

KENT DORN: *GARAGE DAYS*

March 15–April 19, 2025

*The Small Hours*, 2014acrylic on canvas
12 x 16 inches

With *Garage Days*, Houston-based Kent Dorn (b. 1977, South Carolina) unveils a trove of drawings from 2014 in his first exhibition at Seven Sisters, opening March 15.

The exhibition shares its title, *Garage Days*, with the 1987 **METALLICA** EP, featuring cover songs influential to the band's early development. As a young teen, Dorn considered it a seminal album, and his repurposing of the title here is not only an homage to the formative impact of metal music, its ethos, and iconography on his life and work but also a tongue-in-cheek reference to his garage studio, where these works were made.

Having grown up in a desolate, culturally depressed part of South Carolina, the subjects of the exhibition recall Dorn's youth, when the uncertainty of a declining region and a less than idyllic homelife fostered a forlorn sense of dread. At a young age, surrounded by rural and industrial decay, he already understood the impermanence of things — a revelation that continues to catalyze his projects.

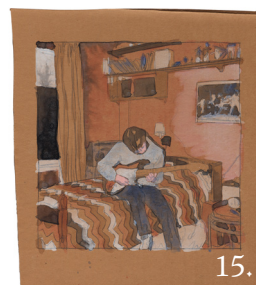
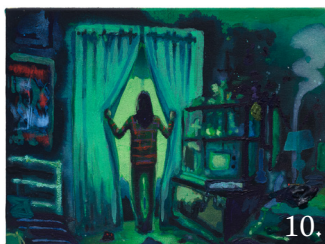
Post-graduate school, and after a productive period of making increasingly conventional, anti-romantic landscape paintings on canvas, Dorn became restless with his process and began experimenting with materials again. In 2014, searching for a more direct and less orthodox method of working, he took the same acrylic washes he'd been using on canvas and began applying thin veils of ghostly stains to one of the most transient, ubiquitous materials available — cardboard. Of course, as material, cardboard has connotations with dereliction that's mirrored in his subjects, but this choice was also a reference, in part, to the painters he was looking at during this time. In a nod to titans like Edward Munch and Toulouse-Lautrec, who addressed ideas

of time and ephemerality in their own ways, Dorn used cardboard as a support precisely because it paralleled the rickety fate of his subjects.

For the works in *Garage Days*, Dorn used carbon paper to transfer found photos he'd collected over the years onto cardboard — essentially a method of printing — to form a sort of psychological self-portrait. His subjects seemingly fluctuate between ephemeral and graphic worlds, with each image transporting him back to a particular place or scenario from his youth. This period of development was the beginning of his transition away from painting, and eventually culminated in the large-scale, layered graphite drawings on joined tracing paper that have become his focus.

The exhibition tops with *The Small Hours*, a single painting of a young man gazing out a bedroom window. Bathed in a supernatural blue-green glow reminiscent of a scene from a late 1980s horror film or a Frederic Remington night painting, the ominous presence at the center of the show cues the viewer to keep looking beyond the surface.

Kent Dorn lives and works in Houston. He received his BFA from Anderson College (1999) and his MFA from the University of Houston (2005). He has shown throughout Texas and in New York, Chicago, Toronto, and Copenhagen. In 2020, his drawings were included in *Target Texas: Drawn Worlds* at the Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi. His work has been reviewed in the *New York Times* and has been featured in *New American Paintings*, *Artlies*, and *Gulf Coast Literary Journal* among others. His work is included in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston's permanent collection and was recently on view in the MFAH exhibition *Contested Landscapes* through 2024.



KENT DORN: GARAGE DAYS INDEX OF WORKS

1. *Untitled (GD #16)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard (9 x 12 in.)
frame: 15 ½ x 17 ½ in.

2. *Untitled (GD #1)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard: 14 x 17 ¾ in.
frame: 18 ½ x 24 ¾ x 1 ¼
in.

3. *Untitled (GD #15)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard: 9 ½ x 12 in.
frame: 15 ½ x 17 ½ in.

4. *Untitled (GD #4)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard: 12 ¼ x 20 ¾ in.
frame: 18 ½ x 24 ¾ x 1 ¼
in.

5. *Untitled (GD #5)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard: 13 ⅝ x 18 ⅞ in.
frame: 18 ½ x 24 ¾ x 1 ¼
in.

6. *Untitled (GD #13)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard: 10 ⅝ x 12 ⅞ in.
frame: 15 ½ x 17 ½ in.

7. *Untitled (GD #6)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard: 12 ⅞ x 18 ⅞ in.
frame: 18 ½ x 24 ¾ x 1 ¼ in.

8. *Untitled (GD #12)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard: 11 ¼ x 13 ¼ in.
frame: 16 x 18 in.

9. *Untitled (GD #9)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard: 13 ¾ x 17 ⅞ in.
frame: 18 ½ x 24 ¾ x 1 ¼ in.

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10. *The Small Hours*, 2014
acrylic on canvas
12 x 16 in.
frame: 15 ¾ x 19 ¾ x 2 ¼ in.

11. *Untitled (GD #8)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard: 13 x 17 ¾ in.
frame: 18 ½ x 24 ¾ x 1 ¼
in.

12. *Untitled (GD #10)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard: 12 ⅝ x 18 in.
frame: 18 ½ x 24 ¾ x 1 ¼
in.

13. *Untitled (GD #14)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard: 10 ⅝ x 12 ¼ in.
frame: 15 ½ x 17 ½ in.

14. *Untitled (GD #7)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard: 8 x 12 ½ in.
frame: 18 ½ x 24 ¾ x 1 ¼
in.

Located in Office:

15. *Untitled (GD #11)*, 2014
acrylic and carbon transfer
on cardboard: 14 ¾ x 13 ¼ in.
frame: 19 ⅝ x 17 ⅞ in.