

# Two Decades of Relevance

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What motivates artists to create art, and why do they choose the subjects they do?

For Marcus Jansen (b. 1968), an internationally exhibited artist based in Fort Myers and New York, painting is an act of intense engagement with the world. His art offers critical commentary on global sociological, political and economic issues and visceral responses to the world events that have shaped his life.

Jansen's life experiences have required him to navigate different cultures, profound loss, and complex challenges.

He was born to a Caribbean mother from Jamaica and a German father. Raised in New York City in the 1970s, he spent his adolescence in Germany and studied graphics and later completed an apprenticeship as a house painter in Mönchengladbach, not far from Düsseldorf.

Jansen returned to New York for visits in the late 1980s, and in 1989 joined the United States Army. After fighting in the first Iraq War during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm he was diagnosed with PTSD and was honorably discharged after eight years of service. Back in New York in 1999, he became a professional artist, joining a group of artists in lower Manhattan known as the "Princestreetkings." In 2011, he lost his first wife to cancer and was left with two young children and steep medical bills.

These life events have shaped Jansen's passion for universal human rights and improved societal conditions. His works, which are charged with a sense of empathy and a commitment to justice, are simultaneously emotional, introspective, and intellectual. *Two Decades of Relevance* showcases 18 powerful paintings by Jansen, including *Foreclosures* (2008), *Spotlight* (2020) and *The Colonialist* (2021). His expressive paintings, with their timeless, relevant themes and their colorful abstract and figural constructions, fully engage the viewer in critical topics about our world. These works demonstrate the artist's sustained preoccupations with power structures and their manifestations across different spheres, struggles of the disenfranchised and displaced, urban and rural landscapes, surveillance and technology.

In addition to his studio practice, Jansen is founder of the Marcus Jansen Foundation Fund in Fort Myers, which aims to serve veterans with PTSD and economically disadvantaged children through enhanced cultural awareness of art and music.

Visitors are invited to discover Jansen's creative output, which has garnered numerous national and international accolades, in this first solo museum exhibition in Southwest Florida.