

Lynn Schuette
Still Life #2 (for Uvalde)
2022
Acrylic on canvas on wood
19 paintings, 12 x 9 inches each

Artist Statement

. . . maybe I wind up with fierce little intense paintings – a vitality that was taken away . . . still innocent and childlike . . . these paintings are for the children not the adults who failed them.

notes from 9/29/22

This piece is the second in my *Still Life* series which started in 2019, it attempts to use painting as a way to speak to issues of violence and develop work that upends what still life painting can be.

The *Still Life* series was born out of the frustration I feel about all of the memorials for too many mass shootings of children. Burning candles, flowers, notes, balloons all seem heartfelt but beside the point. In 2019 I started to burn candles and pour the melted wax into water to create forms*. I thought a lot about how to translate the wax forms into paintings that say something. These forms became the basis of *Still Life #1** for the thirty children who died at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida in 2018 and Columbine High School in 1999 and the four related suicides, the two Florida children who killed themselves a year later and the two Colorado shooters.

Still Life #2 is for the nineteen children who were shot and killed on May 24, 2022 at Robb Elementary School, in Uvalde, Texas. Out of anger and sadness I again started my process by burning candles and pouring wax as well as researching the various aspects of the shooting. I was trying to find answers to my many questions and some insight into imagery that might speak. I struggled with how to create something for these fourth graders.

I discovered that the children and their teachers from two different classrooms were together that morning to see a movie after attending their end-of-school-year awards ceremony. They were watching *Lilo and Stitch* (2002) about a young girl in Hawaii who befriends and adopts an extraterrestrial she mistakes for a dog. These nineteen paintings are spirit creatures* who will guide them back to the last time they laughed.

*Bibliography and research notes are available