



Elliot Stemen

Spring 2021

Capstone - Painting

Department of Art and Art History

Artist Statement:

My work shows repetitive imagery, compositions, subject matter, and colors as a critique of the echo chamber of ideas that are presented on social media and media at large. There are mannerisms that people follow, habits that get formed all in a quest to be seen as a better, or more humorous, or more genuine, or more intelligent human being. The idea of needing to act a certain way or look a certain way or talk a certain way to gain the approval of others deeply frightens me. It takes away what makes us each unique and can limit new approaches to intuitive thought.

Using flat oils and acrylics to depict scenes of human and animal interaction, I aim to show the monotony of ideas proposed through media. I enjoy working with large spaces of color, but deliberately shying away from using stencils or tape to create my linework. This is because I find it important to show my hand in the work, as I believe there is life behind these rather static compositions. I show motion through unsteady lines. Imagery of dead animals and industrial waste spawned by COVID-19 act a metaphor for the limitation of ideas that we succumb ourselves to when failing to question simple ideologies. Social media platforms in particular fail to offer us the motivation to engage with deeper conversations that we have in our daily lives. And at times can push a narrative that deeper conversations and better understandings are inherently less important because of manipulative functionalities like 'likes' and 'comments.' This is worrisome when social media has become a major, or the major, means of communication for many of us.

The flat composition of the works also acts as a representation of what is happening in the images we view without the application of a perfect filter, witty caption, or predisposed attitude towards the person who is posting. I find it paramount that as a society we view social media sites, not through fantastical lens, but as they are.

Title**Original Format**

Figure 1: Untitled (Culling Scene)	Acrylic on wood, 36 in x 36 in
Figure 2: This Billboard Boat Is Really Getting In The Way Of My Shot	Acrylic on wood, 36 in x 36 in
Figure 3: What Do I Call Bullshit? A Contemporary Dilemma	Acrylic on wood, 36 in x 36 in
Figure 4: Idiot Chickens!	Oil on wood, 36 in x 36 in
Figure 5: Rubber Ducks	Oil on wood, 27 in x 27 in
Figure 6: SALE	Oil on wood, 48 in x 48 in
Figure 7: Beached Whale	Oil on wood, 36 in x 36 in
Figure 8: Untitled (Jungle)	Oil on wood, 18 in x 18 in
Figure 9: Squirrel and Line and Condom	Oil on wood, 18 in x 18 in
Figure 10: All That's Left Is Soy Milk	Acrylic on wood, 36 in x 36 in

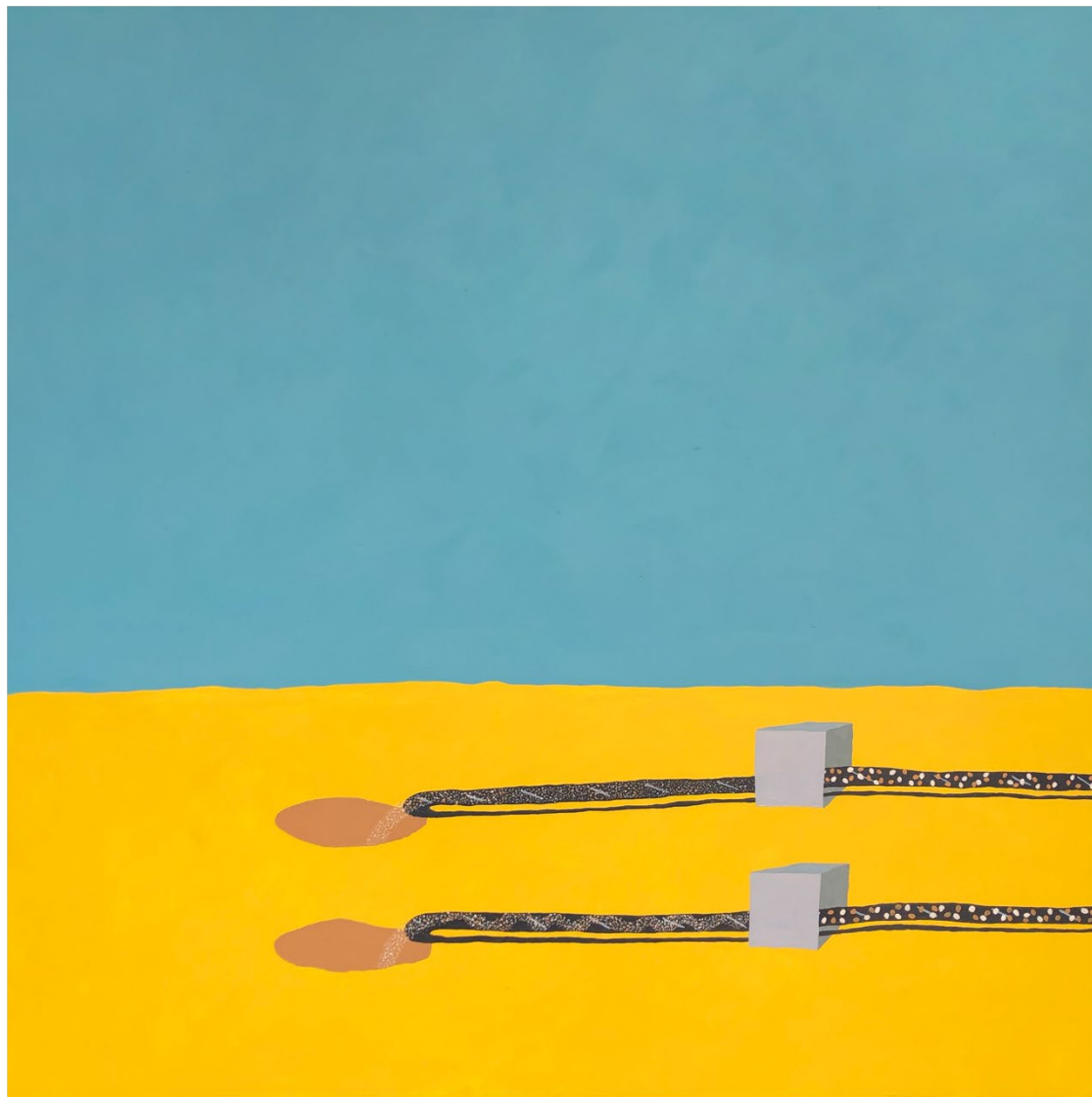


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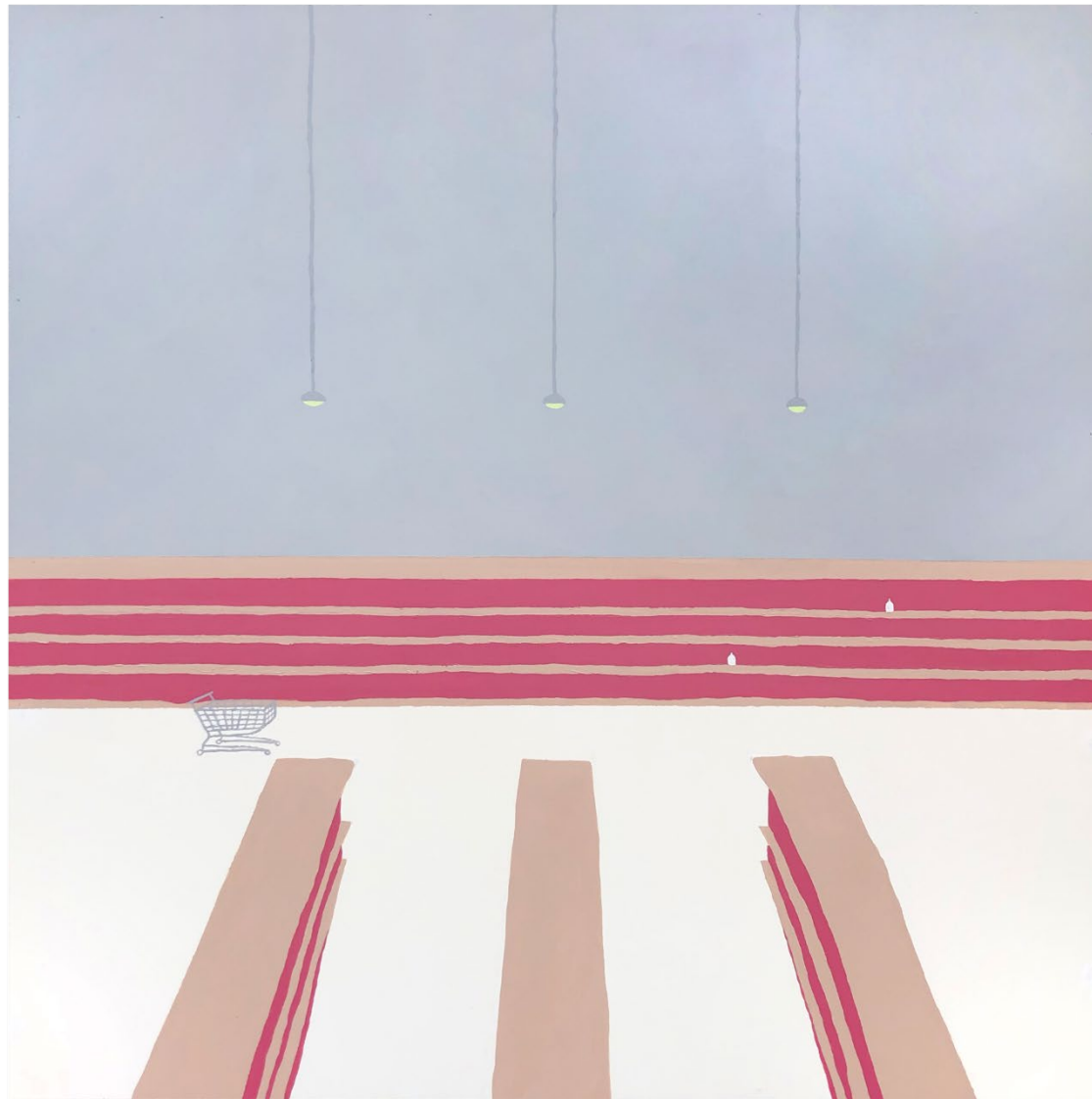


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