



[<< BACK](#)



[CONTACT](#)



[SEARCH](#)



[FACEBOOK](#)



[TWITTER](#)



Andrew Jilka, *Violence and Sensation #3*, Colored Pencil on Paper framed in white. 22 x 30", 2012.

Andrew Jilka's Voyeuristic, Observational Call to Action

Invisible Hand Gallery  
846 Pennsylvania  
785-393-6544  
Lawrence, Kansas  
*Andrew Jilka* ≡ *God Willing*  
November 30-December 24, 2012

By BLAIR SCHULMAN

Lawrence, Kansas-based painter Andrew Jilka portrays familiar images and tableaux that are not just about voyeurism, but require participation from his audience. Showing domesticity, organized sports, pornography and syndicated television, he presents a call to action. We are asked to become invested in our own observations, determining how we piece together these slivers of contemporary living. Some of his paintings are rendered in a series of crosscut images, which buzz back and forth, implying static attention spans that show how we so easily compartmentalize our thoughts and feelings.

The placement of these fast-tracking snippets is represented in works like *Violence and Sensation*, *Violence and Sensation #2*, *God Willing*, *Barbeque* which are mood shifting. We are then asked to decide precisely what we are looking at, the speed we choose to observe them and what, (if any), sense it might be making. It is a style that pays off nicely in terms of vulnerability and fragility. Jilka sees us as a culture behaving like spoiled children with untreated Attention Deficit Disorder. He isn't quite exasperated with society, but I do think he is poking us in the chest at our misguided priorities which is both unnerving and legitimate.

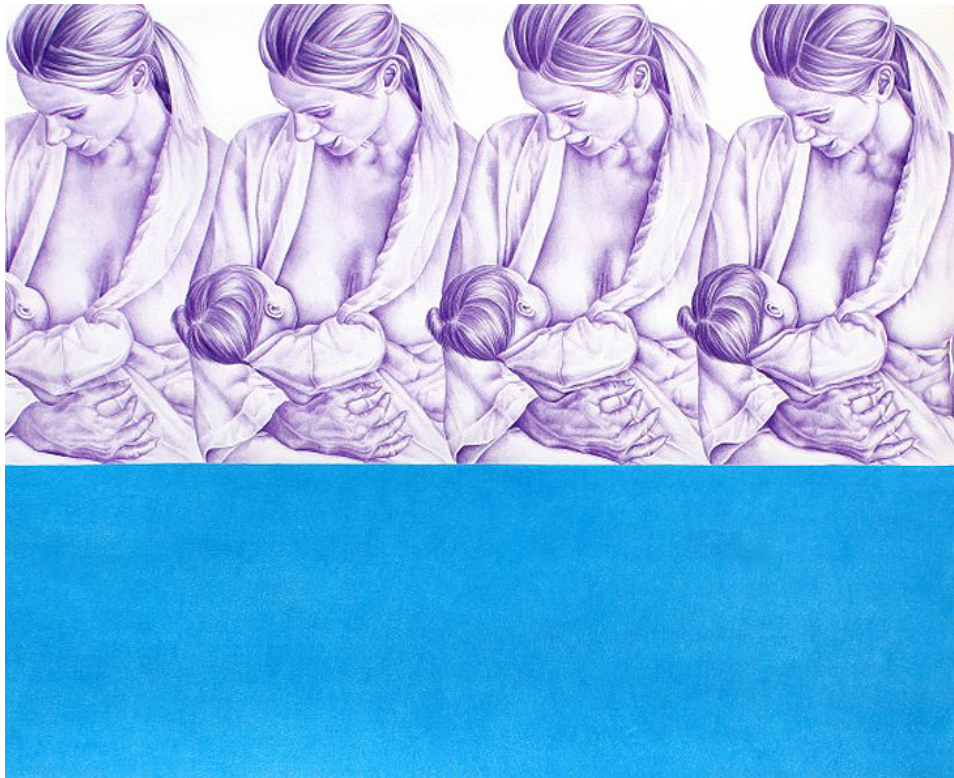
In particular, *Violence and Sensation #2*, is filled with this perplexing lack of concentration. A game show, a sporting event, an exotic locale; it's exhausting to piece together, which becomes a typical reaction to events. As soon as we're finished wondering, grieving, spewing anger, it is onto the next emotion. It is with work like this that Jilka takes us right into the heart of the matter; anyone with a television or internet connection is awash in so much imagery and sensation, we become desensitized to the effects of these feelings. His paintings are reactionary in ways that almost feed a hungry habit; no longer getting high, just getting by.

And we are further drawn into this work with his use of colored pencils. The *Violence and Sensation* series, which is a highly accomplished group of work, has a sensuous reminiscence. Similar to old photographs and its nostalgic feel, the work recalls James Rosenquists *Above the Square* (1963). Both artists' use of blue imparts some sort of titillation without ever actually doing so. For Rosenquist, it looks to be more about the advent of lust, whereas, with Jilka, it seems post-coital.

The *God Willing* series is somewhat more domesticated but not any more comforting. *Barbeque* uses the same slivers of broken imagery; gobbets of meat grilling are spliced alongside a pair of female legs relaxing against a serene blue sea. The chef appears to be paying attention to his food and the oiled



*Violence and Sensation # 2*, Colored Pencil on Paper Framed in White, 45 x 62", 2012.



Violence and Sensation #4, Colored Pencil on Paper Framed in White. 22 x 30", 2012.

flesh. It's a bit creepy with Jeffrey Dahmer-esque implications.

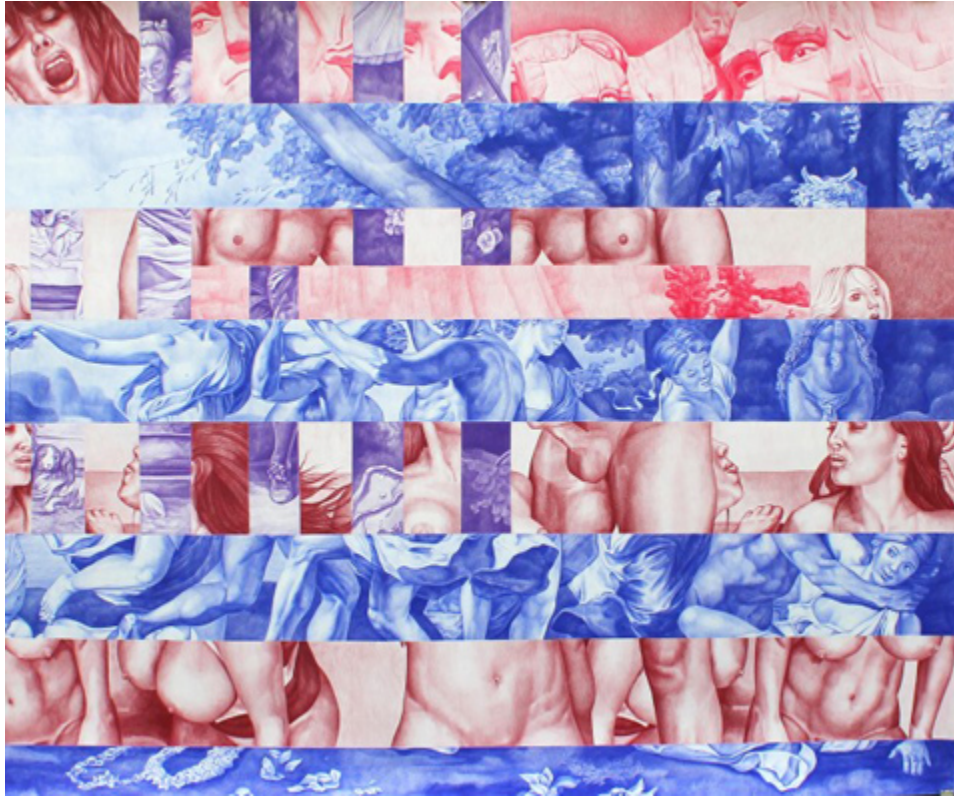
*God Willing (Bulls)* is one of the few pieces shown without distraction. The entire team of the Chicago Bulls basketball team in a group pose; solid and confident. Professional sports are an oft-used theme for Jilka. In America, you can go almost anywhere and have a seamless argument about points, hook shots and fadeaways with an almost blind faith that the discussion will be passionate and fully thought out. The artist seems to be saying that to mess around with this pastime would be sacrosanct.

The ideas of how we love and what we love are both telling and twisted. The *God Willing* painting of a man hugging a young girl in a lake is extremely vulnerable. Using multiples of the same images, the man is in water only below his knees. Not enough for him to drown, but the girl he holds just might. With the lake holding the serenity of a placid moment, this particular work is a frightening combination of fear, love and the difficulty of letting go.

Jilka has a way of capturing and holding our attention. These peripatetic images have a haunting quality which feeds our fears, lusts and weaknesses that would keep any psychoanalyst busy for years. It's hard to imagine where he might go next with his work, but right now he is keeping a keen eye on the foibles of the American psyche and its rich vein of material.



Andrew Jilka, *God Willing (Bulls)*, Oil on Canvas, 72 x 60", 2012.



*Violence and Sensation*, Colored Pencil on Paper Framed in White, 44 x 58", 2012.



*God Willing (Barbecue)*, Oil on Canvas, 60 x 72", 2012.



Jilka, *God Willing*, Oil on Canvas, 72 x 60", 2012.

