

Hal Hardin

I create paintings as an act of resistance. By examining the historical role of figurative painting as a tool for governing our relationship to the body, performance, and self-fashioning from my vantage point as a genderqueer person in the South, I explore my nuanced experiences with curiosity.

A murky Arkansan river,
droopy cat tails and pond-skaters.
Bodies toppling over each other, disoriented,
red strings between red candles, beginning to catch fire.

I do not aim to make work that is generalized or didactic, but rather to investigate a specific idea or remembered personal interaction. The specificity in the clothes and objects within the image reference a certain time, place, memory, or social culture.

I combat the expectation of what bodies in painting should look like, what “transness” *could* look like without offering the viewer the visual satisfaction of discovery.

Awkwardly elongated limbs, slouching and slumped, detached in an apathetic state. They construct their own identities through the objects around them in an attempt to fulfill their roles in the scene. They are grappling between relinquishing themselves from their own image yet conforming to the world they were forced in. Like me at times, they are mortified to be alive.

Limited palettes allow me to control the world that my paintings exist in. Each painting starts as a messy abstraction of shapes, being slowly fragmented and scraped down until figures begin to manifest. The process of build up and erasure, of opaqueness and transparencies, reflects the instability and fluidity of identity.

I use bright, saturated colors and tacky patterns as a reference to punk and DIY aesthetics, digital media, and consumer culture.

It is important to me for my paintings to be unashamedly bright and bold, especially existing in a body where my passiveness and obedience has always been the expectation.

