

### PRESS RELEASE

29 May 2019 (New Orleans, LA) **JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY** is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition of Springfield, MO—based artist, **Kerra Taylor**, entitled *Playfully Serious*. As the Grand Prize Winner of the 2018 NO DEAD ARTISTS Juried Exhibition, Taylor presents six new and four recent paintings. The works will show a variety of her narratives with her family and of her self-portraits. The exhibition will be on view from 29 May through 15 July 2019 with an opening reception coinciding with the Arts District of New Orleans' (ADNO) *First Saturday Gallery Openings* on Saturday 1 June 2019, from 6-9 pm.

The artist discusses her new and previous paintings...

*I am currently working on two bodies of work that depict figurative narratives with my family and of self-portraits. I primarily paint in oils on canvas and wood panel. Painting for me is very meditative. I am intrigued by how one can manipulate a medium and light to create the illusion of space.*

*In my larger series, I playfully fabricate memories with my spouse, parents, siblings, and in-laws, as I fill in the holes caused by the loss of stories. I take into consideration the various personalities, quirks, and typical environments that my relatives and I live in. My paintings are embellishments of personal experiences with family. By putting them in these normal settings with such unusual circumstances, I create my own stories, both familiar and fantastic at the same time. It is in these extraordinary situations that we find the stories that are more worth telling. For every person, for every story, their interpretation of the scene will be unique. In this manner, I allow room for the viewer to enter into my paintings and complete the stories with their own past experiences.*

*I create these paintings by first taking photos of my family and then editing the photos in Photoshop. I often add in props and change the backgrounds in the original photos and then I paint from the photos. Sometimes the paintings evolve further from the photographs.*

*However, my smaller, self-portrait paintings with the skeleton, are more intimate and serious. I am interested in exploring the human condition. I am more interested in the soul and our anatomical complexity. When you strip away the flesh, we are but skeletons. Without the soul, we do not exist but are mere scientific remnants of ourselves. I feel that these paintings are very personal and raw. For me, not only have I feared death and growing old, but I have carried around depression on my shoulders for years. I feel many viewers can relate to this feeling.*

*In the title, "Playfully Serious", I feel that the narrative paintings of my family are just that, playful. Because they are fabricated memories, there isn't much truth to really knowing someone let alone having an authentic memory of that person. Just like, in the skeleton paintings, do most of my family members really know that I suffer from depression? The façade continues.*

**KERRA TAYLOR** (b. 1985) received a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Painting and a Minor in Art History in 2012 from Missouri State University. She received a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Painting from Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 2016. She has exhibited her work throughout Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, and Indiana. Her work has been featured in group shows in China and in Poland. Her work was curated into “Pushing Paint (Oil and Acrylic)” at The National Association of Women Artists Gallery in New York and the “Chronicles of a Future Foretold” exhibition at 33 Contemporary Gallery in Chicago. She has been published in New American Paintings MFA editions #117 and #129. Two of her paintings are in the 21 C Museum Hotels collection. She currently teaches beginning and intermediate drawing courses at Missouri State University.

For more information, press or sales inquiries please contact Gallery Director Matthew Weldon Showman at 504.343.6827 or [matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com](mailto:matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com). Please join the conversation with JFG on Facebook (@JonathanFerraraGallery), Twitter (@JFerraraGallery), and Instagram (@JonathanFerraraGallery) via the hashtags: #KerraTaylor, #JonathanFerraraGallery and #ArtsDistrictNewOrleans.

