

Kelsey Phillips

Using natural imagery and symbolism alongside aspects of the uncanny, I explore my own ideas, emotions, and experiences through my artwork.

*Wingbeats* is mostly an exploratory work: borne of my interest in the complex forms in hands and wings, it was a challenge I set for myself. I had a very satisfying breakthrough when painting the feathers in this piece after my previous attempts in other works had ended up looking altogether *off*. This success also validated many hours of studying the structure of feathered wings with the intent of drawing or painting them realistically.

*Petunias* was conceived when I was, to say the least, pissed off. I wanted to convey the feeling of being angry at someone, but also recognizing that tearing into them isn't worth your time. The language and symbolism of flowers has made its way into my art before, and in this case, petunias represent resentment. Also worth noting is how this piece was my first attempt at a full ballpoint pen drawing; I felt the texture of the pen would nicely complement that of the fur, and *Petunias* was an exercise in realism just as much as it was one in patience.

The idea for *Southwestern Supernatural* came to me after a recent move from average suburban Phoenix to its very rural outskirts—so rural it takes a twelve minute drive to reach civilization again. It's an odd but fascinating clash of civilization and pure desert: paved streets abruptly turn into dirt roads, and power lines are visible between the line of houses and nearby mountains. I knew I wanted to encompass the specific experience of walking under these massive, towering power lines in a piece somehow and the inclusion of a not-quite-normal coyote added the perfect sense of strangeness to my idea. I do want to make it clear that *Southwestern Supernatural* isn't environmental commentary so much as an investigation into how nature and mankind interact with one another—the empty, open desert can feel just as surreal as being absolutely dwarfed by power lines.

Next spring, I will be completing my BFA in Drawing and Painting from Arizona State University, but that doesn't mean I will stop learning about art. I have investigated the fantastic and abnormal in my art since childhood—what once was a pastime morphed into a goal of becoming a professional illustrator. I eagerly take every opportunity I can get to expand my knowledge in the subject and believe there is always something more to learn, always something new to discover, always new techniques to try. At no point in my life have I felt content with my knowledge of form, color, anatomy, lighting, or any other basics of art, and I acknowledge that even as a professional I'll still be exploring new mediums and techniques.