

Gary Kret
Artist Statement

My practice includes drawings, paintings and sculptures. I strive to achieve a balance between these three disciplines. The works are initially conceived on a small scale with sketches. Some are gestural while others are more comprehensive. They are then enlarged to life-size scales and transformed through my artistic process.

My landscape drawings are interpretations of photographs taken while driving at twilight when the sky is illuminated and the remaining light lines the clouds as the landscape darkens. These drawings are made on watercolor block pads with water-soluble graphite. The graphite is applied by brush, directly drawn in its crayon form, or it can be blotted and lifted. Drawing with charcoal and Conté crayon allows me to keep the remnants of the beginnings of the drawing: smudges, fingerprints and redrawn lines. The images are built up slowly - from light to dark - revealing their painterly qualities. The destruction drawings, crafted from memory, are compositions of invented images that are broken, strewn across the canvas, ultimately connecting images from my older works to new ones.

My still lifes are painted with the intention of creating a juxtaposition between what is perceived and known by the viewer and what the work presents. Painting in monochrome colors, with a limited palette of only grays, whites and blacks, and compositionally placing them next to one another creates more variations in tonality resulting in visual complexities. The use of these colors symbolizes the dormancy of life, the bleakness of winter, and absence.

In other paintings, I use primary colors to introduce dissonance within the composition to create harmony and balance, and to elicit an emotional response from the viewer. This palette establishes a dialogue between the objects depicted. The use of complementary colors enhances the notion of contradiction and increases the sense of stability, simplicity, and clarity. The result removes ambiguity and establishes a straightforward presentation of the elements in the work and of the work itself.

My sculptures address human gesture with a minimalist appearance of an anthropomorphic form. The works are elongated shapes portraying heads with two eyes positioned to denote human emotions or actions such as shame, failure, resignation, drowning, or submission. They are made of wood, typically maple, and turned on a wood lathe. The turning is intuitive as there is no specific shape in mind. Every piece is intended to have a particular stance, form, and size to convey an emotion or action. They are finished with black aniline dye, polished with dark paste wax to a warm luster. This process simultaneously denies the nature of the material, while letting it become discovered.

A continuing interest of mine is the way in which humanity creates a context by using contradictions to explain and understand the world, life's circumstances, and emotional relationships. The element of contradiction is an essential aspect throughout my body of work. Whether through my use of primary colors or monochrome colors; the focus on simplicity to heighten the complexity of the work; or the interrelationships created by compositional elements between the work and the viewer, all contribute to this expression.