



Carl Gopal website text document: <http://www.carlgopal.com/2011-assassination-judy-garland/>

The Assassination of Judy Garland 2008-2012

Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore. -
Noel Langley, spoken by Judy Garland, *The Wizard of Oz*, 1939

The Assassination of Judy Garland - A Metaphorical Portrait of America - is a personal reflection on the post 9/11 era, this time focusing on American political mythologies. It continues the story from my 2006 exhibition *Sedition and Other Bedtime Stories*.

I used the life of actor/singer Judy Garland (1922-69) - the narrative arc of her life - as a metaphor for what is happening in American political culture. I then drew analogies with French medieval epic poetry - *the chansons de geste* - as a metaphor for the American political narrative's propagandist elements which are not unlike the Middle Ages when *chansons de geste* described the Christian/Islamic conflict of the Crusades. This time I wove these elements together using a queer lens by adapting iconic Hollywood and Broadway musicals. The paintings fuse surrealism with images inspired by contemporary urban environments; including street art, old subway posters and 60s airport paperbacks.

As freedom of expression has become both suppressed, and distorted, I realised that to assassinate the creative spirit within a nation - *any* nation - is a tragedy of epic proportion. And the *war on terror* is an assassination of that creative spirit represented by Judy Garland. Judy was a conflicted, flawed, unconscious genius.

Judy Garland's life proves that evil can assassinate our body, (both physical and political) but it can never destroy the creative spirit that resides within it (or us). Also like Judy, our demons are forever with us. But she never let that stop her from seeing the truth or giving her best to her audience. The subject matter and the odd approach I took to it have garnered some genuine interest internationally, but as an artist looking at a complex political subject, I experienced a lot of difficulties and challenges both professionally and personally. But it has been worth it.

Images from this series were presented at the [Hitting The Target](#) workshop at [The University of Surrey](#) in 2012 to support reflection on new technologies and capabilities for intervention. The progressive American Jewish [TikkunMagazine's](#) online edition published a revealing interview about my paintings in [A Star Is Born: Metaphorical Portraits of America](#) in 2011. In Dec 2012 five paintings were selected for the collaborative book *2012 London International Creative Competition(LICC)*. In April 2013 the Queer Psychoanalytical Society published my thoughts on these paintings for their publication [The Oouch](#). An exhibition of these paintings was held at 464 SmartSpace, 464A William Street, Perth, Western Australia. More information is available in the [In Print](#) section.

FOLIO 1: Kansas State of Mind

Original drawings on paper (A3 size) in pastel and charcoal. Limited print editions in 20 and 30. Exploring the characters of the film *The Wizard of Oz* in the light of the *War on Terror* narrative. It continues the theme of criminality and the loss of creativity. The original set sold but print editions are available. I should mention that the Tin Man is based on John O'Neil, respectfully for the qualities he embodied.

FOLIO 2: Elsewhere -A Vignette

These 5 pen and brush ink paintings on paper (A3 size) were done in 2008 and were included in the show. The whole 'elsewhere' thing was triggered from Hermann Minkowski's 'space time' diagram/concept in a book I was reading - Leonard Shlain's insightful book *Art and Physics*. It had to do with alternative narratives at work through the unconscious and tied in with my quantum narratives research. Images from this series were published in *Literal Latte* (New York City, 2009), *Drexter Magazine* (Indonesia, 2009) and *Lady Jane's Miscellany* journal (Virginia 2010).