

CHARLES BENEKE ARTIST

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Artist's Statement ***Consumed/Contained***

My artwork is based on the continuous process of consumption that is fundamental to my existence. Three times a day I feed my body. My entire life is spent feeding my consciousness. With consumption and digestion of food as metaphor for the ingestion and rumination of sensory experiences, my images explore the fusion of diverse elements forming the meals that sustain my soul.

As individuals we are dependent upon food. As a culture we obsessed with it—eating, not eating, non-fat, low-cal, high-carb, organic, processed—and our language is peppered with allegories and clichés reflecting this preoccupation. We eat our own words, our hearts out, our humble pie; we want to have our cake and eat it too. I am what I eat. My work investigates the means by which our identities are constructed. On one level, my individuality is determined by my distinct genetic composition. I find, however, that who I am is in a continuous state of evolution that is impelled by everyday experience. I ceaselessly consume commonplace events upon which my mind feeds. Some of these happenings are expelled immediately, some linger, others are hidden away and saved for later. Regardless, all of these mundane details are the extraordinary ingredients that flavor my identity.

In my images varying forms of representation speak of the different ways in which I experience the world and the incongruous effects these experiences have upon my personality. The process of developing my images is analogous to the way that new observations are assimilated with past experience and digested to determine who I am now. Diverse circumstances interact in an atmosphere that is at once subjectively romantic and objectively documentary. Through my layering of images, techniques, and print media, I create visual meals to serve my viewer.

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