

The Party's Edge

48 x 48 inches
Oil on aluminum

Greta Kresse

Bio

Greta Kresse (b. 1999, Little Rock, AR) is a plein-air painter based in Fayetteville, AR. She received her BA from Hendrix College and is pursuing an MFA at the University of Arkansas, supplementing her education through programs at the New York Studio School and The Mount Gretna School of Art. Kresse teaches workshops at the Arts and Science Center for Southeast Arkansas.

Working primarily in oils, she creates vibrant narrative paintings that explore human connection within the Southern landscape, particularly focusing on intimate scenes along Arkansas rivers. Her documentary-style approach captures moments of profound connection between community members, investigating themes of isolation, beauty, and love in the American South. Drawing inspiration from regional poetry and direct observation, Kresse's work proposes comfort and connection as forms of resistance, presenting authentic representations of her community.

Artist Statement

In Arkansas summers, the river becomes our sanctuary, a democratic space where my community gathers to escape heat, swim, and find connection. Some pieces explore swimming as transcendence; others investigate the relationship between bodies and environment. Winter transforms the river into a black line cutting through snow. I retreat indoors where isolation shifts, sometimes the house thrums with voices, sometimes quiet grows teeth. Working in documentary style, I capture intimate moments against the American South's backdrop. My subjects emerge from immediate community, their presence coloring experience and narrative. Realism anchors the work, yet figures frequently dissolve into abstraction. Limited palettes intensify mood and dissolve figures into environments. Glazes act atmospherically: warm yellows settle like sunlight on skin, icy blues coat canvas like bone-deep cold.

Poetry and music flow as undercurrents through my practice. Raised in Little Rock with childhood hours in my painter father's studio above a music venue, I honor home's complexities. I propose love and comfort as protest, finding beauty without nostalgia. My figures enact scenes from profound peace to deep tension, one unable to exist without the other. This authentically represents community through a contemporary lens, documenting connection while acknowledging complex social context.

