

JULIE LIGER-BELAIR

Toronto, ON

BIOGRAPHY

My need to make art started in my childhood. With an artist mother and an architect father (Belgian and French respectively), I grew up surrounded by art books and art supplies. Spending my summers in the Canadian wilderness, collecting and observing nature, nurtured and molded my imagination. After studying music and visual arts at a high school level, I decided to continue my education in Fine Arts.

I attended the Ontario College of Art and Design where I studied printmaking, photography, illustration and metalsmithing. This interdisciplinary focus led me towards mixed media art in an attempt to combine these different disciplines in one coherent body of work. Around the same time, I began collecting cabinet cards and Victorian-era photographs. These ultimately became the 'seeds' of my current imagery.

For 20 years I've been making assemblage pieces and three-dimensional collages in found or handmade frames and boxes. I create mixed media works using paint, wood, papier-mâché, polymer clay, metal and found objects. They feature the cabinet photos, finding that these, in of themselves, evoke imagined histories and feelings of nostalgia. Their serious and stern faces provide an ironic counterpoint to the humour and levity I try to inject into the work. Alternatively, my pieces make evident a playful fascination with all forms of iconography, creating alter-pieces for everyday life, making sacred of the mundane. More recently, I've been working on larger pieces that combine painting and collage on wood cradle boards.

In my latest work I've been attempting to combine these vernaculars – the ironic and the sacred – to tell a story about the disconnect between our private and public selves. That is, who we are is often at odds with what we project to others. What do we choose to reveal, conceal or fabricate? More importantly, I explore the toll exacted by this 'duplicitousness' specifically the feelings of sorrow, resentment, anxiety and martyrdom it engenders.

I live in Toronto and work in a garage studio where I sometimes allow my husband, three children and little black dog, Frida, to visit.

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358 Richmond Rd. Ottawa, ON. K2A 0E8 | 613.729.0003 | info@wallspacegallery.ca



ARTIST STATEMENT

The man who thought he was a man (and other parables)

This show builds on Liger-Belair's established and continuously evolving visual language, and carries forward her intimate fascination with storytelling and folkloric symbology. Each collage is created from a mixture of antique photography, vintage and collected postcards, images of Old Masters paintings, and the artist's own painting and mark-making.

In her subversive inclusion of work by prominent male painters of days past, Julie Liger-Belair alludes to a contemporary reevaluation of Renaissance era symbolism. This critiques ongoing patriarchal power structures so often imbued in (art) history and politics. Using her own artistic aesthetic, Liger-Belair reassigns value and context to the prevalent religious symbols and iconography frequently found in 14th to 17th century paintings. In doing so, the artist draws attention to the transient nature of power and influence. In discussions leading up to this exhibition's debut, the artist recalls Ozymandias by poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, particularly in its critique of the supposed infallibility of man. Despite one's desires to be as steady and everlasting as the tallest mountain, we are all just passing through.

- Erin Crowell, Curator

I met a traveler from an antique land,
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Ozymandias by Percy Shelley

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"Pieces. Parts. Fragments.

The act of dividing up an image into countless parts, to then reassemble them into new stories, this is the beauty of collage. The endless possibility of new narratives, the re-contextualizing of imagery, these are the things that delight me.

In this series, I focus on fragments and symbols from Classical European art. The hubris and certitude of the Old Masters' worldview may be long since discredited, but the fragments of their patriarchy remain, oblivious and obstinate to the "Truth" that no mountain is eternal."

- Julie Liger-Belair

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CV

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 *The man who thought he was a mountain (and other parables)*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
- 2019 *Absurd Imaginaries*, Saugatuck Center for the Arts, Saugatuck, MI
- 2018 *Brexit, Im Stich Glassen & Kanadische Ikonen*, Kunsthaus Kirschbluethe, Germany
- 2013 *Where Gods Fear to Tread*, Akasha Art Projects, Toronto, ON
- 2012 *The Frog Croaked Twelve*, Akasha Art Projects, Toronto, ON
- 2009 *Behind Closed Doors*, Dale Smith Gallery, Ottawa, ON
- 2008 *Sardine Saints and Dustpan Gods*, Dale Smith Gallery, Ottawa, ON
- 2007 *The Little Red Thread*, Dale Smith Gallery, Ottawa, ON
- 2006 *La Grande Parade*, C1 Artspace, Toronto, ON
- 2006 *Nous Sommes Tous de Drôles d'Oiseaux*, Dale Smith Gallery, Ottawa, ON

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 *Begin Again*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
- 2017 *Open Door 13*, Rosalux Gallery, Minneapolis, MN
- 2000-2013 Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibitions, Nathan Phillips Square, Toronto, ON
- 2011 *Square Foot*, AWOL Gallery, Toronto, ON
- 2010 *Mail Me Art 2*, Red Gate Gallery, London, UK
- 2011 *6 x 8*, The Paper Place, Toronto, ON
- 2010 *6 x 8*, The Paper Place, Toronto, ON
- 2009 *In September*, Parts Gallery, Toronto, ON
- 2007 *Heat*, Dale Smith Gallery, Ottawa, ON
- 2007 *Folk Arts Feature*, Ontario Crafts Council Guild Shop, Toronto, ON
- 2005 *Square Foot NYC*, Project Spaceman Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
- 2005, 2006, 2010 *The Shelf Project*, C1 Artspace, Toronto, ON
- 2004 *The Circus and the Pimp's Jalopy*, AWOL Gallery, Toronto, ON
- 2003 *Glass Slipper*, OCAD Gallery, Toronto, ON

PRESS + PUBLICATIONS

- 2017 *Mix and Match- Exploring Contemporary Collage*, Sandu Publishing

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- 2012 "Get Some Art." The Gird (July 5-11).
2012 "Art Over the Street." Xtra! (June 14).
2010 Uppercase Magazine (Issue 5)
2009 "I'll Take Door No. 1: Julie Liger-Belair at the Dale Smith Gallery." Ottawa Citizen (June 1).
2008 "Julie Liger-Belair: Mythes en Boîte." Voir (February 21).
2008 Preston Catalogue (Vol. VIII)
2007 "Asian Connections." Parkhurst Exchange (Vol. 15, No. 11).
2006 "Strange Birds Take Flight." Ottawa Citizen (February 11).

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