

ARTIST

*K*URT BITTLE



{ MID } CENTURY ART

## THE ART OF KURT BITTLE

Kurt Bittle is a very successful fine artist who has earned acclaim for both his painting and within the teaching community. A graduate of Frostburg State University and a recipient of the MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Kurt currently devotes himself to his dream of documenting life in America through his Mid-Century Paintings - those years of his youth through early adulthood, during the move from war to peace and a time of new mobile prosperity.

The images of diners and roadside amusements we all visited and the automobiles and highways that took us all down new roads of adventure are now misty memories of a uniquely disappearing cultural landscape. In highly realistic portrayals, Kurt captures the spirit and memories from a time of greater innocence and simpler pleasures. These visions have become an extensive portfolio of an era of fond remembrance for all who lived them and for those who wished they were there.



## CULTURE OF NOSTALGIA

*K*urt Bittle's original paintings transport his viewer through a segment of America's cultural heritage; that slice of time between the 1940's and the early 1960's.

Mid-century America found our culture in a new peacetime prosperity. With the construction of the interstate, our country became accessible for the first time. New opportunities for a more mobile society found its' people searching for their own piece of the American dream, whether on the tree-lined streets of small rural towns or the rapidly paced industrialization in our cities. Businesses expanded, branched out and relocated as the highway became an integral part of our commerce. Families picked up and traveled America's highways to far off sights. Gas stations, motor courts, diners and roadside amusements sprang up to offer comfort and entertainment to those adventurous travelers.



Cultural icons from a kinder, more gentle era are now part of a disappearing landscape that can once again be celebrated and revisited as Bittle documents fragments of the American lifestyle of his youth.

*"For me, there is a sense of personal history there. I can close my eyes and revisit the corner store where I drank my share of soda pop, and watched Grandmother's new-fangled television set for the first time, gas stations where "fill'er up!" was routine, the local drug store soda jerk making a Cherry Smash or an honest to*

*goodness milkshake, riding the trolley car downtown, barbershop haircuts with the supposed box of ears that kept me sitting still during the snipping, and amusement park rides, all fondly remembered. These are but a few sweet memories of my youth."*

- Kurt Bittle, 2004

1900

40's

50's

60's

2000

CLASSIC DINERS



DEEP WATER DINER 20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board



SUMMIT DINER 20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board



THE WHITE MANNA 20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board

Most classic diners reflect similar shapes, sizes and materials. Each have stools, booths and stainless steel back wall panels. All have dogs, burgers, and their soup of the day, made right in the kitchen. Each diner has its own special group of "regulars" - the breakfast or lunchtime locals, factory workers, the college crowd, or that traveling salesman.

Some diners, however, seem to possess a lasting quality that have endured from one generation to another. Perhaps it was a special location, an unusual name or sign, or perhaps a specific clock or architectural design element. A diner could have become famous for a particular food item or a spectacular "character" that frequently "entertained" there. For whatever reason, the atmosphere is special in our most favorite diners, and for some reason they just seem to be classic.



OPEN 24 HOURS 20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board

## COUNTER SERVICE

Can you remember those special trips in the family car— summer vacation adventures with the whole family— or piling your best friends into Dad’s sedan for a trip to the drive-in theater—or a night out with that special someone? Along the highway we found friendly diners with waitresses who called you “Hon” and that “bottomless cup of coffee,” anytime of day or night.



DINER DELIGHTS  
16" x 20" acrylic on crescent board



STANDING READY  
20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board



CARNIVAL SWEETS 20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board



GREAT SHAKES 16" x 23.5" frisk board

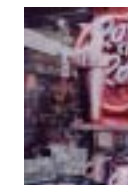


GUEST CHECK 16" x 22.5" frisk board



MY OLD TAGS 20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board

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JAW TEASERS 20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board

## FILL'ER UP

“Fill'er up! with high-test and check the oil please,” was a request I often made when touring along the highway. There was so much to see and do beyond the boundaries of our small towns, to see sights thought once too far to venture. Oh, how we traveled in those special machines.



ROMAN COLUMNS 20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board



FULL SERVICE 16" x 20" acrylic on crescent board



LAST GAS 16" x 20" acrylic on crescent board



POLY GAS 20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board



CORVETTE SUMMER 20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board



RAINY NIGHT COFFEE 16" x 20" matte film



FIRE CHIEF 16" x 20" matte film



SWEET TREATS 20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board

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## DUSKY GLOW NEON

At dusk those wonderful neons glowed brightly calling us to eat, sleep, or play. An advertisement to be sure, we were thrilled by the colors and the art of the signs that beckoned us to a host of motor courts, eating establishments, fairs, carnivals and attractions alike. They were impossible to miss, easy to remember, and beautiful to see.



CARL'S DINING CAR  
20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board

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CANDY APPLES  
20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board



SNO-CONES 20" x 30" acrylic on crescent board



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