

DAVID WILSON: ALIVE AND EXHIBITING

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ARTIST STATEMENT

I primarily utilize film and television performers as the figurative motif in my artwork. I find their constructed personas intriguing because they present a wide range of emotion under the guise of entertainment. In some instances, their characters become so engaging and believable that they transcend the identity of the performer as an individual. The dichotomy between the individual performer and the construct of their character is where I find my space to create. I am formally influenced by the simplistic, flat, hard-edge designs of classic movie posters. These elements are pitted in direct interaction with the characters and assist in establishing the artificial environment that acts as the set or landscape for the figures. Performers in each piece act as surrogates for me, creating a less vulnerable self-portrait. As a result, my own situation becomes entertaining rather than self-indulgent.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Lockport, IL, David received his MFA in Painting from Illinois State University in 2001, a BA in Fine Art/Design from Columbia College, Chicago in 1998, and an AA in Fine Art from Joliet Junior College in 1995.

In addition to teaching drawing, painting, and cartooning workshops for youth and adult learners, he instructed art and art history courses for Black Hills State University, Eureka College, Illinois State University, International Music Camp, Joliet Junior College, Oregon Coast Community College, Owensboro Community and Technical College, University of St. Francis, and Vanderbilt University's Sarratt Art Studio. David participated in over 150 art exhibitions since 2001, conducted grant funded research with the U.S. military art collections, and organized fundraising events for various art non-profits. He was also the curator for the Salem Art Association, OR, and Owensboro Community and Technical College, KY.

David is currently the Program Coordinator for the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy at Vanderbilt University. Additionally, he volunteers with Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee by providing workshops and coordinating their annual art exhibition, teaches watercolor for Vanderbilt's Sarratt Art Studios, and is curating an exhibition exploring cultural, political, and social issues through original comic strips, political cartoons, and animation art.

More Than One Way Forward: Teaching, Curating, Creating – interview by Kelsey DeGreef for *Normal Roots*, May 2025.



Normal Roots connects all of those who trace their artistic roots back to Illinois State University's College of Fine Arts. This work is about dissolving the borders between disciplines and creating space for artists to strengthen their professional networks, speak openly about the impact of their education, and to collaborate with each other. We share our post-graduate journeys, host meet-ups, advocate for our diverse community, and above all support each other.