



JoEllen Wang

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ARTIST STATEMENT

I believe that living is an act of rebalancing, and I am drawn to the tension inherent in the process: the tenuous balance between natural and man-made; the progression of certainties, constructed on passing cultural interpretations; the labor for self-understanding, existing as a woman habituated to the idea that others know better; the compromise between dignity (self-respect) and humor (self-deprecation).

Life informs art and my inspiration comes from life in an urban environment. Through representational painting and life-size installation, I isolate or mis-contextualize commonplace objects as an exercise in questioning the values associated with them. I use ubiquitous yet universally devalued as subject matter – tarpaulin, blackberry, and mothers. On its own, I see the tarp as representing the primal, innate desire to shape our own environment; to transform it into something that feels like our own. Once I remove the invasive label from blackberry and see this plant outside the language of fighting, I can better consider the role humans play in the survival of other species. In combining decorative motifs, female anatomical drawings, and combustion engine diagrams, I can better contemplate gender norms, domesticity, medicine, and the politics surrounding the female body.

I want my work to evoke a mixture of awe and apprehension – to be wonderfully disturbing. I hope the work inspires no-so-serious conversation about human complexities and imperfect systems and conveys my hope that beauty can emerge from broken ideologies.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

JoEllen Wang (b. 1982, St. Louis, MO, USA) is a self-taught painter and installation artist who mainly explores the themes of shelter and motherhood. After working in the non-profit sector and the architecture industry, JoEllen began pursuing a studio art practice in 2016. Her work offers a nuanced critique of social dilemmas, approaching personally felt issues with both dignity and humor.

JoEllen has participated in exhibitions at SOIL, Gallery 110, Ghost Gallery, and Mini Mart City Park in Seattle, WA, and Woman Made Gallery in Chicago, IL. She has been commissioned for temporary public installations and has work in Seattle's Permanent Portable Works Collection.