

# THE APPALACHIA OF FLORIDA: “WELCOME TO BITHLO BY THE WATER”

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This area is basically the Appalachians of Florida. Poor, but full of really great, tenacious people.

Nope once the Space Center got defunded it went to shit. Moved there in 65 when CB had the highest GPA in the nation, due to everyone's father being engineers at The Cape. That's loooooong gone now.

Like · Reply · 9w · Edited

Is Cocoa Beach trashy?



For those of us that grew up surfing those dirty waves, we know the truth — **Cocoa Beach** is **trashy**. If you were to hold a black light over the state of Florida, **Cocoa Beach** would be a shining beacon of debauchery.

Only thing bithlo about our town is the hillbilly redneck's coming here trashing our Beaches

Like · Reply · 9w



**Robbie Burwell**

March 13 · 🌐

Cocoa beach is pretty much bithlo by the water

It is a dumpy beach town, but it's our dumpy beach town. Now...if we could just get rid of the Yankee transplants.

Like · Reply · 5y



God Bless Cocoa !!! Coconuts and Lidos

Like · Reply · 9w



changed, but I chose to see the good in it. Yes there are a few tacky surf shops. Yes, we have our fair share of drunks, and weirdos. Yes, things have changed, but then everything always does. But we also have many beautiful things around us, all you have to do is open your eyes and choose to see them. But when the chips are down you can count on the citizens of CB and CC to help each other out and look out for one another.

(LIDOS IS ONE OF THE LOCAL STRIP CLUBS)

Welcome to cocoa beach, we fuck on the 1st date.

Like · Reply · 1y · Edited



I FOUND THE COMMENTS TO THE LEFT ON MY TOWN'S COMMUNITY FACEBOOK PAGE AND WHILE GOOGLING "COCOA BEACH" & SURFING THE RESULTS. THEY INTRIGUED ME BECAUSE THEY WERE ANTAGONISTIC AND HONEST, THUS MAKING A LOT OF PEOPLE ANGRY.

(RIGHT) FROM THE BEACH BUM SERIES



you can spot a Florida-lifer by the texture of their skin. Most adults have had some sort of melanoma before their midlife crisis. The figures I paint are splotchy orange, bright pink and sunburnt, or tan and leathery.

These crude paintings are both cheeky and honest. I try to depict my neighbors in their most vivacious moments, usually with a beer in hand or riding on the back of mud-covered truck beds. I paint hastily and with impatience. The immediacy of my style mimics the urgency I feel day to day while doom scrolling. We are teetering on the precipice of destruction as the effects of the climate crisis present themselves. My expressionistic brushstrokes exude a range of emotions about the state of today's world: anxiety, fear, rage, sorrow and confusion, but also joy and love. Contradiction and satire fill the work as I grapple with the love-hate relationship I have with my hometown. Florida has many systemic issues, while at the same time, a radical history and tenacious people. I'm most interested in the complex relationship between these two truths.







## COCOA BEACH, FL

I spent my teen years growing up in this unique little coastal town sandwiched between SpaceX, NASA and what is now the Space Force Base. Rockets, surfers, skaters, street fights, potheads, drunks, and engineers are abundant. There is a common anti-tourist sentiment among locals, as they litter and create traffic. Even still, tourist culture heavily influences our town. Beach supply stores are a staple along A1A. Remnants of single-use plastic beach toys, chairs, and floaties wash up on shore. The color scheme is inescapable. The neon colors, airbrush style, obnoxious pineapple and flamingo patterns are stained in our minds' eyes and are reflected in my artwork.



This show is filled with personal imagery and the titles tell stories.



HE WAS A SK8R BOY, PEN AND ACRYLIC ON PAPER.



ALL MY EXES MOVE TO HAWAII,  
SPRAY, ACRYLIC AND OIL PAINT  
ON CANVAS.



CURLY TAILS, 2021

MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS.

Native to the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands and Cuba, northern curly-tailed lizards were originally introduced to Florida in the early 1940s to combat sugar cane pests.

"They're the T-Rex of our little ground critters," Hank Smith, a wildlife biologist for the Florida Park Service, told the Sun-Sentinel in 2006. "They're larger than our native lizards that occur along the coastline: the green anole, the green racerunner. Wherever I find it, I find no other lizards."

Big Sugar dominates a large area of land in Florida, and dominates national politics. The Fanjul brothers moved their Big Sugar business from Cuba to Florida after the Cuban revolution, since the new politics there would of required the nationalization of the land. There's been endless corruption ever since.





"Last week, historical documents were released showing that the sugar industry paid Harvard scientists in the 1960s to produce research that downplayed the connection between sugar and heart disease, and instead laid the blame on saturated fat. According to The New York Times, the documents, released by a researcher at the University of California, San Francisco, suggested that five decades of scientific research into the interconnection between nutrition and heart disease "may have been largely shaped by the sugar industry."<sup>1</sup>

"The Fanjul brothers also work with the rest of the sugar industry, and together they donate to politicians in big numbers: according to the Center for Responsive Politics, between 1990 and 2016, the sugar industry spent over \$40 million on contributions to politicians."

<https://promarket.org/2016/09/19/sugar-industry-buys-academia-politicians/>



During the 2008 recession, our little house in Maryland was foreclosed on and my single mom had to file for bankruptcy. we moved in with her best friend for a year in Arizona, and then ended up in Cape Canaveral, FL. in MD, my room was more of a closet. i was used to being poor, but at 11 years old, i remember crying when arriving in Cape. Thanks to help of my grandparents, we eventually made our way to a little house on the nicer side of the peninsula, a place called Cocoa Beach.

NASA and elon musk's spacex launch site is also in cape canaveral, fl. that's what why most people know the name. in 2020, musk made \$140 billion bringing his total net worth to \$167 billion. meanwhile, us locals know most people living in cape canaveral are living in poverty.

but did you know that jeff bezos (networth almost 200 bill) also has a private space flight company called Blue Origin? boys & their toys, am i right? apparently he's going to fly into space soon. hopefully he does not return.

the Endless Frontier Act, a bill that passed Senate June 2021, gives \$10 billion to science & technology, which would end up in bezos' hands. both spacex and blue origin spend hundreds of thousands lobbying the government for handouts while Floridians (human, animal and plant life) fight for survival. both of these billionaires also pay little to nothing in income taxes.

"ProPublica reported that Musk's wealth grew by \$14 billion from 2014 to 2018, but that he only paid \$455 million in taxes. Bezos did not pay any income taxes for at least two years between 2006 and 2018, the report said." - Business Insider

this is what I had in mind (the incomprehensible wealth gap) as I painted "Catchin' Coins", "Patrick Space Force Base" and "Space Daddy" etc.



part of my process is taking photographs while walking around my hometown...











## ***Someone Wrote 'Trump' on a Florida Manatee***

Wildlife authorities are investigating and said that the harassment of the manatee is illegal under state and federal laws.



Yeah the river sucks cuz of development and fertilizer, but the shit that really kills the river is the boat traffic. It kicks up all the silt which starves the sea grass of light and all that shit dies. The Trump Boat parade kicked up such an enormous cloud that it killed p much all that was left.

The manatee population had recovered until the Trump Boat Parade.



Aa





my paintings of manatees are a tribute to them as they will most likely be extinct soon due to several factors including storm run off, chemicals like Roundup (glyphosate) that come from lawns, golf courses and Big Sugar, the boating industry, toxic algae blooms, waterfront development, the decline of seagrass (main source of their diet), general pollution and capitalism putting profits before living beings.

in 2017 the boating industry pushed the government to take manatees off the endangered species list, which they had been on since the 60s, even though their conditions were not improving.

"This has all been coming for a long time. The boating industry began pushing for manatees to be taken off federal and state endangered lists as far back as 1999.

The boat manufacturers and sellers' motive was simple. They believed that if they could knock manatees off the list, then boaters wouldn't have to put up with all the regulations that made them slow down." - Craig Pittman, (would recommend reading his other stuff, he really cares about FL. or listen to his podcast "Welcome to Florida")

when i was 14, before I knew it was illegal to touch manatees, i was paddleboarding in a canal when one came up to my board. she opened and closed her mouth almost telling me hello, we hugged and hung out for awhile. I still remember the joy it brought me to bond with her. i'll never forget it.

check out Save the Manatee Club.

The term **redneck** has a long history, a lot of which had to do with poor working class whites in the South organizing.

According to both historian Elizabeth Catte and the West Virginia Mine Wars Museum, the term was used for the miners who wore red bandanas to fight against the coal operators. The 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain was the largest uprising in the USA since the civil war. 10,000-20,000 coal miners marched up Blair mountain with rifles to defend their right to unionize for better working conditions. The national guard was called in and planes dropped bombs on the miners' heads.

"One iteration of the story is that **hillbilly** was a specific term deployed against people who were from East Tennessee right after the civil war when individuals were trying to form what what historians would probably call fusionist government. Governments where African Americans and white individuals had equal political power. And so the word hillbilly was a degrading term for white people who politically organized with African Americans." - Elizabeth Catte on Dolly Parton's America Podcast.



REDNECK REVOLT #1,  
2021

I WANTED TO PAINT SOMETHING THAT TIED INTO THE RADICAL HISTORY OF THE WORD "REDNECK" BECAUSE I IDENTIFY AS A POOR WORKING CLASS WHITE WOMAN FROM THE SOUTH.



**DICKS AS FISH (WELCOME TO THE MEN'S CLUB BY SHARON BIRD)**  
**MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER.**

Homosociality means "nonsexual attractions held by men (or women) for members of their own gender," according to Sharon Bird in her essay *Welcome to the Men's Club*. Bird wrote that there are three aspects of homosociality that contributes to hegemonic masculinity, which are emotional detachment, competitiveness, and sexual objectification of women.

"emotional detachment is one way in which gender hierarchies are maintained" ... "violations of the norms of hegemonic masculinity typically fail to produce alterations in the gender order; instead, they result in penalties to violators." - Bird.



He said he was out on the boats with his friends when they started to talk down on women... saying they're all crazy and only take advantage of men. My friend stood up for women and said that was not true and they were basically perpetuating sexism, and then was hurt when they all gave him weird looks and the cold shoulder.

Unsurprising, I know.

## 321 BY SERENA V CK

HOME IS WHERE MY MOM WATCHES SOAP OPERAS  
EVERYDAY AT 3 LIKE CLOCKWORK.  
WHERE MICROBURSTS OF RAIN AND WIND  
CHASE THE SUN AWAY EVERY AFTERNOON,  
THEY WHIP AROUND THE BANANA TREES  
AND RATTLE THE OLD RCIS AND FISHING LURES  
LAID TO REST AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CANAL.  
WHERE THE LITTLE WHITE FLOWERS SEEM UNBOTHERED BY HEAVY RAINS.  
HOME IS WHERE KELLY SLATER GREW UP  
AND PELICANS RIDE THE WAVES FOR FUN.  
WHERE HAPPINESS IS MURKY SALT WATER  
AND SEAWEED,  
DICKS DRAWN IN SAND,  
ACAI BOWLS,  
BUSCH HEAVY,  
SEX ON THE BEACH, AND  
BAREFEET IN CONVENIENCE STORES.  
WHERE BUSINESSES OPEN LATE AND EVERYONE KNOWS YOUR NAME.  
WHERE OLD WHITE PEOPLE GO TO RETIRE AND  
DREAMS GO TO BE INDEFINITELY DELAYED.



NOT ONLY IS SWIMMING IN THE OCEAN SO SPIRITUAL  
AND HEALING, IT'S ALSO SO DAMN ROMANTIC!!!!







BEACH GOER (TOP LEFT)

PORTUGUESE MAN 'O WAR JELLYFISH

(LEFT BOTTOM), GREAT BLUE HERONS IN LOVE (ABOVE)

ALL 2021





hydraworx

I work in the space industry in brevard, we have spring water coolers at all of our facilities and there's warnings not to consume tap water. 5-25



Research PFAs.  
"Very low exposure to some PFAS chemicals has been linked to cancer, thyroid disease, weakened childhood immunity, and many other health problems." - <https://www.fight4zero.org/pfasmap>  
follow @fightforzero on Instagram to follow the fight against water contamination in Brevard County and across Florida.

Following For You

PFAS has been linked to severe health problems, including cancer and

330 comments

sunshine\_und\_butterflies

Anywhere around military bases unfortunately. I lived in Colorado Springs near Ft. Carson & we couldn't drink our water because it was contaminated. 5-10

amysue41

Stationed there in 1992. Cancer increases near military bases 😞 5-10

proowgatts

Agent Orange was used there extensively in 1965-66. 5-11

pxram

PFAS is all over!! They are forever chemicals. Keep pushing 5-10

Add comment...

@

😊

Some of the highest PFAS detections in the nation were found in Brevard County, Florida

@stelbailey · 5-9

5766

330





COKENSLUTS,  
ACRYLIC AND INK  
ON PAPER. 2021



thank you for coming to my show and reading this. please  
continue to support living artists  
and stay curious.

hope is a discipline, not a feeling.

based on an irl art show  
at The Plant in Tallahassee, FL  
2021