

Cara De Angelis

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by Pat Rogers

The central theme in my work is the interplay between the domestic and the wild, which is integral to my series on roadkill. Ten years ago I began bringing animals found on local roads into my studio and creating still lifes with them. I was curious about working with the subject matter mostly due to my interest in environmentalism and habitat loss, and partly because there was so much of it I couldn't ignore it. The paintings were greatly inspired by, and grew to satirize, 17th century Hunting Still Lifes, using the roadkill in place of game animals. These works re-invent tropes used by the Flemish masters and give them a contemporary, political, and environmental perspective.



Cara De Angelis in her Connecticut studio.
Courtesy of the artist.

The inclusion of dolls and children's toys in my still lifes are used to symbolize nostalgia and the infantile, as well as to complete the circle of life and death. The toys create a tangible visualization of the two disparate worlds (domestic and wild). It also serves as a means of finding humor in tragedy through the inherent absurdity of the comparison. With these combinations, the series began to fully symbolize the tension and growing distance between domestic civilization and our surrounding wild spaces.

As I was studying aristocratic portraiture the series quickly evolved to also include paintings of human figures sitting with the animals. Instead of a little lap dog, the women in my paintings sit

with deceased wildlife, seemingly unbeknownst to them. Tar is often employed as a medium in the portraits to symbolize the darker side of humanity such as corruption, greed, and over-industrialization. Tar has long been used as a potent representation of death and criminality in film, literature, and art.

In this vein, I've used it extensively in my work. In the portrait *Donald Trump with a Crown of Roadkill* his suit is coated in a layer of black tar, and in *Laid Table of Roadkill III* the tar is mixed with asphalt and fool's gold to create a 3-dimensional mass coming out of the deer's innards.

The work is painted near life-size so the viewer is able to feel a presence of the animals at their actual scale. Seeing wildlife up close is not experienced in most people's daily lives, for example many of us only see wildlife when driving past roadkill. Bringing roadkill to my studio is the closest relationship I have with wild animals, and in this way I'm able to share this relationship with my viewers. All the paintings in this series, (both still lifes and portraits), explore and question the role of wildlife in an increasingly industrialized society, and the place for them going forward in what's been termed by some as a 'Post-Natural Age'.

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"Two Sisters with Roadkill"
by Cara De Angelis, 2016.
Oil on linen, 41 inch
diameter. Courtesy of the
artist.



"Laid Table of Roadkill III"
by Cara DeAngelis, 2018.
Oil paint, tar, asphalt, and
fool's gold on canvas, 40 x
62 inches framed.
Courtesy of the artist.



"Ivanka Trump with
Roadkill" by Cara
DeAngelis, 2017. Oil tar
and asphalt on wood, 29
inches diameter. Courtesy
of the artist.



“Snow White with a Laid Table of Roadkill” by Cara De Angelis, 2017. Oil on linen, 31 x 57 inches. Courtesy of the artist.



“Tirrana, 1986” by Cara De Angelis, 2018. Oil on panel, 15 x 27 inches. Courtesy of the artist.



“Still Life of Toys and Roadkill” by Cara De Angelis, 2015. Oil on linen, 34 x 45 inches. Courtesy of the artist.