

Jason Kishell

Artist Statement

The law of conservation of energy states that energy can be neither created nor destroyed, but rather transforms from one form to another. I like that idea, and I like looking at the evidence of that: a decaying leaf, a bug carcass, a rotting fruit. The cyclical quality of life along with the role of human experience within the natural world dominates my conceptual themes.

My work contains a conflicting duality that exposes the world we live in as ugly and beautiful, safe and scary, gross and pretty, serious and funny. Perhaps most noticeable is the examination of the contrasting forces within life and death, and how much they are the same. I enjoy creating things that aren't defined while at the same time providing enough information to generate an explanation. This allows for individual exploration and opens the door for interpretation.

For as long as I can remember, the things I create have had a tinge of comedy to them. Sometimes it is obvious, and sometimes it is subtle, but it shows up even when I didn't plan it. I suppose it is that conflicting duality from the paragraph above and my way of maintaining emotional homeostasis within my work. In addition, I enjoy the challenge of working with humor. Creating a singular work that is humorous without relying on text, motion, or sound while at the same time maintaining sincerity and not coming across as cheap, is a fun challenge and requires a flexible imagination.

Exploring the relationship that humans have with nature and death, specifically through scientific study and adventure, is a favorite topic of mine. Having spent most of my life outdoors, I have an impressive collection of natural history, which is the basis of my visual vocabulary. I am most interested in items that have the potential to transfer or transform energy. Not to mention, these things are visually stunning and evoke a child-like curiosity.

Good story telling happens when idea and technique work in harmony; therefore I spend a great deal of time crafting the things I create. I work with a variety of materials but mainly clay: a cone 5/6 porcelain clay body typically fired in an electric kiln. Frequently, I incorporate wood and occasionally metal, also indulging in 2-dimensional media such as paint, colored pencil, and graphite. Process is just as important to me as concept. In many cases the process becomes the driving force that pushes me to complete a work of art, letting the formal techniques of creating become part of the concept. People are entertained by illusion and skill, it pulls them in closer for further investigation. I do not shy away from craftsmanship but rather cherish its place in the way I create and how it impacts a viewer's understanding. In this way I am exploiting the art materials into detailed objects of mystery, quasi-science, and entertainment.