

## "Heidi Pitre: Southern Peculiar" at the Buttridge Gallery

In this solo exhibition, the South will rise again – not unlike a sort of puckish zombie made of cultural memories and witchy girlparts

REVIEWED BY WAYNE ALAN BRENNER, FRI., MAY 31, 2019



fresh MEAT by Heidi Pitre

It seems unfair, not unlike so many things in this life, that Heidi Pitre has seen that one Kubrick movie that no one else has ever been allowed to see, the one about the series of murders in a small Mississippi town, the reels of which film have been sitting in the Kubrick estate, stashed among boxes of carefully labeled archives in one of the large rooms reserved for storage in Childwickbury Manor.

But that explains Pitre's rendition of what must be a single shot from that movie: a mother and daughter walking through the aisles of a Winn-Dixie, pushing a cart and heading for the butcher's department, the barefoot kiddo holding a red Popsicle, letting it dangle and shed its bloodlike drops to the shining tiles, the mother's feet snug in fine black shoes with skinny, three-inch heels. This is shot from behind, from a perspective almost level with the floor, and it would be another iconic image of cinema, indelible in the worldmind of pop culture, if only Kubrick had released the film, if only his widow Christiane would allow access.

Pitre calls this painting *fresh MEAT*, and it's oils on panel, 36 by 24 inches, currently displayed at the Buttridge Gallery in the front lobby of the Dougherty Arts Center. It's part of Pitre's "Southern Peculiar" show, the components of which flood an array of paintings and charcoal drawings across the familiar Buttridge walls, providing an exposure of Southern anthropology via the artist's particular (thoroughly native) perspective.

You want to know what it's like to live in the Southeastern part of this country, existing as part of the populace and its tradition-saturated haunts and happinesses, its habits and harrowings? Well, you'll have to actually live there for that. But this show of Pitre's, with its illustrations of quotidian kinks and portraits of ordinary people in their personal dramedies, might at least make you briefly *feel* what it's like to live there. Walk around the gallery and look closely at the realist images the artist has rendered with charcoal on vintage flashcards, scrutinize the denizens of her many well-wrought oils until a sufficient amount of symbology sparks a deeper understanding: You might get the sensation of Eudora Welty whispering in your ear and even touching you in places no ghost should put its hand.

Yes, yes, of course there's no missing Kubrick movie – at least not the one described above. And anyway that *fresh MEAT* scene might be in a Piggly Wiggly instead of a Winn-Dixie? So, yes, this "Southern Peculiar" show is all and only Heidi Pitre – if you don't count all the phantoms of cultural memory, sometimes giggling, that haunt the framed edges of its apprehension. And, tell you what, friend: It's a worthwhile experience provided by an exceptional, delightfully region-riddled talent.

### "Heidi Pitre: Southern Peculiar"

Buttridge Gallery at the Dougherty Arts Center,

1110 Barton Springs Rd., 512/974-4000

Through June 8