

## Contemporary painter Julie Heffernan debuts first Oklahoma exhibition

By BRANDY MCDONNELL | Published: February 15, 2012



**Julie Heffernan** works with oil and canvas, but she strives for an almost cinematic storytelling style with her complexly layered, lavishly detailed paintings, whether her work depicts a large pack of animals protesting before a golden shrine or a self-portrait of a man with a vast tree growing from his head.

“That’s my version of giving myself as I’m painting a movie experience,” Heffernan said in a phone interview. “Movies tell the best stories in contemporary modern life. ... It’s debatable, but one could say that movies are the popular mode of delivering narrative. And I’m not a moviemaker, but I want to have the richness of that filmic experience. So I try to get it in layers.

Oklahoma art lovers will get to study the layers of 20 recent paintings when the exhibition “Julie Heffernan: Infinite Work in Progress” opens Wednesday night at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art

“Anyone interested in painting should see this exhibition. Julie Heffernan’s show ... is mesmerizing and provocative, and a testament to the fact that painting is alive and well in contemporary art,” said Glen Gentele, the museum’s president and CEO, in an email.

### Return trip

Heffernan, 55, will give a lecture about her work at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday. The Brooklyn, N.Y.-based artist will discuss “how I think about narrative in a painting, which is a stilled medium, and kind of a different way to look at figurative painting. ... The art historians’ way of looking at painting is to say, ‘Look at this, this means that and that means that,’ and this is a different way of approaching meaning in figurative art.”