Los Angeles-based artist Ann Greene Kelly (b. 1988) makes sculpture that combines found, everyday objects, such as mattresses and tires sourced from the areas surrounding her studio, with traditional sculptural materials, drawing, and collage. She is drawn to the textures and decorative finishes of commercially-produced domestic or industrial goods, as well as recognizable sights throughout the city that may ordinarily go unnoticed—printed floral patterns, the soft folds of bed sheets, or the repetition of a building’s brick façade. Her drawings expand these interests and depict interior scenes converging with the outside world in fanciful and surreal ways, situating the viewer in a space that is at once familiar yet uncanny. This exhibition marks the artist’s first solo institutional presentation.

Kelly’s work is informed by the artistic traditions of the readymade—common objects displayed as works of art—and found-object assemblage. She is interested in the formal aspects of a given material and brings disparate elements together to reveal possible contradictions and points of tension. She collects detritus and discarded objects from around her studio and alters them through a series of operations, subverting their intended use through shifts of scale, cutting, or covering their surface with another material. The resultant objects are ambiguous and unexpected, and they challenge a viewer’s perception. Untitled (small circular bench) (2017) is made from child-sized plastic chairs cut and reconstructed into a round structure that suggests a seating area. Its shape and small size prevent access and belie the typical function of a bench. Additionally, the hand-carved brick pattern on the bench’s plaster surface would cause discomfort to any sitter, further distancing the viewer from a possible physical interaction with the object.

While the body is rarely present in Kelly’s work, its functions and movements are often implied. The still-life portraits on view feature offerings of food or a spilled drink, suggesting someone’s presence or an invitation to a viewer to join a meal in progress. The interior space of these drawings includes windows and hallways leading to spaces outside the confines of the picture plane. Bedsheet tunnel (2019) comprises a crumpled yellow bed sheet with a delicate floral pattern that becomes a tunnel surrounding a set of meandering train tracks. In the background, a subway car resembling those found in New York—the artist’s hometown—passes by, the silhouettes of passengers visible through its windows. The use of windows, voids, and tunnels repeats throughout the artist’s work, alluding to an escape to the other side of one’s perceived reality. By focusing on changing the use and materiality of objects, Kelly’s work reveals moments of delicacy, beauty, and imagination in the mundane.

Mientras que el cuerpo es algo poco presente en la obra de Kelly, a menudo da por asumidas sus funciones y movimientos. Los retratos de naturaleza muerta que a menudo incluyen ofrendas de comida o una bebida derramada sugieren la presencia de alguien o una invitación al espectador a unir-se a la comida que está teniendo lugar. El espacio interior de estos dibujos incluye ventanas y pasillos que llevan a espacios fuera de los confines del plano cuadrado. Bedsheet tunnel (Túnel de sábanas, 2019), comprende una sábana amarilla retorcida con un delicado patrón floral que se convierte en un túnel que rodea las sinuosas vías de un tren. Por el fondo pasa un vagón de metro parecido a los de Nueva York—donde la artista es originaria—y se puede ver la silueta de los pasajeros por las ventanas. El uso de ventanas, vacíos, y túneles se repite en la obra de la artista, aludiendo a la huida hacia el otro lado de la realidad que percibimos. Al enfocarse en cambiar el uso y la materialidad de los objetos, la obra de Kelly revela en lo mundano momentos de delicadeza, belleza, e imaginación.