

Ellen Mueller

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ARTIST STATEMENT

I am an interdisciplinary artist exploring issues related to late-stage capitalism as it affects daily life. Within my work I strive to create experiences that engage the cultural conscience of the audience, while addressing social and political issues in a variety of venues.

Both visually and conceptually, I am interested in contrast, especially as it relates to contemporary anxieties and ideals. Through specific compositional choices, subjects are dissociated from their original meaning, and the systems in which they normally function are exposed. My work is inspired by a number of events and phenomena at once, and often hinges on a bizarre juxtaposition of two or more seemingly unrelated influences. Through this work, I challenge the binaries humans continually construct, and hope to disrupt seemingly infinite cycles.

Various aspects of my work could be described as simultaneously humorous and unsettling. I mine the ways capitalism is integral to all aspects of everyday living and decision making, from food and shelter, to clothing and energy. Absurdity and humor are ways for addressing this creeping influence, even if such gestures are largely symbolic. In addressing these issues, I often use imagery sourced from dreams, which includes a great deal of discord and symbolism. I rely heavily on online image searches and self-directed photo shoots to generate these strange and disparate compositions.

My practice also has strong ties to place. Cultures and individuals maintain different fantasies related to place. Thus, I examine both the human need for 'conclusive' stories, and question whether anecdotes 'fictionalize' the histories of various places. In this way, my work wrestles with concepts such as authenticity and objectivity by using an archival approach and quasi-scientific precision as I peruse a range of different locations and communities.