

THOUGHTS ON FIGURATIVE WORK

This body of work is all figurative and represents some of my past and present interests in interpreting the female form. I work in a variety of media. Usually I paint in acrylic and watercolor. My prints are executed as aquatints, etchings, intaglios, lithographs, and silk-screens. Sometimes I explore the idea of the female as “Mother Earth” in large and small works which I call “nudescapes”. These paintings and prints incorporate and blend the female figure into the natural landscape around her. They are static and peaceful and emphasize the land-like forms in the female body and her mythological tie to the Earth. I interpret the female body and Mother Earth as she lies near beaches, cliffs, rivers, fields, and mountains. I, myself, am very much tied to the earth and the outdoors. I find my greatest inner peace walking through the countryside, sailing, or gardening. I live in 30 acres of forest overlooking Churn Creek and beautiful fields. In the past I have been fortunate to overlook sand dunes in the Netherlands and fields and rivers in England. As a woman I have experienced the wrath of Mother Earth in hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods, but always admire the peace afterwards. Perhaps this is the peace that I seek and try to capture in my “nudescapes”.

In contrast, I also explore the female body in movement. I call this work “Body Language”. I have always been interested in dance and movement, but do not always have access to dancers as models. Fortunately, the models that I use are very gifted in movement and music interpretation. While painting or drawing these models, I use a technique employed by artists for centuries called “blind drawing”. This is a manner of drawing where the artist only looks at the model and rarely looks at the paper or canvas as he/she moves the drawing tool. By placing so much visual concentration on the model or the source of inspiration, the artist captures nuances that might not be noticed in more academic drawings. The essence of the movement and the placement of weight is captured in strokes that are quite lively. These strokes convey line quality that is interesting in itself and not just a vehicle for communication or representation. In some of this work I actually used both hands at once to draw the image, placing a different tool in each hand. The large painting, “The Dance” is an example of this. I used conte crayon in one hand and a pencil in the other. Sometimes I also dip my fingers in water and spread the conte crayon to increase the size of the terracotta line or make a shadow. These drawings are all made quite quickly as the model is unable to hold many dance positions for a great length of time. After the initial drawing is completed, I usually go back into the figure and rework a few areas or enhance the background.

On occasion, I also explore the female body when she is in a more mundane environment...her house. I call this work, "Pink Thoughts" which examines the stereotype of a woman with a sense of humor. For example, "Pink Thoughts-couch" is accompanied by the thought, "I wonder if I should change the lampshade?" The static body language is very subtle, but equally interesting as the body in movement. When analyzing all my figurative work, I like to see the body language that I was able to capture and hopefully convey to the viewer.