

IAN KURTIS CRIST

Ian Kurtis Crist (b. 1992) is an Alaskan-raised, Los Angeles–based painter whose work channels the austere isolation of his frontier upbringing into contemporary scenes of quiet intensity. Often working on raw, hand-sewn canvas, Crist paints solemn, unadorned figures that evoke a sense of spiritual exile. His compositions are stripped down yet symbolically rich, drawing heavily from religious iconography while maintaining a raw, contemporary edge. The result is a body of work that explores themes of ostracism and interiority with both restraint and reverence.

I'm interested in how power structures—especially those shaped by Judeo-Christian culture—rely on shame and fear to enforce moral order. My work explores how these dynamics play out across both religious and political spheres, where public humiliation and exclusion are used as tools of control. At the core of this inquiry is a fascination with the complexity of morality itself—how it's shaped, weaponized, and often oversimplified in service of authority. By recontextualizing religious iconography in contemporary painting, I draw connections between historical belief systems and today's ideological battles. I confront moral absolutism through visual austerity and formal intensity, intentionally refraining from overt messaging or conceptual explanation. I intend for the paintings to demand that viewers sit with ambiguity, contradiction, and the deep-rooted mechanisms of judgment that continue to shape our cultural and personal lives.



Ian Kurtis Crist by Ben Lindbloom