

My paintings are plastic spaces for soft collisions of objects, identity, the decorative, the wearable, the malleable, screen space, imagined space and real space. I cultivate this space through material exploration that investigates a place between representation and material as material. These materials include canvas, air-dry clay, wax, caulk, spackle, paint, paper, collage, found objects and images, felt, stickers, and a variety of acrylic mediums and glues. For me, the space of a bedroom shares something with the icing of a cake one decorates or buys and the clothes one wears, and the desk one sits at to write, screens one watches, and the desire to stick gum and streamers on the wall: I am interested in the intimacy of this and the humanness of the private self and the public self and how those divisions can break down, through a dedication to play and material exploration in the space of a painting.

My use of symbols and icons such as candles, balloons, streamers, and cakes speak to a habitual party or an any-aged-ness, in which ritual and perpetual and evolving personhood plays out. I am interested in the aesthetics, ephemerality and democratic nature of generic party decorations, and how they are used to demarcate and celebrate a passing of time and function as fodder for joy outside of time. In "Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity," Jose Esteban Munoz talks about a queerness that has not yet arrived, that has to look to the past rather than the present. He cites moments that provide glimpses of this future-possible utopia, through moments of joy. For me, the use of the celebratory is related to queerness, and to when you win on Solitaire on the computer and the cards cascade and bounce, and when you type "Congratulations" in a text and confetti happens, and my personal reverence for the Sesame Street themed party decor my parents' always bought for me and my brothers. I am interested in how those decorations were placed in our dining room with the print of the Hopper painting that my parents found in a dumpster.

As Sarah Ahmed discusses in “Queer Phenomenology,” I am interested in elements of orientation and disorientation in relation to quotidian spaces, and how to illustrate this visually. Through combining this with the celebratory or decorative, I hope to convey a sort of transcendence or subversion of the expected and a pleasure in this. My paintings are as much table-scapes as wall-scapes and bedroom-scapes, as places for the body to be indexed or implied.

I think about the body’s presence in my paintings in a similar way to how it functions in the work of some of my favorite poets —at present, the work of Eileen Myles and James Schuyler, because of the grit and saturation with which they talk about the physical and tangible, and personify objects, in a way that turns or rotates to the magical or transcendent. As Eileen Myles says about James Schuyler, in reaction to him being termed an “intimist,” his poems are “close, touchable, have a quality of sweetness that we associate with intimacy, a dangerous sweetness even.” In my paintings I am interested in the synthesis of this with Myles’ “damp coloring book,” that is “naturally orange—you left it out in the rain.” I was once in a poetry class in which the premise was the notion that all poems are love poems. I would like to think the same thing about paintings, and I try to convey something of the feeling of kissing your crush in a dream, and then waking up, and it still feeling sweet, but also there is a sense of loss, or a not-yet, and something of a reorientation as you reenter the world.