



RUIZ-HEALY ART

Contemporary Art from Latin America & Texas

Patricia Ruiz-Healy, Director Ruiz-Healy Art
Gallery: 210-804-2219

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Julie Speed: Undertoad

**A collaboration between Flatbed Press and Gallery and Ruiz-Healy Art
An exhibition of paintings, prints, and collages spanning two cities**

The exhibition will be on display at **Ruiz-Healy Art** February 17- March 19, 2016
Ruiz-Healy Art 201-A East Olmos Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78212

Ruiz-Healy Art opening reception and book signing Wednesday, February 17 6:00-8:00pm

Presented concurrently with **Flatbed Press and Gallery** February 16 - April 7, 2016
2830 East MLK Jr. Blvd., Austin, Texas 78702

Flatbed Press and Gallery Opening Reception Friday, February 19 6:00-8:00pm

Ruiz-Healy Art, San Antonio and Flatbed Press and Gallery, Austin are pleased to present *Julie Speed: Undertoad*, an exhibition of paintings, prints, and collages spanning two cities. The exhibition at Ruiz-Healy Art curated by Patricia Ruiz-Healy will run February 17 -March 19 and at Flatbed Press and Gallery curated by Katherine Brimberry. The artist will be in attendance for both opening receptions at Ruiz-Healy Art, Wednesday, February 17th 6:00-8:00pm and at Flatbed Press and Gallery, Friday, February 19th 6:00-8:00pm. A joint catalogue with essay by Lyle W. Williams, Curator of Prints and Drawings at The McNay Art Museum is available.

After dropping out of Rhode Island School of Design at age 19, Julie Speed spent her twenties moving around the U.S. and Canada working pick-up jobs (house painter, horse trainer, ad writer, farm worker etc.) until moving to Texas in 1978 where she settled down and taught herself to paint. She switches back and forth regularly between oil painting, printmaking, collage, gouache and drawing, often combining disciplines.

Utilizing her keen sense of the absurd, Speed ponders the big questions—the role of religion, isolation and longing, sexuality, sin and guilt—with a sly, sometimes dark, sense of humor and a steadfast refusal to offer the viewer any tidy resolutions. It is the emphatically open-ended and omnivorous nature of her work, combining anxiety, erotica, and violence with the subversive power of beauty that puts Speed in the vanguard of a return to figurative painting in contemporary art.

The question that arises time and time again with Speed's work is what does it all mean? There is a physical presence to the work that draws people in; these are not works meant to be seen from across the room but rather up close, not glanced at but stared at intently. The artist wants us to look and to think about meaning, about storytelling, but there are no hard and fast answers to be



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had. In the post-modern tradition, the audience is not told what to think or how to interpret. The audience determines meaning; and the meaning can be different for different viewers at different times.

In *The Aestheticians*, three women sit in a row contemplating future breast-related surgeries while a group of monkeys seem to look on mockingly from above. The background, a constellation map, seems to suggest that even as we worry about superficial things, the earth continues to spin in a vast universe oblivious to our concerns. The three women are cut out from a found engraving to which Speed added gouache drawings of the scalpel, the scissors, and the pink-nippled breast. A perfectly graceful c-curve is created by the scalpel pointing towards the breast and then continuing on through the blades of the scissors. This c-curve is then perfectly bisected by a strong diagonal suggested by the intense gaze of the monkeys above.

Collage is supremely important to Speed's practice because she often works with paper cut-outs and other collage elements, moving them around on the surface of one of her works, to determine their precisely correct location. Getting it right is of utmost importance to the artist. Speed has written of her art that "composition comes first." So it is not just a matter of finding interesting but random bits of paper and gluing them together. Rather, there is often a bit of trial and error before Speed reaches that point when the composition just works. When asked about starting to create *The Aestheticians* if it was difficult to begin attaching collage elements to the constellation map, a prized gift from a friend, she answered "of course!" Speed just has the ability to make it *look easy*.

Julie Speed has exhibited throughout the United States and internationally at numerous galleries, museums and collections. The *Undertoad* exhibition celebrates the artist's 50th and 51st solo exhibitions. Two monographs by UT Press have been published on Speed's artwork: *SPEED, ART 2003-2009* and *Julie Speed: Painting, Constructions and Works on Paper*. Speed's artworks can be found in a number of public collections including Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, The Art Museum of Southeast Texas, The Grace Museum, The McNay Art Museum, The Contemporary Austin and the San Antonio Museum of Art .

About Ruiz-Healy Art

Founded in 2004, and located in the historic Olmos Park District of San Antonio, Ruiz-Healy Art specializes in contemporary with an emphasis on Latin American and Texas connected artists. To request high-resolution images and more information about the exhibition, please contact the gallery at 210-804-2219. Gallery hours are Tuesday – Saturday 11:00 -4:00 p.m. and by appointment.

About Flatbed Press and Gallery

Founded in 1989 by Katherine Brimberry and Mark L. Smith, Flatbed Press and Gallery is comprised of two divisions: a publishing workshop that collaborates with artists to produce limited editions of original etchings, lithographs, woodcuts and monoprints and Flatbed





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Gallery a showcase for original prints. Gallery hours are Tuesday - Friday 10:00-5:00 pm, Saturday 12:00 -5:00pm and by appointment. 512-477-9328

