A Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures

Paintings by Dana Ellyn on exhibit at Garner Narrative

"A Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures" is an exhibition by independent Washington DC artist Dana Ellyn. Art is her way of telling stories with themes as varied as religion, feminism, politics and pop-culture. Dana's paintings are at once playful, morbid, endearing, ironic, menacing, and intoxicating. She presents a body of work inspired from her well-read focus on literary classics, progressive view on current events, and folk art influence.
The paintings on this page are inspired by classic novels - a subset of what you'll see on exhibit at Garner Narrative.

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1. Soma Ballet: inspired by Brave New World
2. Zygote: inspired by The Handmaid's Tale
3. Death and Destruction and War, Oh My: inspired by The Wizard of Oz
4. Meeting the Lord: inspired by Lord of the Flies
5. Performing for The Lord: inspired by Lord of the Flies
6. Samneric: inspired by Lord of the Flies
7. Plague of Blood: inspired by the Bible
8. Plague of Frogs: inspired by the Bible
9. Plague of Hail: inspired by the Bible

To purchase or inquire please contact:
Angie Reed Garner: garnernarrative@gmail.com

Cardinal Sins

a new painted series by Dana Ellyn on exhibit at Garner Narrative

CARDINAL SINS (from Wikipedia):The Seven Deadly Sins, also known as the Capital Vices or **Cardinal Sins**, is a classification of objectionable vices (part of Christian ethics) that have been used since early Christian times to educate and instruct Christians concerning fallen humanity's tendency to sin. The currently recognized version of the sins are usually given as ***wrath, greed, sloth, pride, lust, envy, and gluttony.***

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1. Lust 35”x35” oil on canvas $700
2. Envy 11”x14” acrylic on canvas (sold)
3. Pride 30”x40” oil on chipboard $550
4. Gluttony 14”x18” acrylic on canvas $200
5. Greed 11”x14” acrylic on canvas $200
6. Wrath 16”x16” acrylic on canvas $200

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See additional interviews, photos from opening night and more paintings by Dana Ellyn:
http://www.danaellyn.com/press/garner/garner.html



August 8, 2012

Art: Calling it like she sees it

Political artist Dana Ellyn presents 'A Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures'

BY CHELSEA GIFFORD

It must be difficult for anyone familiar with artist Dana Ellyn to believe her claim that for the first three decades of her life, she was quiet and reserved. Her paintings, on display at Garner Narrative, would suggest an artist unabashed about sharing her opinion. The show, titled "A Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures," consists of a handful of large-scale acrylic paintings and twice as many smaller watercolor, acrylic and collage works typical of her signature political and cultural critiques in which nothing escapes her satirical scrutiny.

Ellyn lives and works in Washington, D.C., which may explain why her art — which often employs visual metaphors drawn from pop culture and art history and informed by the tradition of political cartooning — expresses her disenchantment with the cognitive dissonance of contemporary society. In the tradition of Yue Minjun and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, she paints in a style somewhere between cynical realism and expressionism with a bold, assured palette. Thanks to subsidized housing available for artists in the D.C. area, Ellyn was able to leave a corporate job and dedicate herself to painting full time in 2002, a year that preceded a decade ripe for satire of American folly. Her topically charged outpouring could comfortably be called prolific and features many subject matters taken directly from the headlines.

In her show, Ellyn unabashedly satirizes sinful cardinals, Derby debutantes, the military industrial complex, meat eating, drone warfare and the Tea Party. Garner Narrative co-owner Angie Garner became aware of Ellyn's work through another artist with Louisville connections, Rodney Hatfield (aka Art Snake). She feigns innocence on behalf of the artist in terms of understanding the local connotation of Cards behaving badly. Her "Seven Deadly Sins" series features cardinal bird/human hybrids gobbling worms in the presence of open-mouthed baby birds, depicting greed, or letting smaller birds die in the foreground while they languish slothfully in the background. It is clear the bird is a loaded motif repeated throughout her work. In "Vanity," a girl looks into a full-length mirror and sees a bird reflected back at her, and in "Lust," a rooster sits perched on the lap of a Catholic cardinal.

"I'll Have Another," however, is clearly a dig at a local sacred cow; in it, a woman in a lilac dress and enormous Derby hat sits sideways on a wooden hobby horse, an outstretched mint julep in her hand pressed aggressively upon the viewer. The woman's face looks like a marionette, her teeth shine out of the center of the composition in vulgar gaiety. While this painting is clearly an unflattering depiction of boozy Derby revelry, it is hard to imagine anyone who would disagree with its verisimilitude.

While Ellyn lost me on some of her more pedantic political metaphors, I respect her unrelenting and energetic commitment to calling it like she sees it, day in and day out.

'Dana Ellyn: A Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures'
Through Sept. 29
Garner Narrative
642 E. Market St.
641-8086
garnernarrative.com