

Artist Statement

I began my most recent series of representational acrylic paintings on canvas during the travel ban of the Covid 19 pandemic. A friend of mine began posting photographs of flowers on her Instagram site. She focused on their formal qualities, like the varied shapes of seed pods, leaf patterns, or the sculptural look of a single flower, which were qualities that interested me as well in my painting. I asked her if I could paint from these photos. The interplay of strong shapes and color and an underlying sense of deep emotion in the photos were the same characteristics that captured my interest when experiencing a landscape from life so I was drawn to reinterpreting the floral specimens on canvas even though I could not experience them in person. In my series, botanical forms convey emotions such as loss in a painting with brown, shriveling lotus leaves, a meditative state as seen in a work with floating lotuses on a transparent pink and golden background, and exuberance in the spiky repeating patterns of hot-colored leaves with the yellow eyes of a leopard peering through them.

As I finished the botanical series and the travel ban eased, I began to see family and friends again. I was moved to paint the people that were significant in my life. I took photographs of friends and family began with more representational portraits. Subsequently, I began to explore more abstract versions of the figure at rest and in motion. This figurative series is current and ongoing.

Prior to the pandemic I painted natural and urban landscapes based on travel to places as varied as Patagonia, Iceland and Italy relying on a combination of memory and sketches and photos made in the field to render the essence of place, rather than a realistic depiction. These paintings echo the American modernist tradition as embodied by artists such as Milton Avery, Arthur Dove and Georgia O'Keefe.

In my mountain and Arctic series landscapes, massive forms of stone or ice, the desolation of ruined man-made structures and the presence of remarkable animal inhabitants dictated how I used cool or pale colors and large shapes to paint a place of seemingly marked by isolation and remoteness but actually infiltrated by human incursion.

In the case of the Roman and Italian urban landscape, I used a variety of warm colorful, geometric shapes, including apartment blocks, triangular roofs, and domes as well as natural forms like the iconic umbrella pines and other trees to convey the sunny feeling and charm of Italy (a second home of sorts for me) as opposed to a literal representation.