

## Kelly O'Connor

Kelly O'Connor draws on the allegory of American consciousness through the use of iconic characters, driven by memory, fantasy, fiction, and pop culture. She thrives to expose the duality behind the thin public facades that our society readily embraces.

The scenes the artist creates are calcified remains of a culture focused on production and destruction. By appropriating idealized American landscape and icons, O'Connor creates a non-linear narrative, intentionally leaving the situation ambiguous in order for the viewer to relate their own experiences to the suggested scenarios -- an immortal or dreamlike space, such as one that could only exist in a person's subconscious.

Throughout history society continues to struggle with aspirations and contradictions represented in popular culture. Many of the female characters have a look of artificial bliss or antidepressant-driven happiness at times hypnotized or controlled by intoxicating products or appliances, while many of the male characters represent the ominous "man behind the curtain."

Using the collage medium, O'Connor plays with color and scale juxtaposing candy-colored surfaces that are almost sickly sweet with papers sampled from vintage record covers. The contrast of sparkling rays and bright neon against weathered, dull tones acts as a metaphor for dualities within our society. Appropriated images, enlarged from their original source to exaggerate their apparent content, introduce nostalgic and familiar themes that provide a rich access point for the viewer. Her found images are drawn from films, advertising and magazines, as well as amusement park and travel memorabilia, from the 1950's and 1960's, a period rich in American stereotypes.

Kelly O'Connor studied Visual Arts at the University of Texas at Austin where she received a BFA in Studio Art in 2005. O'Connor has exhibited at the San Antonio Museum of Art and the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, Women and Their Work in Austin and the Blaffer Museum in Houston. Her work has been included in the Texas Biennial and New American Paintings in 2013. She is the Collection and Exhibitions Officer at the Linda Pace Foundation in San Antonio, TX.

### Awards + Collections

McNay Art Museum, Permanent Collection; San Antonio, TX  
Kinzelman Art Consulting; Houston, TX  
Liz Anders & Associates; Houston, TX  
New American Paintings, West; Issue #108  
Visual Arts Grant, Artist Foundation of San Antonio  
Women & Their Work Award

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