

# Black and Blue and Red All Under



36" x 132" acrylic on canvas

This large canvas is a meditation on child abuse. I worked alone in the studio during a hot, sweaty summer with the music of Leonard Cohen and Natural Born Killers blaring from the speakers. I wanted to enter a mental and emotional space of fear, confusion, pain, and abandonment and convey those emotions on the canvas. I applied a meditative layer of blue paint and added darker hues to the blue to mark deep bruising of the skin. Black belt marks rip the skin; blood oozes from the wounds. The white paint on the top layer was applied in violent slashing motions with a cat o' nine tail whipping an imagined defenseless child. The violence of the strokes is not immediately apparent when viewing the canvas, just as the bruises and festering wounds of an abused child can be hidden by clothing or ignored by adults who should protect the child.

I have always been committed to addressing issues of child abuse. As a high school teacher and elementary school principal in my early career, I occasionally had to meet with Child Protective Services and testify at court hearings. Today, Joshua and I are members of TeamFX, a marathon training team at Lady Bird Lake in downtown Austin. We run the Austin Marathon and raise money for abused and abandoned children at the Austin Children's Shelter. See [www.teamfxaustin.org](http://www.teamfxaustin.org) Our motto is "Creating a world without child abuse and neglect... one step at a time."

Donations to the Austin Children's Shelter and sponsorships for our team are most appreciated!