

# The Washington Post

Galleries: 'Alive and Present,' 'Enduring'



Katie Miller, Youth in a Party Hat, 2013, oil on panel, 34 x 23 inches  
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By Mark Jenkins, Published: May 16

Immaculate contemporary photographs with a classical vibe, Agniet Snoep's still lifes have been among the big hits of the (e)merge art fair, where they've been exhibited by Amsterdam's Amstel Gallery. Now Connersmith, (e)merge's founder, is presenting

the Dutch artist's first U.S. solo show, "Alive and Present." These elegant pictures pose fruit, flowers and small animals in compositions modeled on Dutch Golden Age paintings.

Positioned before black backdrops and dramatically lighted, the photos show a respect for nature but also a sense of mastery over it worthy of the Enlightenment's intellectual confidence. Generally, three items of similar or complementary colors are posed together. In "Still Life Series: Lime," a green beetle is wrapped inside the fruit's coiled peel. "Raspberry" places a red bloom and an orange bug between two berries. When the artist pairs a beetle with a cauliflower, both are vividly green, and the vegetable's fractal-like patterns highlight the image's modernity.

The link between these photographs and 17th-century Dutch painting is specific. Snoep is descended from Ambrosius Bosschaert, whose circa-1630 canvas, "Dead Frog with Flies," she remade as a photo. Both are examples of the memento mori, a reminder of death's inevitability. These works point out that even the woman who made these supremely controlled images will someday die, turning cold and dry like that papery-skinned frog.

The gallery is also showing portraits by Katie Miller, another contemporary artist who gives classical painting an up-to-date twist. "Enduring" offers 10 pictures of children, rendered with exceptional detail and precision. (Much as Snoep's photographs resemble paintings, Miller's paintings could be mistaken for photos.) The Baltimore County artist distinguishes herself from her forebears by using bright colors and blank, single-hue backgrounds, and by depicting kids with such props as squirt guns and toy sharks.

Miller's "Youth in a Party Hat" sports a mouth stained with blue food coloring; "A Girl with Bright Colored Hair" has tresses of red, green and blue, partly hidden by a mop of lighter blue cotton candy. Some of the children seem to float in space, while "Young Girl with a Dead Phone" is so naturalistic it could be a family snapshot. The toddler in that last picture appears intent, and none of the kids is smiling. They may just be wary, but perhaps they understand the high seriousness of the artistic tradition they've just joined.

***Agniet Snoep: Alive and Present; Katie Miller: Enduring*** On view through May 31 at Connersmith, 1358 Florida Ave NE; 202-588-8750, [connersmith.us.com](http://connersmith.us.com)