

MARK KELNER

# Dollar City

MARK KELNER'S PRACTICE documents and distorts imagery ranging from art history to pop culture to reveal their inherent and hard-to-see contradictions as familiar symbols of contemporary life: their false representation of ideas and their role as false idols propping up a system of consumerism where things and people are commodities.

"Dollar City" alludes to the visual culture that defines the concepts of American capitalism and the meaning of "Americanization" – each simultaneously in opposition and symbiosis with one other. At the same time, "Dollar City" functions as a trick mirror refracting reality to enable the viewer to see and sense the often invisible socioeconomic and cultural elements of control embedded within the contemporary urban landscape and the built environment.

At their heart, these paintings are about sloganeering and propaganda. In the twilight of a

reality TV presidency, Kelner argues that phrases such as "In God We Trust" and "We the People" have long-ceased to reflect the ideals of our national identity, but are merely empty filler for sound bites.

Rather, it is the ubiquitous signage that screams out empty words and promises that serve a higher purpose in promoting the very idea of commerce and salesmanship as to how we define what American slogans are right now. "Dollar City" offers markers of how we see ourselves and what attracts us to the latest opening, closing, clearance, or sale.

Proclamations of "Going Out of Business," "Fast Cash Loans," "Last 3 Days," and "Everything Must Go," among others, are reimagined as both near-to-real signs and as fine art. Yet, in either form, they are painted to induce desire, while commenting on contemporary advertising jargon, typography, and design.

**EXHIBITION VIEWS: BEACON GALLERY, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**



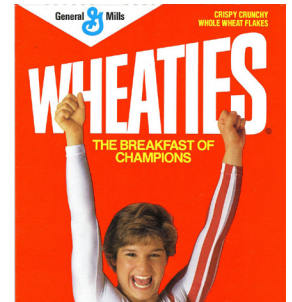
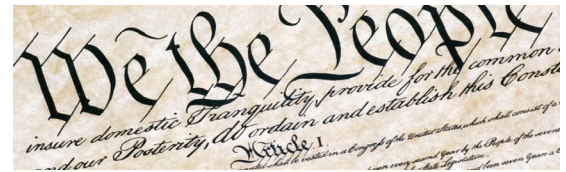




**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**



**AMERICAN SLOGANS**





**STUDIO VIEW**



**PANEL TALK** (click image to view video)



"The Cultural and Artistic Landscape of Signs," October 28, 2021  
Artist Mark Kelner; photographer Geoff Hargadon; Beacon Gallery director Christine O'Donnell, independent curator Anna Winestein.

SELECTED WORKS (ALL ACRYLIC ON CANVAS)



**Beauty Supply**  
42 x 29 inches, 2020



**Blow Out Sale**  
47 x 26 inches, 2021



**Buy One Get One Free**  
52 x 39 inches, 2021



**Compro Oro**  
51 x 25 inches, 2020



**CVS Diptych, (Ode to Helvetica)**  
40 x 52 inches, 2019



**Daily Instant Lotto**  
43 x 21 inches, 2020



**Everything Must Go**  
36 x 27 inches, 2021



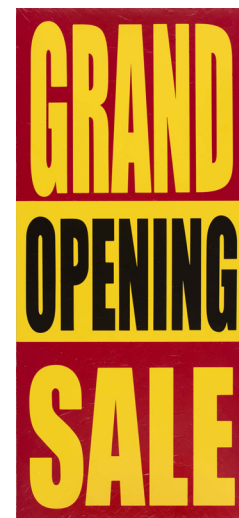
**Fast Cash Loans**  
43 x 28 inches, 2021



**Girls Girls Girls**  
47 x 30 inches, 2021



**Going Out of Business**  
45 x 31 inches, 2021



**Grand Opening Sale**  
57 x 25 inches, 2020





**Jumbo Slice**  
37 × 25 inches, 2020



**Last Three Days**  
36 × 29 inches, 2021



**Mattress Sale**  
51 × 31 inches, 2020



**No Money Down**  
43 × 24 inches, 2021



**Our Biggest Clearance**  
42 × 30 inches, 2021



**Pawn Shop**  
46 × 26 inches, 2021



**Pay Bail Bondsman**  
40 × 22 inches, 2021



**Psychic**  
37 × 31 inches, 2021



**XXX**  
44 × 32 inches, 2021