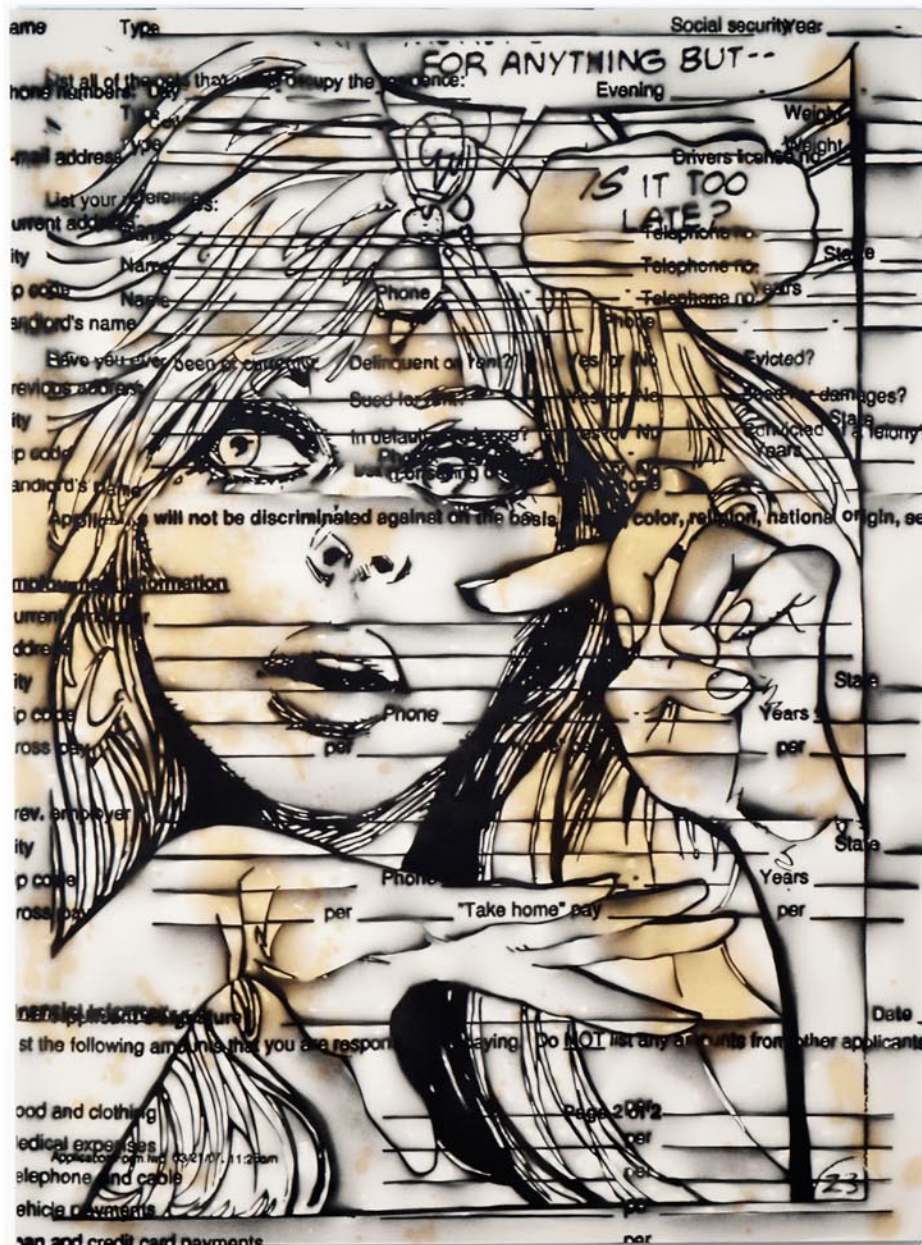




David Ratcliff

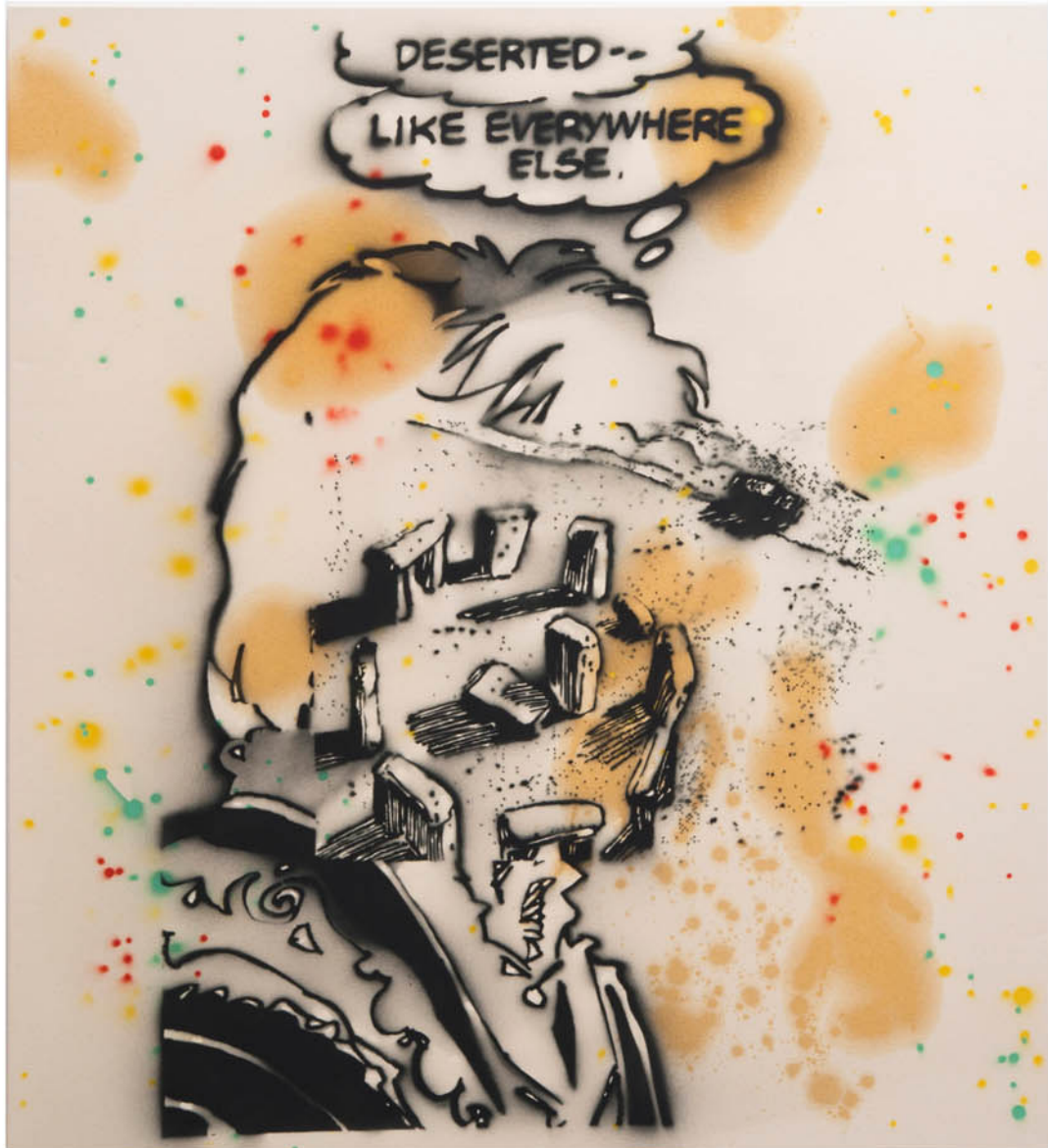
I often use photos of drawings from online sources, but at some point I began to re-trace them, or trace the edges of photographic elements with a narrower line. So while they have become fainter, less concrete entities, they've simultaneously bridged the distance my hand has traditionally had from the work. The tracings are then re-traced with a knife on paper, and it is this knife tracing that is ultimately transferred to the canvas.



DAVID RATCLIFF, *Let Them Eat Cake And Ice Cream*, 2011.
Acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 64 × 50 inches / 162.5 × 127 cm.
Courtesy of the artist and Team Gallery, New York.

DAVID RATCLIFF, *Untitled*, 2013.
Acrylic, oil, and spray paint on canvas, 84 × 62 inches / 213.4 × 157.5 cm.
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels.

I've found myself more drawn to images that tend to highlight the rapidly changing world. Very recent images, as well as those from the past, that contrast with how we want to see things now. I've started using coloring book images from bible stories or from historical events. In coloring-book form, these stories and events tend to empty themselves out and simultaneously open up to a broader spectrum of society. There's something in the simplicity of the outline that I'm drawn to. In searching for images for these new paintings I'm really looking at outlines, at the edges of forms. The interior becomes less important since I'm not even sure it will be made visible.



DAVID RATCLIFF, *Untitled*, 2013.
Acrylic, oil, and spray paint on canvas,
64 × 58 inches / 162.5 × 147.3 cm.
Courtesy of the artist and Team Gallery, New York.

Like many people, I tend to experience memory in monochrome. Maybe it's partly my generation, when a lack of color signified the past. Growing up we still had a black-and-white TV in the house. Late night on all the channels, when the programs were finished, there were only color-bars or dense and airy static fuzz. An attraction to the past is something that I need to resist in my work since I'm afraid I'll get it all wrong, but then there is that phantom, that continuum.

With fiction, in order for it to make sense, I have to somehow understand what I'm reading before the fact, and I believe this is what separates poetry from representation. In my work the visual experience is a foremost concern: the paintings are paintings and they are meant to be looked at. That visual experience is poetic, which is to say the misery or beauty includes the viewer and isn't just a report. Revery or nightmare? Given the choice I'd go with nightmare to be on the safe side, but I hope there isn't too much distance for the beauty not to convulse.

—Excerpted from "Giving Up the Ghost: A Conversation Between David Ratcliff and Bob Nickas," Galerie Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels, 2010.