

Hal Hardin

Artist Bio

Hal Hardin is a nonbinary painter based in Arkansas who explores the layered and evolving nature of identity through contemporary figurative painting. Their work is informed by their experiences navigating the American South, art historical references, and popular culture. Using vibrant color, layered imagery, distortion, and collage-based processes, they create playful paintings that embrace ambiguity and invite many interpretations. By reimagining familiar representations of the body, they challenge inherited ideas about gender, beauty, and how bodies are expected to occupy space. Through the recontextualization of historical poses and visual conventions, their work questions ways of seeing while making space for more fluid and expansive understandings of the self and belonging.

Hal received their BFA in Painting and BA in Art History from the University of Arkansas in 2026. Hal has exhibited work at Windgate Galleries in Fayetteville, AR, Midnight Gallery in Bentonville, AR, and in group exhibitions across Arkansas, Pennsylvania, and New York. They are the recipient of the 2026 Windgate Accelerator Grant and have received additional support through travel grants for study at the UA Rome Center, Mount Gretna School of Art, the New York Studio School, and the Chautauqua School of Art.



KitchenAid, 15 x 13 inches, Oil on panel, \$450.

Artist Statement

I create paintings as an act of resistance. By examining the historical role of figurative painting as a tool for governing our relationship to the body, performance, and self-fashioning from my vantage point as a genderqueer person in the South, I explore my nuanced experiences with curiosity.

I do not aim to make work that is generalized or didactic, but rather to investigate a specific idea or remembered personal interaction. The specificity in the clothes and objects within the image reference a certain time, place, memory, or social culture.

I combat the expectation of what bodies in painting should look like, what “transness” could look like without offering the viewer the visual satisfaction of discovery. Awkwardly elongated limbs, slouching and slumped, detached in an apathetic state.

They construct their own identities through the objects around them in an attempt to fulfill their roles in the scene. Each painting starts as a messy abstraction of shapes, being slowly fragmented and scraped down until figures begin to manifest. The process of build up and erasure, of opaqueness and transparencies, reflects the instability and fluidity of identity.