

## **Know Your Artist, Know Your Art**

Carbondale Arts believes in the power of art and we know you do, too. There is a deep connection that happens when you purchase a piece of art, and getting to know the artist makes that connection even deeper. Carbondale Arts hosts over 10 art exhibitions every year. Find some art you love and dive in.

We have launched a “Know Your Artist, Know Your Art” campaign, as Carbondale Arts works to build relationships between artists and patrons. Inspired by the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model of Investing in local food, this Community Supported Art movement promotes the investment of local artists making a living in and around the newly established Carbondale Creative District, where Carbondale Arts makes its home.

**September 4 - October 2, 2020**

# **Self-Reflected Universe Brian Colley**

At the Carbondale Arts R2 Gallery  
in The Launchpad (76 S 4th Street)  
carbondalearts.com | 970-963-1680  
Now open weekdays 10am - 5pm



## **Brian Colley Biography**

Brian Colley grew up in Dallas, Texas in the 1980s and has worked as an independent artist and illustrator in the Roaring Fork Valley since 2010. He holds a BA in fine art and supplements his time creating paintings, drawings, engraved prints, and sometimes graphic design. He's been a resident at Studio for Arts + Works (SAW) in Carbondale since 2013 and also has been the Gallery Manager at Carbondale Arts since 2014.

Brian visited Meow Wolf over a year ago but can't stop thinking about it and still plans to secretly move in and live for the rest of his life. He also enjoys playing in his ragingly popular solo new-age-meets-gregorian-chant band, "Ukulele Underwhelm", dreaming of tiny houses, and writing statements that people may or may not read.

[briancolley.com](http://briancolley.com)

## **Brian Colley Artist Statement**

For "Self-Reflected Universe", I've chosen to explore variations on the self-portrait, interpreted through both an intimately personal and existentially cosmic lens. Primarily showing acrylic on panel works as well as some watercolors, the self-portraits are a way for me to examine my own experiences of sudden loss, change, and personal growth over the past couple years. The work represented here celebrates my sense of resilience through it all, and I hope others will find ways to connect to the work through their own personal stories of success and failure.

I've experienced some uniquely personal life-changing events over the past two years relating to a small benign growth near the base of my brain, which has affected my body in many ways. It's been a great challenge to find ways to cope and move forward with the help of family, friends, therapists, and others, but overall the self-realizations and sudden forced self-reflection has aided in a stronger appreciation for life and the ability to see myself in new ways. I'm inspired by what the human body is capable of overcoming, slowly realizing that just to be alive in this world is an amazing privilege.

### **About the Astronauts**

In this exhibition you'll find a couple astronauts, something I've enjoyed in my work over the past 12+ years. The astronaut has been a useful metaphor since, at least to me, it seems to suggest a separation of the self (specifically, myself) and also a direct relation to all of humanity: the culmination of our achievements as a human race on this planet. This back and forth personal-and-universal-relevance has gradually allowed me to better understand the wisdom behind the concept that we are all connected; that my own experience, though perhaps vastly different from yours, is still relatable

and can at least be somewhat empathetic in relation to every other human being who has ever lived.

### **About the Enneagram**

I make a reference to the enneagram in the headless astronaut juggling piece “I’m Going Through Changes Now”. I’ve only known about the enneagram for about 8 or 9 years and am not normally a proponent of personality tests since it feels like an inescapable label. The nice thing I’ve found with the enneagram (which is based on a system of 3s, and has 9 total main types) is that it allows space between the numbers for the subtle characteristics for each person (I’m a 6 by the way...with a 5-wing I believe).

I’ve enjoyed taking some deeper dives into the enneagram over the past few years and have found it a useful tool for self-analysis, relationships, and understanding what makes different people tick. I created 9 different astronaut heads for the 9 different types, since we all reflect each type in some way or another throughout our day and/or lifetime.

### **About the Process**

Some people ask why I decided to cut the shapes out of panels. This is something new I wanted to try out a few years ago after seeing similar work by local artist Chris Erickson. Most art you see is framed or on stretched canvas in the shape of a square or rectangle, but that’s not how life is (cropped with 90° corners). I’ve played around with layering different panels one on top of the other and found this to be very fun and playful but pretty time consuming. But I’m still drawn to the cutout shape since it floats out from the wall. I think it feels more like an art object and doesn’t get as stifled as it might be otherwise in a frame.

### **About the Titles**

I don’t take the naming of my artwork too lightly. There is something about a title that adds another level of understanding to the work which can either be a benefit or a distraction. I listen to a lot of music while I paint and brainstorm ideas for new work and enjoy finding ways to make relationships between the lyrics and my work, especially for any songs I listen to over and over again.

Here are the song titles that relate to a few of the artworks in the “Self-Reflected Universe” exhibition (find a complete list on Spotify: <https://tinyurl.com/y6x6kpxn>):

**Artwork title:** “I’m Going Through Changes Now”

**Lyrics from song:** “Changes” by Langhorn Slim & The Law

**Album:** “The Spirit Moves” 2015

**Artwork title:** “The Crew Compartment’s Breaking Up”

**Lyrics from song:** “The Commander Thinks Aloud” by The Long Winters

**Album:** “Ultimatum” 2005

**Artwork title:** “It’s No Better To Be Safe Than Sorry”

**Lyrics from song:** “Take On Me” by a-ha

**Album:** I like their MTV Unplugged version from the 2017 album “Summer Solstice”

**Artwork title:** “I Need the Night to Feed My Dreams”

**Lyrics from song:** “Hey Moon!” by Molly Nilsson

**Album:** “These Things Take Time” 2009

## About our R2 Gallery Sponsor

Both exhibitions this month are generously sponsored by Studio for Arts+ Works (SAW). Designed as a space for creative professionals and professional creatives, Studio for Arts + Works (SAW) was remodeled from an auto mechanic shop into minimalist, industrial-style, artists studios on a modest budget using non-toxic, salvaged and recycled materials wherever possible. The tenant mix at SAW (potters, painters, jewelers, sculptors, print makers) showcases our commitment to enhancing the vitality of our community through our work. Though SAW doesn't have regular hours (as the tenants are working artists and keep their own day-to-day schedules) SAW is open to the public by appointment. Learn more about the 25+ SAW artists at [sawcarbondale.com](http://sawcarbondale.com) or on Instagram @sawstudio

## Acknowledgements

Special thanks to David Thickman for gallery preparation, to Laura Stover for gallery layout, and Kirk Robinson for gallery installation.

## R2 Gallery Committee Members

**Staff:** Brian Colley, Staci Dickerson, Amy Kimberly

**Board Liaisons:** Nicholas DiFrank, Leah Swan

**Non-staff:** Kristi Close, Gayle Embrey, Lindsay Jones (Chair), Vanessa Porras, Kirk Robinson, Laura Stover, David Thickman

These committee members work with the Gallery Manager to choose exhibitions each year. Interested in learning more? Email [brian@carbondalearts.com](mailto:brian@carbondalearts.com).