

“BRIAN KELLEY AT WSS”

Paintings, Prints, and Drawings

March 24 through May 5

Opening Reception: Friday, April 7 from 6 - 8pm

Artist Talk: Friday, April 7 at 7pm

BIO

Brian Kelley lives in Alexandria, Virginia. He has an MFA in Painting from Indiana University and a BA from the College of William and Mary. He has exhibited nationally and lectured at several schools, including George Washington University, the College of William and Mary, George Mason University, Anne Arundel Community College, Prince George's Community College, Northern Virginia Community College, and the Washington Studio School. His portfolio includes works in painting, drawing, printmaking, and video.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I consider myself a problematic figurative painter, both because a good deal of my work is not painting and because the human figure is often missing. First, I approach painting, drawing, printmaking, and any other media as extensions of a painting practice that comes from working from direct observation. I try to not cultivate separate ways of working in different mediums, but use different mediums and techniques as a way to keep the mark-making spontaneous and considered. Second, in works that have no people present, the subject is still people, but by proxy. The cities, buildings, interiors, and still life objects in my work are always a way of thinking about the durable ways human action shapes the world.

The world I view daily is one touched and retouched by people. In a place like Alexandria or Washington, there are no remaining primeval trees or wildness. Even the local contemporary push to replant native species is a very deliberate human action that paradoxically hopes to be somewhat wild. Cracks in walls, and perhaps even more importantly their slipshod or expert repairs, reveal that a building is not an inorganic structure, but something much more like a bee's hive marked by each successive group of inhabitants. I am particularly fortunate to once again be exhibiting a solo exhibition in a building that has had several past lives.* I enjoy this kind of double layer of human touch and activity: the first being the motif of places shaped by people and the second being the act of working by hand and direct observation on a composition.

*The Washington Studio School is currently located at 2123 S Street, NW. It was designed by architect Nathan C. Wyeth, who also designed the Oval Office and the Old Senate and House Office buildings. The first floor gallery and second floor library remain largely unchanged from Wyeth's initial design. 2123 S Street was the private residence of the Biddle family and then the private school, Holton-Arms (now in Bethesda) before it became an art school.