

Artist Statement

When do we lose the ability to play pretend? When do we realize magic isn't real? Does the weight of reality and eventual adulthood dim the light of all our play? Do we experience regret for the loss of our unmediated imagination and attempt to will it back? My work explores these questions and attempts to explore the grief I feel for childhood moments lost in unselfconscious play. My paintings and assemblages are interrogations of this time of change. Is it an immeasurable transition? Is this moment truly the end of ability or when permission to exercise it has been withdrawn?

Children may seem to live small lives, but the worlds of their imaginations extend far beyond the limits imposed by space, time, and societal expectation. My paintings and assemblages build the worlds that I used to access effortlessly and make them visible to share with others. My paintings are a window to look through. My assemblages are stages for fantastic stories to play out. Their visual narratives don't show the beginning or end of a story. My audience arrives in the middle, much the way we arrive in our dreams.

My works play with depth and flattened shapes to mirror stylized cartoons and toys sold to children. The choice to borrow from these relics of childhood is purposeful. For many people my age, these toys are the cartoonish archetypes of a cultural collective unconscious. They were tools used by children to share their inner lives and made it possible to play together in overlapping worlds. They are the raw materials for a child's myth making.

I ignore the rigid laws of form and perspective because they would only serve to ground my work in a mundane reality. Vivid and discordant colors serve to remind viewers that my landscapes are of a strange land. They are vaguely threatening. Children play the lead role in their stories and every protagonist needs danger in order to transform into the hero.

Though my assemblages and paintings explore the same psychic space, constructing an assemblage comes closest to the feeling of childhood play I alluded to. Using childish craft materials to build diorama-like spaces, I hope to stir a memory of grade school art class in my audience: the sense of play, the smell and taste paste. Their process reenacts the memory of building structures for my toys to exist in when store bought doll houses or plastic castles inevitably fell short of my imagination's needs.