



Tiny Tree, Kelly Lynn Jones's second solo exhibition with The Pit in Palm Springs, celebrates the harmony of the natural world, bringing light and texture into focus.



Kelly Lynn Jones, *Tiny Tree*, installation view, The Pit, Palm Springs, 2023. Photo: Jeff McLane. Courtesy The Pit.

Kelly Lynn Jones: Tiny Tree

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The Pit, Palm Springs

There is something Edenic about Kelly Lynn Jones’s art. Nothing spoils in her world, it seems—not slices of cake left out overnight, not flowers in vases. While the world outside Jones’s work seems only to spiral downward, every painting on view in Tiny Tree at The Pit in Palm Springs radiates a kind of unvarnished, untamed simplicity, making a compelling case for harmony between humans and the environment they inhabit.

Though many of the LA-based artist’s paintings return to the same place, planting the viewer smack in the middle of her living room—window open, breeze lazy—each imagines a world brimming with color, sound, life, altogether untouched by violence, brutality, or anything of the sort. With all the tranquility of a still life and the vibrancy of an artist devoted equally to experiments in texture, scale, and symbolism, these glimpses into Jones’s life feel like excursions into a dream world.

And yet, though most of the subject matter in her paintings are centrally autobiographical—details of the view from Jones’s kitchen window or toys strewn across the thick-pile carpet in her living room—and some version of the artist often makes a cameo in the outskirts of her work, their focal point never centers on herself. Frankly, Jones’s work rarely has a center of activity or interest at all.

Regardless of the size of the canvas, each of her paintings is crowded and as tirelessly detailed in the foreground as in the back. In a way, her work represents a kind of maximalism that celebrates the wildness of the natural world, so that every object in every landscape, whether indoor or out, seems as if it’s stumbling over itself to join in the fun. Even her domestic scenes are delightfully undomesticated.



Tiny Tree, installation view, The Pit, Palm Springs, 2023. Left to right: Kelly Lynn Jones, *They say the days are long and the years are short- #2, #1, #3, and #4*, all 2023, acrylic and oil on canvas, 33 x 24 in. Photo: Jeff McLane. Courtesy The Pit.

While Trinie Dalton described Jones's 2022 solo show at The Pit as contradicting anthropocentrism, Jones's more recent collection of work seems instead to consider one's life a symphony between people, places, and things, where each element contributes equally to each other's importance. Harmony, for Jones, is a matter of collaboration not only between people but also with the natural and man-made world.

They say the days are long and the years are short (2023), for example—a series that observes the same corner of the same room across each of the four seasons—explores variations on this symphonic collaboration over time. In the first installment (i.e. summer), a golden midday sun brightens every hue in the room, from the pink floral wallpaper to the fresh fruit resting on the table. A speckled blue cat curls up beneath the window pane, while a figure—blonde and bikini'd—stretches at the bottom of the canvas.

In the second (presumably fall), a similar figure is now tucked into the corner of the room, their hair dark as night, while cool moonlight shadows dance across the center of the floor and the houseplant in the corner bends away from the window, rather than toward it. Finally, in the fourth installment, the room is cleared, the springtime sun returns, and all figures—human, cat, and houseplant alike—stretch their branches and limbs toward a single spot of light on the carpet.

If there was ever a main character in Jones's paintings, it would be the warm desert sun. In *In search for a moment of quiet and maybe the miraculous* (2023), sunlight unfolds itself from the top to the bottom of Jones's canvas, as if it were a brush dripping with honey that the artist drew across the glimmering sea and flowering field she'd painted the day before. In *Yoga Cats* (2023), two cats, a rabbit, and a human figure crowd in the center of the room, where a single ray slices through the shadows.

Viewing this work at The Pit's humble outpost in downtown Palm Springs, which the Glendale-based, artist-run gallery opened in 2021, the sense of the indivisibility of the natural and the man-made—the world's universal dependence on the sun for sustenance—makes perfect sense. Just outside the gallery walls, not one structure in the glittering oasis of Palm Springs can compete with the grandeur of the Coachella Valley, as is the case with most towns scattered across the Colorado Desert. For Jones, this fact is a spiritual one: even though many of her pieces in *Tiny Tree* depict the world from within the safety of her home, it seems to me Kelly Lynn Jones cares only about color, light, and life, each of which revolves around the sun.

In her thick, impastoed layers of oil and acrylic, Jones toys with our expectations, patterning grass purple and yellow, the sky polka-dotted navy, clouds ruby red—but across her practice, the world she depicts is always caught up in the glory of a single, simple moment.



Kelly Lynn Jones, *The shell in the desert*, 2023, acrylic, oil and oil stick on canvas, 60 x 48 in. Photo: Jeff McLane. Courtesy The Pit.



Kelly Lynn Jones, *They say the days are long and the years are short- #1*, 2023, acrylic and oil on canvas, 33 x 24 in. Photo: Jeff McLane. Courtesy The Pit.



Kelly Lynn Jones, *They say the days are long and the years are short- #2*, 2023, acrylic and oil on canvas, 33 x 24 in. Photo: Jeff McLane. Courtesy The Pit.



Kelly Lynn Jones, *They say the days are long and the years are short- #3*, 2023, acrylic and oil on canvas, 33 x 24 in. Photo: Jeff McLane. Courtesy The Pit.



Kelly Lynn Jones, *They say the days are long and the years are short- #4*, 2023, acrylic and oil on canvas, 33 x 24 in. Photo: Jeff McLane. Courtesy The Pit.

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