



Photography by Michelle Mackey.

Dallas History

Michelle Mackey Painted the Barrow Family Gas Station

The artist explores the past through physical spaces.

By Tim Rogers / November 16, 2022

Clyde Barrow's family once owned a service station in West Dallas, at 1221 Singleton Blvd., in a neighborhood called the Devil's Back Porch. That structure stood until April, when it was hastily bulldozed before the city's Landmark Commission could intervene.

Given the long lead times of a monthly magazine, I didn't know how or whether D Magazine could address the matter. (Although Bethany Erickson wrote about it for our website.) But then an artist who has written for us, Laray Polk, alerted me to the fact that another artist in town, Michelle Mackey, had spent years studying and painting and thinking about the Barrow service station. Which is how I came to find myself in Michelle's studio back in May, looking at some of her work and talking about how she might do something in the pages of the magazine.

The result is a story titled "These Walls Could Talk," illustrated, in part, with Michelle's paintings of the Barrow service station. It published in our November issue and went online today.

We waited till this month to publish the story because Michelle has an exhibition of new paintings inspired by Enchanted Rock titled "Beyond Measure" at the Holly Johnson Gallery, in the Design District. It will be up through February 11, but the opening is this Saturday, November 19, from 5 to 8 p.m. A taste from the press release:

"For the last several years, Mackey has been exploring the futility and successes of human attempts to harness the earth's power for energy and survival. From Iceland to West Texas, Mackey talked with geologists and hydrologists about geothermal energy, sinkholes, and erosion. Now her work focuses on a different kind of power: Enchanted Rock, a dome of pink granite in Central Texas. Enchanted Rock rises like a pink half-moon in an otherwise limestone-filled landscape, and this anomaly draws 250,000 tourists per year to climb it. But Enchanted Rock has lured visitors long before it was a public park—tales of silver deposits enticed the Spanish explorers and stories of battles filled Comanche and Tonkawa tribes with reverence for the rock. That awe remains alive today because of the sheer grandeur of crystals shining on the surface and the smooth curve that hides the elusive summit from view as one climbs."

<https://www.dmagazine.com/frontburner/2022/11/michelle-mackey-painted-the-barrow-family-gas-station/>

Tim Rogers, Editor - Tim is the editor of D Magazine, where he has worked since 2001. He won a National Magazine Award in 2012 for a profile he wrote of Barrett Brown. He is a graduate of Cistercian Preparatory School and the University of Notre Dame. He likes fire trucks.