





Erin Schalk

*Fog of War*, 2012

Acrylic and gouache on panel

16.5" by 33"

The phrase “fog of war” is used in conjunction with military operations and denotes the uncertain variables in a combat situation, those often-critical elements that only become clear in retrospect. *Fog of War* assumes a diptych format to draw the viewer’s attention to the concept of duality, specifically that of two distinct sides and viewpoints. This painting was inspired by events that occurred during a three-year stay in Okinawa, Japan. There has been a large American military presence on this minute island since the end of WWII. Over the past six decades significant cultural differences between Okinawans and American military personnel have brought about recurrent clashes ranging from daily misunderstandings to criminal offenses. These intercultural tensions are underscored by the intensity of the painting’s brushwork, as well as the stark contrast between blue-black lines on a gelid white background. Both sides of this diptych were painted simultaneously and in a similar style to hint at themes of disconnect and commonality. Aspects of American and Okinawan cultures fundamentally contrast and therefore a level of separation between both peoples may always exist. However, hope remains that both sides will work together to find a common ground that will eventually bring about a long-term, peaceful resolution.

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ERIN SCHALK has been a visual artist for nine years, living and working in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Okinawa, Japan; and Dallas, Texas. The content of her work draws from both Eastern and Western philosophy and art. Her graduate focus at the University of Dallas is in painting, but she also ventures into aspects of sculpture and performance.