

## **Art & Life with Kelli Vance**



Today we'd like to introduce you to Kelli Vance.

**Kelli, please kick things off for us by telling us about yourself and your journey so far.**

The things I was most interested in while growing up were art, science, and physical fitness. Considering that, it seems inevitable that I would end up painting and making work involving the human figure. Originally from Garland, Texas, I did my undergraduate work at the University of North Texas and went on to the University of Houston for my graduate studies. Upon graduation, I was selected to participate in the Roswell Artist in Residence program in New Mexico, where I met some amazing artists and got to spend an entire year just making work. It was truly a life-changing experience. I then spent a few years in Los Angeles making and showing work while teaching at Long Beach City College

before moving back to Houston, where I have since been continuing my work and teaching.

Outside of painting, I am an adventurous spirit that loves traveling, running ultra-marathons with my husband Brian, backpacking and pretty much anything outdoors.

### **Can you give our readers some background on your art?**

My works are investigations of psychological spaces where anxieties surrounding identity and states of consciousness are represented as moments in an unfolding narrative. These concepts are catalysts for creating paintings and drawings that raise more questions than giving answers and never quite give the story whole, as the figures are caught in moments of being 'in-between' or before and after. The women exist in a place where a sense of self is being lost or found, formed or deconstructed. They are enveloped in a journey where that loss and reconnection to the self and to nature propels an estranged relation of the figure to the environment she inhabits. These precarious and unstable moments propose an examination of our own cognizance surrounding the fear, release, engagement, and submission in how we find and contemplate our place in the world.

Mostly I make paintings, though drawing does also have its place in the studio. I stage photographs using myself or friends to utilize as reference material for the paintings and, depending on the place they inhabit, I will also use photographs I have taken while traveling and hiking.

I hope people leave my work with questions unanswered but also with a sense of recognition of something they may not be able to place.

**Any advice for aspiring or new artists?**

My advice to other artists would be to trust yourself with your work. There are so many people out there, including other artists, that can't wait to tell you why your work isn't good (whatever that means) or why it isn't relevant. Make your work. Don't worry about other people. If you are authentic in your practice, the work will show that, and it will find its audience.

### **What's the best way for someone to check out your work and provide support?**

I show my work at McClain Gallery here in Houston and at Cris Worley Fine Arts in Dallas.





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