Meet me in the sewers at dawn

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MEET ME IN THE SEWERS AT DAWN

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts degree in Art in the Graduate College of The University of Iowa

August 2018

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Susan White
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER’S THESIS

This is to certify that the Master’s Thesis of

Julia J. Wolfe

has been approved by the Examining Committee for
the thesis requirement for the Master of Fine Arts degree
in Art at the August 2018 graduation.

Thesis Committee:

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Susan White, Thesis Supervisor

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Andrew Casto

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Tameka Norris

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John Dilg
To the raccoons, and the flowers that are angry.
PUBLIC ABSTRACT

I make installations, objects, paintings, drawings, prints, and arrangements of found words (which some have classified as poetry). I take note of ideas, imagery, and phrases from places that are commonly seen and heard but often go unnoticed. The work combines humor and innocence with an awareness of our culture of mass-production and consumption, resulting in an approachable, whimsical criticism.
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MEET ME IN THE SEWERS AT DAWN

Please pay attention please.
For mental consumption only.

Smiling will sell more. In the store, on a stage,
for a fraction of a wage, altogether building a stage.

Buy into it, but don’t forget to keep on wondering.

It’s good to escape every once in awhile. Walk with me in
the land of the trees.

You and I, in it together. Consuming and delighting,
observing and ignoring, critiquing and joking.

*Whether or not you can see criticism in the work does not
mean it is absent.

And remember to eat something.

!

And if you must know,
that is all to say;

I make installations, objects, and paintings.

Words weave between cartoony flowers
of varying moods,
gridded fence-like forms,
and a slice of cake.

The paintings feel like flattened versions of the
installations: animated with color,
playground-esque,
humorously innocent
with an underlying awareness of
the way of things in the world.
I am drawn to contradictions, like a nun with an affinity for Pop Art, or a vegan with a weakness for Pop-Tarts.

These installations are essentially theater sets, where the viewer is both actor and audience. The work comments on our culture of consumption, mirroring how stores fill all available space with merchandise, leaving little or no breathing room for individual products.

By combining objects and imagery of mass-production with a childlike and whimsical aesthetic, viewers remain able to depart with a sense of optimism.
Figure 1.
*Waiting for the Bus*
Acrylic, papier-maché, and found materials.
2017
Figure 2.
Between the Garbage and the Flowers
Acrylic and found paper on canvas.
78 in. x 72 in.
2015
Figure 3.
*One Moment in the Shade*
Acrylic, pen, and found materials.
16 in. x 18.5 in.
2016
Figure 4.
We Sell
Acrylic on canvas.
72 in. x 71 in.
2017
Figure 5.
That’s Why
Ink, gouache, and monoprint on paper.
11 in. x 17 in.
2017
Figure 6.
Playground
Acrylic and found materials on canvas.
36 in. x 48 in.
2015
Between the river and the clouds
It usually doesn't rain
Except Sundays & Holidays

Down Park Road on a green park bench
Here's a glass of room-temp tap water
8am 8pm-7am

Hot dogs & ORANGE drinks
On glittering chilly days of Oct Oct
Between driveways

And it can change
Just meet me in the sewers at dawn
on school days

Figure 7.
Hot Dogs & Orange Drinks
Acrylic on drywall.
72 in. x 80 in.
2017
Figure 8.
Window Seat
Found Plastic and cardboard.
4 in. x 3 in.
2015
Figure 9.
Green with Parking Lots
Acrylic on canvas.
72 in. x 73 in.
2016
Figure 10.
6AM to Sunset
Acrylic on canvas.
72 in. x 81 in.
2015
Figure 11.
*Warm and Contented*
Found plastic and paper.
29 in. x 33 in.
2015
Figure 12.

Carrots
Acrylic and found sticker on canvas.
14 in. x 36 in.
2017
Figure 13.
Good Time French Fries
Ink, gouache, and monoprint on paper.
17 in. x 11 in.
2017
Figure 14.
A Jug of Milk
Acrylic on canvas.
6 in. x 6 in.
2015
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I went out walking
When there were
green fields a& sugar
Within 5ft of drive

You deserve a bread today
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