

Erik Parra

Statement

I make paintings, drawings and collage that are often part of larger, immersive, site-specific installations. My work draws on tropes of the horrific, midcentury aesthetics & politics to ask questions about the origins of certain, current sociopolitical narratives in the vernacular of pictorial construction. Often I work in small series' of original compositions that conflate my personal history and knowledge with mid-century historical narratives in order to view important, current social concerns through the lens of history. This serves as an entryway into a process of constructing images that draw on our conceptions of space and the stories we tell ourselves in order to navigate the environments we build.

These fabricated interiors play host to a range of potential conversations related to aesthetics, politics and history. Central to my work is an examination of postwar historical narratives, such as white flight and the American space program and their challenging effects on contemporary society. Both darkness and lightness are employed to present not only familiar looking interior spaces but also for their expressive narrative effect. Objects within each painted interior are chosen for the potential of their symbolic form to be both simultaneously loaded and banal. This duality then resonates with similar formal choices within the work and drives the potential to open new space to create productive dialogue to the attendant issues. I am interested in drawing on our collective cultural memory as informed by the histories of painting, film, aggressive underground music and radical politics in order to paint a critical, collective self-portrait at a very critical time.