



KELLY BJORK

My work focuses on portraiture and intimacy between loved ones and objects. I want to show the tenderness that can be experienced in this world through selective simplicity and tiny details. With our current socio-political climate, I think it is important to recognize these often unnoticed moments in our daily lives, and to remember that they exist. My paintings help me move forward openly, by presenting what is good in our world.

—Kelly Bjork



In her intimate narrative paintings, Seattle-based artist Kelly Bjork depicts candid moments between friends and lovers within tidy, domestic settings. Painted on paper with gouache and pencil, expressive figuration, patterning, and gratifying hues dominate Bjork's work, confronting the viewer with challenging and amusing imagery. The artist's pleasure-focused motifs invite viewers to enter a world where conflicts and tensions are simply absent. In their place, figures practice self-care (*Cultivating Space*, 2019), indulge in leisure (*The Oracle*, *The Witches*, *Us*, 2019), and channel deep intimacy (*Anima Rising*, 2019).

Small in scale, Bjork's compositions present rich visual complexity. The artist renders her scenes in precise detail, with studious attention to textures and patterns on walls, furnishings, and surfaces. Hanging tapestries, throw pillows, bed linens, bath towels,

electrical outlets, rugs, artwork, and decorated vases are executed with meticulous care. Further, Bjork creates continuity between her paintings with recurring items—a lampshade from her Joshua Tree series, an expressive abstract painting, a hand-stitched quilt, and a pink electric gemstone light, to name a few. The particularity of these objects signals that they are not generic, but exist in a particular location and bear special significance to the artist.

The frank clarity of Bjork's compositions coupled with the tenderness of her subjects evoke the intimacy of snapshots. Her paintings feature a cast of characters, including representations of the artist herself. Many of the figures who inhabit her scenes are shown nude or caught unawares, comfortably coexisting with one another. Her visual memoirs include a portrait of a friend napping, a glimpse of

herself in a bathroom mirror, and a naked man lying supine on a neatly made bed. Bjork's vignettes of intimacy, comfort, and simplicity within everyday settings offer viewers a welcome respite from the often not-so-blissful realities of our world. Her paintings are easy to fall into, and once immersed, we find ourselves wishing to be guests in Bjork's home.

— Nancy Margolis Gallery, 2019

Anima Rising

2019, gouache, acrylic, wax pastel, & pencil on paper, 22.5 x 30 inches



Bedside Teeth

2019, gouache & pencil on paper, 11.25 x 7.5 inches



Cleansing

2019, gouache, acrylic, wax pastel, & pencil on paper, 22.5 x 30 inches



Clemence Cleanse Bratton Bathroom

2019, gouache & pencil on paper, 30 x 22.5 inches



Cultivating Space

2019, gouache & pencil on paper, 30 x 22.5 inches



Death + Birth + Death + Birth + Death + Birth

2019, gouache, acrylic, wax pastel, & pencil on paper, 30 x 22.5 inches



Please Don't Be Surprised When You Find Me Dreaming Too

2019, gouache, acrylic, & pencil on paper, 22.5 x 30 inches



Don't Interrupt the Sorrow

2019, gouache, acrylic, & pencil on paper, 22.5 x 30 inches



In the Desert Everything Repeats Itself

2019, gouache & pencil on paper, 11.25 x 7.5 inches



It's Okay, We're Both Okay

2019, gouache, acrylic, & pencil on paper, 19 x 15 inches



Just Hold on Tight, Cause I Love You

2019, gouache, acrylic, & pencil on paper, 22.5 x 30 inches



Lift Yourself Out

2019, gouache & pencil on paper, 22.5 x 30 inches



Self Portrait in Desert Mirror

2019, gouache & pencil on paper, 11.25 x 7.5 inches



The Oracle, the Witches, Us

2019, gouache & pencil on paper, 11.25 x 7.5 inches



The Quiet Principal

2019, gouache, acrylic, & pencil on paper, 19 x 15 inches



Wash + Balance Me

2019, gouache, acrylic, & pencil on paper, 19 x 15 inches



You Belong to You

2019, gouache, acrylic, wax pastel, & pencil on paper, 22.5 x 30 inches



KELLY BJORK

Lives and works: Seattle, WA

EDUCATION

2009 B.F.A. Drawing + Printmaking, Western Washington University

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2019 *Kelly Bjork*, Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, NY

2018 *Gentle Cravings*, Zinc Contemporary, Seattle, WA

2016 *Almost Home*, Joe Bar Cafe, Seattle, WA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2019 *100*, Joe Bar Cafe, Seattle, WA

2018 *Bellwether*, Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA

I say: RADICAL you say: FEMINIST, Archer Gallery, Vancouver, WA

2017 *Outsiders*, Art Primo, Seattle, WA

Party Hat: The Art Show, Party Hat, Seattle, WA

Joe Bar's 20th Anniversary, Joe Bar Cafe, Seattle, WA

Saudade, Zinc Contemporary, Seattle, WA

Out of Sight, 115 South Jackson St, Seattle, WA

Living Together, Calypte Gallery, Seattle, WA

Drawing Practice, Whatcom Museum, Bellingham, WA

10 Year Anniversary Celebration, Smith Vallee Gallery, Edison, WA

Paintings, or it didn't happen!, The Factory, Seattle, WA

2016 *American Painting Today, V2*, Seattle, WA

2015 *Rearranging Furniture*, Glass Box Gallery, Seattle, WA

Icky Body, Less Space, Oakland, CA

=^._.^= (Cat Show), Velouria, Seattle, WA

Threads, Smith Vallee Gallery, Edison, WA

2014 *Significant Objects*, Toast, Seattle, WA

Home: Through our Eyes, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham, WA

Vignettes Love Party, LoveCityLove, Seattle, WA

2012 *Space Blanket Space Cadette*, Corridor Gallery, Seattle, WA

Teenage Dreamsicle, Refrigerator Artspace, Richmond, VA

The Snake and the Beast Work Together, Noodleworks Studios, Seattle, WA

INK, Spark: Museum of Electrical Invention, Bellingham, WA

2011 *Selection of handmade artist books & poetry*, Cullom Gallery, Seattle, WA

Everything Small, Viking Union Gallery, Bellingham, WA

Miniature Memories, DIGS, Bellingham, WA

Paper Kingdom, Good Shepherd Center, Seattle, WA

2010 *LIMBO!*, One of One Gallery, Bellingham, WA

Standing Room Only, The Majestic, Bellingham, WA

Birds, Smith & Vallee Gallery, Edison, WA

Winter Commission II, AMRE, Bellingham, WA

2009 *Bare Images*, LARC, Mount Vernon, WA

2008 *NOPE*, Blue Horse Gallery, Bellingham, WA

2007 *Composite*, Lucia Douglas Gallery, Bellingham, WA

CURATION

2014 - 2016 Founder & Curator, Two Shelves, Seattle, WA

2015 =^._.^= (Cat Show), Velouria, Seattle, WA

AWARDS & RESIDENCIES

2018 Helen Frankenthaler Fellowship: Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT

2017 Winter Art Walk Award, City Arts Magazine, Seattle, WA

Summer Art Walk Award, City Arts Magazine, Seattle, WA

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- 2018-2019 Advisory Committee for Victorian Radicals: From the Pre-Raphaelites to the Arts & Crafts Movement, Seattle Art Museum
- 2018 Album cover for Cumulus

LECTURES & VISITS

- 2018 Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA
Clark College, Vancouver, WA
Gather Seattle, Seattle, WA
Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA
- 2017 Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA

PUBLICATIONS

- 2019 Illustrations Theme No.7: Feminism. Papier Magazine.
King, Karen. Accent on: Artist and Illustrator Kelly Bjork. Accent Opaque. May 2.
DeMelo, Juno. The Only New-Mom Hack is Money: Sleep is for the Rich, InStyle Magazine. March 22.
Madrigal, Alexis. Instagram Man, Anxy Magazine No.4: The Masculinity Issue. January.
- 2018 Kelly Bjork's "Gentle Cravings" in Seattle. Juxtapoz Magazine. May.
Pothast, Emily. Kelly Bjork: Gentle Cravings, The Stranger. April.
ZINC Contemporary presents "Gentle Cravings" by Kelly Bjork, King5 News. April.
Constant, Paul. Would You Rather, The Seattle Review of Books. March 27.
Ball, Elissa. More or Less. Cover Art and spot illustrations.
Aperloo, Sandra. Beautiful illustrations by Kelly Bjork, ArtisticMoods. March 13.
Depetris, Bruno. Kelly Bjork: Scenes of Ordinary Happiness, Picame Magazine. January 22.
Moving Forward, The Washington Post. January 18.

- New American Paintings, Issue 133. January.
- 2017 Highliday Gift Guide, Northwest Leaf. Issue 90: Page 40. December.
Artists of the Year, City Arts Magazine. November 27.
One Sky: A collaborative project with almost 90 artists and one instruction: look up. The Women Who Draw. Topic. September.
Women Crushing It Wednesday: Kelly Bjork. Oiselle. August 20.
Artist Spotlight: Kelly Bjork. BOOOOOOOM.com. August.
Bellingham National: The Luck of the Draw, Cascadia Weekly. August 9.
Cover Art, Seattle Weekly. July 26.
Cover Art, Seattle Weekly. July 12.
What We Loathe about Intermissions, The Washington Post. July 7.
Picture Interview, Kollektiv Gallery. July.
Illustrations Of The Little Things That Makes Us Happy, Cultura Colectiva. July 5.
Feature, Sukeban Magazine. June 21.
Drawing Practice: Bellingham National Juried Art Exhibition and Awards, SAM Blog. June 20.
Illustrations you should see when you think everything is dark, Cultura Colectiva. June 12.
Spicy Metal, City Arts Magazine. May 25.
Life is Tender (and a Little Awkward) in the Paintings of Kelly Bjork, Creators. May 28.
Witnessing the Sweet Moments: An Interview with Seattle-based Painter Kelly Bjork, Juxtapoz Magazine. May 25.
Funky Personas by Kelly Bjork, Upper Playground. May 25.
ILLUSTRAZIONE: Le scene di vita di Kelly Bjork, Osso Magazine. May.
Kelly Bjork's illustrations put a witty twist on personal moments and intimacy, We and The Color. May.
Seattle-based illustrator Kelly Bjork depicts languid ladies and neat interiors, It's Nice That. May.

Feature, People of Print. May.
Interview, Ballpit Mag. May.
Cover Art, The Stranger. May
Head Rest, City Arts Magazine. February.

2016 Inside Witnesses (weekly column), McSweeney's. October 2015 - October 2016
Portrait Looking Left, Sixth Finch. Fall.
Artist Spotlight: Kelly Bjork. BOOOOOOOM. June.

2015 Cover Art, The Stranger. December.
Fresh Magazine. Issue 08. Pages 16-18. June.
A Taxonomy of Brunchers, Seattle Met Magazine. February.



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