

Meet Joseph Kameen



THE QUARTERLY

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JOSEPH KAMEEN: INTERVIEW

1. What is your connection with the University of North Georgia?

I have been working and exhibiting in the southeast since 2018, and was invited to show my work at UNG Dahlonega by Professor Kornrumpf.

2. Background?

I grew up in Pittsburgh, and completed my BFA in painting and sculpture at Boston University and my MFA in painting at Indiana University. Currently, I'm an assistant professor of art at USC Aiken.

3. What media do you prefer and how did you come to use it as your primary one?

I primarily paint in oils, and have always loved the flexibility they afford.

4. When did you first become interested in art?

I first became seriously interested in art in high school. It began partially as a hobby, but when I took my first drawing class in college, I knew art was what I wanted to do with my life.

5. What does your work aim to say?

My work uses narrative imagery to look at the systems we develop to help ourselves understand our lives, and the ways that the spaces, people, and objects around us become parts of that narrative.

6. How does your work comment on current social or political issues?

Some of my pieces are more immediately personal, but many touch on larger issues as well. The piece "Forward Without", for example, was made in frustration at the achingly slow progress towards social justice, combined with the hope provided by forces like BLM that aim to speed that change.

7. Who are your biggest influences?

The list is too long! As a student, artists like Odilon Redon, Edvard Munch, and Hyman Bloom were big influences. There's so much great figurative art happening now that the list of contemporary inspirations is even longer; Kerry James Marshall, Robin F. Williams, Nicole Eisenman, and Hilary Harkness are just a few I keep going back to.

8. How have you developed your career?

I have always loved teaching, so that was a focus from the beginning. Most of my professional decisions have revolved around balancing my studio and teaching practices.

9. How do you seek out opportunities?

I try to focus on spaces that represent or exhibit artists I admire, and keep my eye out for opportunities to show my work there.

10. How do you cultivate a collector base?

My work has changed a lot over the years, but I find that there is always a common thread across the work. A supportive collector will see that thread and be interested in where it leads.

11. How do you navigate the art world?

It's helpful that teaching is my primary source of income, which lets me navigate the art world with a focus on the work that is interesting to me.

12. Which current art world trends are you following?

As I mentioned, there has been such a boom of amazing figurative art in the last few decades. There are so many artists now who feel the need to tell stories, and believe in the importance of that work.

13. How do you speak to the ways art is important to society?

As a teacher, I try to encourage my students to make work that they feel is important to them. Each new generation faces new challenges, and new art needs to be made to describe, critique, and analyze those challenges.



Check out more of Joseph Kameen's work on his [website](#) or on his Instagram [@joekameen](#).

ART GALLERY EVENTS

Congratulations to our Fall21 graduating class

Come see our BA
senior seminar
exhibition at the
Gainesville library and
the Dahlonega campus
from November 29 -
December 10.