

Look Again

ARTIST STATEMENT

Kaitlyn Peach Heger

I've always loved living in cities. From the people walking around to the colors of buildings and storefronts, the transportation on the street, and the nature; there's so much to look at and draw inspiration from. I have a photographic memory, and I have been drawing people from my mind for as long as I can remember. I'm especially interested in drawing people with a little attitude. An avid people-watcher, I'm drawn to the way people express themselves through their clothes, makeup, shoes, or the way they walk or stand. I love the little details that give you a glimpse of someone's creativity, and I'm always curious about the person behind them. I'm originally from Philadelphia, a city with plenty of grit and character, and now I live in Venice, Los Angeles. LA has its own kind of glittery grit. I definitely like it here.

I make designs in the form of prints, drawings, and animations, usually inspired by something I've seen or remembered, like a sign or graphic on a car dashboard. My background in graphic design and sign fabrication has a lot to do with how I approach an image. I love working with shapes and figuring out how much I can simplify something while retaining its essence and amplifying what makes it interesting. For my prints, I use a jigsaw technique, cutting individual shapes with a laser cutter and printing them by hand on an etching press or a clamshell press. I also like hiding images within other images. Sometimes you notice them right away, and sometimes you might have to look a little longer.

Nostalgia through color is a huge part of what I do. I love seeing what happens when certain colors sit next to each other, especially when natural light is involved. A lot of my palettes come from things I remember: candy at a corner store, the colors of a pencil case, Venice sunsets, or shadows stretching across hot concrete. I can remember a particular combination of colors long after seeing it, and sometimes it's a smell that brings the memory of that particular time back. Though it's a personal memory I draw from, I seek to access universal feelings of playfulness and innocence through color. I want the colors in my work to make as much of an impression as the image itself.

Making art has always been therapeutic for me, especially throughout my experience with addiction and recovery. I think that's part of why I'm so drawn to printmaking. I love being able to return to the same image over and over, experimenting with different color combinations and seeing how each iteration changes the way I experience it. The same image can take on an entirely different emotional quality depending on the colors I choose. I also enjoy the unpredictability of the process.

My personal experiences find their way into the subjects I choose, too. I'm often drawn to images of temptation or figures interacting with each other in ways that aren't entirely straightforward. Their relationships are usually complicated by something else happening in the composition. Having experienced addiction and the stigma surrounding it, I've become especially aware of how easily a person can be reduced to one aspect of their identity. I've spent a lot of time thinking about this in relation to femininity, too, and the assumptions people make based on appearance.

In 2014, I started collecting inspiration and sharing my artwork under the name Peach MoDel. What began as an online identity gradually became a persona that runs through my work. Peach isn't a character that I dress up as, but more of a spirit that lives in the figures I draw. The name plays with the expectation that feminine people should be sweet, beautiful, and desirable, while also acknowledging how easily we can be looked at, judged, or consumed without our consent.

I'm fascinated by how much we think we can tell about someone just by looking at them, and how often those first impressions miss the mark. I like exaggerating the things we tend to notice first, while running a subtle script in the background, playing with the line between what's funny or sweet and what's unsettling. My work is meant to be playful, even when there's something more complicated going on. I like the idea that someone might see one thing at first, then discover something entirely different when they look again if given the opportunity.

As I've grown as an artist, I've come to understand Peach MoDel as part of my work rather than a separate identity. I've decided to bring these parts of myself together under the name Kaitlyn Peach Heger. Peach will always have a place in what I make, and now it has a place in the name I use as an artist, too.