certain mimetic relationship between the visual information depicted and the processes in which they are made. This process-based painting allows Erik to explore how something is observed and understood, and how that transaction is processed into paint and image.

- What do you think the “mimetic relationship” in Erik’s process means?
- How do you think this process of creating art, allows for more understanding of the subject?
- How is it different from a normal painting?
- How does Erik deconstruct objects that are generally thought of as high art? How are they changed and repurposed in the work?

Speaking about his art, Erik says, “As of lately, I paint my own reality, which these days is being a dad to two young daughters in the middle of a global pandemic, in the city that sparked a movement for racial equality, has many challenges but also moments of profound reflection.”

- How does Erik use color in his work to portray emotion and subject matter?
- How do you see Erik’s family being represented in the work?
- How is architecture used in the work? What does it tell us about the artist and his interests?
- What are some challenges you have faced over the past year? How would you represent them in a visual way?