

Each issue, Rare Magazine chooses a local Austin artist to feature on our cover and section introduction pages. This month's feature artist is Allison Gregory. Make sure you check out her art scattered throughout the magazine.



ALLISON GREGORY'S Creative Patterns



When I pull into Allison Gregory's driveway, she's painting in her garage. The space is (for the most part) orderly, but works are lined up against the walls, and the floor covering is blasted with splatters of bright color.

Although Gregory works on her art full-time now, her post-college career got off to a rocky start. After graduating from the University of Redlands and struggling for a year, she went to Platt College to pursue a graduate degree in graphic design and illustration. The move seemed practical, but Gregory realized she was never going to be satisfied working nine to five. And so, she moved back to her parents' house in San Antonio, a decision that turned out to be crucial to helping her transition into a career as an artist.

"Living in my mom's house, I painted day and night. I did 15 paintings in three weeks, had my first show and sold six paintings," Gregory says.

Encouraged by the success of that show, Gregory threw herself full-time into her artwork, and completed over 200 paintings in her first year, working six and seven days a week.

Gregory works in a range of styles, moving from abstract pieces to figurative works: "I'm not a landscape artist or an abstract artist," Gregory says. "I do everything, and I wanted to do a bit of all the things that represent my work."

If anything about Gregory's artwork is consistent, it's her use of color. While she'll dabble in styles and shift from figurative works to abstraction, Gregory almost always sticks to the vivid palette, and she never, ever wastes a single inch of a canvas.

"I think, most importantly, what I can say about my art is that I'm influenced by 1980s pop culture," Gregory says. "The reason I started painting and drawing was Keith Haring."

Taking cues not only from Haring but from Andy Warhol, and other pop artists, Gregory is deeply influenced by more readily accessible bits of culture, including the clean graphic appeal of the Rubik's Cube and the bright twinkling pixelation of Lite Brite. She's also fascinated by patterns, and many of her favorite contemporary artists (including Rex Roy and Beatriz Milhazes) work with patterns inspired by textiles and graphic design. She's also currently obsessing over the lowbrow art movement, which strikes a chord because of her love of illustration. Gregory's unique mixing of styles owes in part to her influences and her bold use of color, but also to her method — she never plans works (unless they're commissions) and she literally never uses paintbrushes.

"I don't use paintbrushes on any of my paintings," Gregory says. "I use the backs and tips of pencils. There's no brush made that would let me get the details I want."

Those details can include dots so small they border on being invisible. Gregory also layers her works, and a single painting can have 15 layers on it, covering every inch of the canvas again and again. That level of repetition explains why Gregory can spend anywhere from two days to six months on a single work.

Gregory may have gotten away from the overwhelming work pace that helped her get started, but she'll likely never escape the attention to detail and willingness to work that got her where she is now — they're visible in every completed piece.

*Carly Kocurek
Photo by Jaime Ibarra*

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