

# Todd Kelly

## Settings

January 9 - February 13, 2021

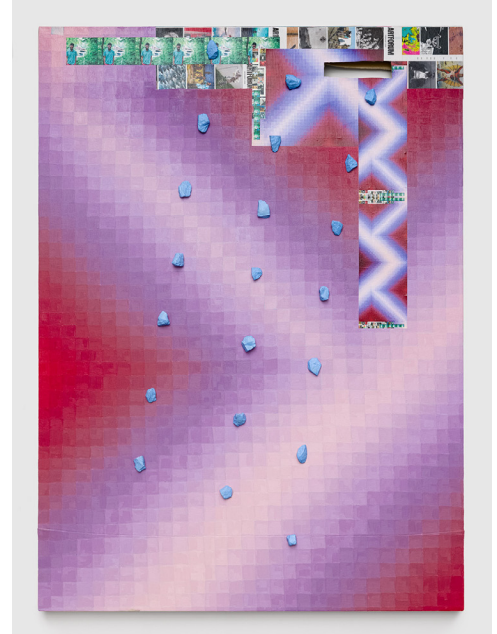


**Asya Geisberg Gallery** is pleased to present “Settings”, the fifth solo presentation of **Todd Kelly**. Kelly’s paintings have consistently spiraled between their surface and conceptual depth. In recent series, a sort of painted quilt unifies and flattens via layers of stenciled shapes or pulsating hand-painted grids or tiny lines. Frequently jumping within a series, show, or even painting between abstraction and outlined or flattened figuration, Kelly enjoys the interplay between objects, arrangements, and patterns. His work has made successively intricate arguments for the continual pleasures to be found in the arena of still life painting for contemporary painters.

With his newest body of work, Kelly has added Op-Art pastel gradients, and now the still-life is “alive” - as actual objects are embedded, dangling, or subsumed in paint. The painted grids now take over all but the edge of the paintings, leaving only a perimeter of tiny repeated images including photos of the artist or of his work, interspersed with other personally significant or symbolic elements such as a Muybridge nude, flower packets, or rocks. When the objects hang off a chain they suggest a sort of charm necklace or mobile. A rebus of meanings is built up, to be considered for its aesthetic, Pop value, and inevitable references to the artist’s lived experience - t-shirts, a digital camera, unpaid bills, etc. The work builds in cycles of adding paint and objects and then editing back, occasionally cutting out objects entirely along with the canvas underneath. Double-entendres such as roosters/cocks or winking asides proliferate such as a Sunday painter figurine. A photo of the artist wearing a T-shirt of his painting - literally navel-gazing - is then collaged and multiplied on the edge of a painting, next to sparkly rainbow decals that could perhaps allude to gay pride.

“Settings” includes sets of four small paintings that refract collaged images of past work - where a stamp-sized image is collaged, then the entire surface painted, then photographed, shrunk and collaged again, and so on. The regurgitated and remixed result is four unique paintings that together uncannily suggest a hall of mirrors. The mirroring then multiplies within the larger paintings. Kelly’s self-referential work seems to be a perfect symbol of the forced interiority of our pandemic self-isolation, where we are left alone with our thoughts and allow them to gather density as they grow like fractals, unimpeded by social interaction. Kelly has found an entire world within his studio, where both paint and reality exist on the same plane, and asks us to accept them equally, without judgment, finding pleasure, humor and curiosity out of humble origins.

*Originally from Michigan, Todd Kelly splits his time between living in Brooklyn, NY and working in his barn studio in Upstate New York, where he is surrounded by chickens, flowers, and studio views of the changing seasons. He began his career in architecture, an influence that still resonates in his work. Kelly earned an MFA at the School of Visual Arts and a B.A. at Anderson University, IN. Recent exhibitions include Transmitter Gallery, Brooklyn; LVL3, Chicago; Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Philadelphia; and the New Bedford Art Museum, MA; and he has been included in exhibitions in London, UK; Galway, Ireland; New York, NY; Spokane, WA; Minneapolis, MN; Albuquerque, NM; and Madison, WI. His work has been featured as an Artforum Critic’s Pick, and reviewed in the London Times, the London Paper, Art F City, LVL3, Bmore Art, The New Criterion, Gorky’s Granddaughter, and Beard and Brush, among others.*



Setting 7, 2020  
Oil paint, house paint, acrylic paint, collage, rocks on canvas  
44" x 32"



Personal Setting, 2020  
Oil paint, house paint, photographs of xmas trees, chrome plated steel, chain, various hardware, CDs with images of my past work, plastic rooster, various lapel pins, purple plexiglass, xmas cookie cutter, plastic storage box, Disney Goofy figurine, ceramic nativity figurine, bottle of Hendricks gin, multi-tool key chain, door closure hardware  
73" x 51" x 12"