

20 Years of Works on Paper

Artist's Statement

This exhibit of work spans a period of time of continual change: 1987-2007. The only constant is that it in some way involves the use of paper, as support for drawing, watercolor and monotype, and as both the material and support in collage/chine colle.

I have explored a variety of paper media, focusing on the process of the medium to guide much of the imagery. Paper has a receptive surface, which eases change and discovery. It changes size easily, it's possible to work both tiny and large, and easier to store than multiple canvases can be. Paper also comes in many forms, colors, and textures.

I have two degrees in Painting (MFA and BFA) with an emphasis in oil painting. I have a traditional foundation in realism from my school days for which I am grateful, it has been a good backbone for my art making. From 1987 to 1997 I worked exclusively on paper, primarily with drawing and printmaking. In 1997, when I moved from Seattle to Cleveland I returned to painting in oils, but I have not been able to reconnect with it as I have continued to connect with paper.

Drawing as an art form was not something I took seriously until 1987. Previously I used drawing as a way to work out ideas for paintings. In 1987 I had a 3-week residency at the Vermont Studio Colony; it was a life changing time that launched me into a series of abstract drawings— The Arch series. But even when working abstractly I could not lose the need for a motivating idea or image. I have found myself coming full circle returning to realism in the last five years, but this time with more freedom to invent.

Throughout this exhibit are a series of artist statements from each period of time and for each series of work, often associated with a solo exhibit of work. There are several series: starting with the Nature-Based Still Life color pencil series 1986-87, the charcoal/pastel drawings of the Arch Series 87-88, Desire Series 1989, Absent Angels 1990-91, and Bird series 1997 to present and the Vessel Series 1992 to 97 of monotypes and collages. Since 1997, images of birds have continued to dominate my work.

In this review of my work, my first retrospective, I have rediscovered many works I forgot about or dismissed the first time around. There are many pieces that have not

been shown before this exhibit, particularly the book art collages and monotypes such as the moon pieces.

This summer I spent time working on a new drawing, of one of my favorite places on earth, La Push, Washington, a Pacific Ocean beach resort on a Native American Reservation of the Quilette tribe. I spent a few days there this summer and watched the La Push crows play and interact. The drawing **La Push Crows** is a composite of many photographs and recreated in a new landscape, somewhat like La Push. It seems fitting to end with a work inspired by the Northwest but created here in Northeast Ohio, completing a cycle of place and work.

Nancy Weymouth Halbrooks

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