

## Artists Statement

This is a series of storm drawings. They are large, abstract, and surreal. Vine charcoal creates movement and weight on the paper; sometimes it has a light wispieness, other times dark, haunting blacks. The fragile material is as ephemeral as the subject. I'm not depicting a particular event; more of an emotion. This body of work has been about relationships and conflict; evoking a visceral feeling of clashing, opposing viewpoints, and dissonance.

*Tantrum (2022)* looks like a flaming comet about to strike the earth – it's fiery, just like my 6-year-old when he's pitching a fit. I want this piece to evoke a power struggle, the stark contrast between this fleeting sense of control during an emotional outburst, and the eventual reality of being forced to play by someone else's rules. Storms are paradoxical like this; they soothe us with sounds of thunder and rain, but only if we're safely sheltered. Storms water the earth, bringing life to everything. However, other than fire, water is the single most destructive element, and storms claim thousands of lives every year. Its consequences can be instantaneous, or glacially slow.

Creating storms allows me to narrate my own personal trauma, betrayal, and manipulation. I created this series during my separation and eventual divorce from my partner of 20 years. I struggled with feeling vulnerable, childlike, and alone at a moment when I was also entering fatherhood. I knew I couldn't look backward, but the future looked dark and uncertain. Liminality pushed me into this body of work, that far surpasses my individual experience of loss and growth.

Intentionally, I haven't included a horizon line in any of the pieces. I don't want the viewer searching for a setting, wondering where this is taking place, but instead focusing on the chaos. These are not meant to be clear representations, but abstract confrontations. What's behind or underneath? Is this coming or going? Will things be the same or different?

I want them to feel aggressive, dramatic, and stirring. I want the viewer to look longer, be immersed. I make them large to increase their presence in a space. I want them to feel loud.

-Andrew Mastriani 2022