AN INTUITIVE APPROACH TO ARTMAKING

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by
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Fields of Study

Major Field: Painting
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MY BELIEFS ABOUT ART

We all have our views of the world, the world inner and outer. These views are seldom shared, yet they make the world. The world is something we dream together, and bring into being through our beliefs. Parts of our common view are unspoken and unexamined. Parts of our individual views are also unexamined, and we rarely question our assumption that these views are also held by others. I believe it is important that we share our views of the world, for this is something that is unique about each of us, but also our dreams and our beliefs grow as they are revealed. They are something for us all to build upon. Each actualization of an inner idea advances what is possible.

There is a part of us that is shared. I believe that the way towards the part of us that is shared is by going deeply into oneself, so that it is by going into what is most deeply, uniquely mine that I also find what we have in common.

Art is a means of communicating a part of me that isn’t easily stated in words. There are shapes, forms, figures, kinds of space, that have meaning to me, and I define the meaning and extend it by use of these elements in my work. Some of the symbols I use are like little stories that I could tell you in words, but others are not. Instead, I work to define my meaning in visual fashion.

I see myself as belonging to the present in art, because I do not believe in technology that advances or becomes more rarified with each generation. I am of the present because I have been formed by the present, and hold in my consciousness, at some level, the challenges and problems of the present - whether I address them
directly or not. Among other things, I cannot avoid the issue of how human consciousness must expand so that it is not based on the exploitation of the rest of creation.

This expansion of consciousness has probably already begun, not because of any single or few great artists or writers (the concept of greatness and heroes may belong to the narrow ego consciousness we need to outgrow), but through many small acts of imagination, and sharing what it is that we begin to see.
PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES AND INFLUENCES

Who I Am

My father worked in a service station, which he later owned. My mother dropped out of high school after tenth grade, and worked at a variety of low-paying jobs when she needed to in order to support us. I'm the second oldest, the oldest daughter, of five children. My parents were divorced when I was seven which led to an assortment of stepparents. We were very poor between my mother's marriages.

A strong effect of my background on my art is that I am determined to create art that can be accessible to anyone who takes the time to experience it. Believing that recognizable imagery allows an opening into a painting for many viewers is one of the reasons why I choose to do figurative art. This doesn't mean that I want to appeal to the least common denominator in people. My goal is to appeal to the depths which we share, rather than to surface commonality, but it does mean that I want to create art which doesn't require a specialized art school education (and the money to pay for it) to understand.

For the past eleven odd years, since my daughter's birth, I've been a single parent. That period also includes all the time since I knew I wanted to be an artist, and began going to school to study art. My relationship with my daughter is very important to me. I don't think my artwork would be the same if it didn't exist. The opening quote is from a poem about taking care of my child as an infant, and yet it seems fitting to describe the process of painting as well. Giving in, or surrender, to the needs of a baby
is very like the process of surrendering to a painting as you paint it. Apart from that, the fact of having made a commitment to love and care for her, and trusting myself to be able to do that, has changed me.

Childhood and Other Early Influences on Art

Art was probably less a part of my life in childhood than it was for most children. In fourth grade a cartoonist came to class to show us how to draw cartoons, beginning with stick figures. I had a lot of free time in that class which I spent reading and drawing cartoons. A couple of years later my sixth grade teacher was a nun who studied art each summer. She taught us to use watercolors. After that I did virtually no artwork until I was an adult.

Other experiences probably have more to do with my artwork now. I always read a lot as a child, and I lived a great deal in my imagination - especially around the ages of nine and ten which were very difficult for me in my real life. Lying in bed at night, where I imagined myself taking part in scenes based on books I had read, was the place where I felt safest from the violence that frequently occurred in my family at that time. Most of my fantasies were based on books by Louisa May Alcott, Little Women, and particularly on the school at Plumfield in Little Men, and I would go over the fantasies and elaborate on them every night when I went to bed.

I also read stories of saints, and tried to have visions, imagining that saints would come and tell me that I was really good, and not bad as I was being told that I was.

Around the age of eleven I started writing poetry. The first poems were more like my idea of what a poem should be like, but by the time I was thirteen, and since then,
poetry has been a major means of expressing my emotions. So have the journals which I began keeping during high school. I probably write more about my art than most artist, and think about my art than most artists, and think about art as a writer, as well as a painter.

As an adult I began to draw and paint occasionally, not to do art, but to explore dreams in a different way. I didn't think of it as art, but as an exploration of the inner self. My interest in understanding human beings led me to study psychology and later to teach Jungian psychology. In teaching I used drawing as a means to approach archetypes. I had my students use pastels to draw their conceptions of the archetypes of the shadow, mother, father, anima, animus, wise old woman or man, the eternal child, etc.

Dreams seem, therefore, a natural source of imagery for me. Elements from dreams have appeared in several of my paintings.

Art Experiences Before Graduate School

My first art class was at the YWCA when I was 27 years old and a single parent with a year old child. I took it because the Y had drop-in, babysitting, so I could have a couple of hours break away from the baby. It was a life drawing class, taught by a wonderful teacher who now teaches at the Art Institute of Chicago. The class was a revelation to me because I had never before even tried to draw anything from life. As I drew I felt that I was bringing something into being. It never felt like mechanical rendering, but like an act of creation.
It was also a relief. Concentration on something outside myself allowed something deep inside me to emerge much more freely and easily than it could when I deliberately looked inside to try to find it. That contrasted with what was happening then when I wrote poetry. I had reached a point with poetry where I felt it was something that I should do, as well as something that I wanted to do. This resulted in a forced searching for meaningful images, dredging through my mind to find them. Drawing from life reminded me that there were other sources that could also lead you deep inside yourself.

As long as it was offered I took the life drawing class, and later began drawing my daughter as she slept. I applied to art school, got in, but didn’t have the money to pay the tuition for another year. Though continuing to draw my daughter, at first I shied away from drawing her for classes, wary that drawing a child might be considered too cliche-ish or sentimental. Eventually I decided I was going to draw what was important to me, and I began to draw (plate 1, titled "Erin Sleeping"), and to paint her as well.

As I continued to do art, I began to use invented imagery. The invented imagery allowed a kind of playfulness. However drawing from life has remained important to me, allowing me to refresh myself when I begin to feel ungrounded with imagery that comes only out of my head. For a while I thought that these two ways of working might eventually come together so that I would invent more realistic figures, or distort or abstract more as I drew from observation. But, for the most part, this did not happen. I seem to need the two distinct poles refreshing each other.

In time the invented imagery took a definite direction, with certain kinds of images recurring: womb-like forms; images depicting inside and outside at once; protective images; animal figures which are personified and seem to represent a sense of safety
in the natural world; dangling or precariously balanced forms (plate II, "Pregnancy"). I can analyze them and say that I am trying to build safety in a precarious universe, but I don't know if that kind of analysis really increases my understanding.

Issues That Arose Out of Undergraduate Experience

The connection of art with life:

In Betsy Lindsey's literature class, "Artists and Literature", she asked the question: What if you thought of whatever it is that seems to block or prevent you from doing your art, and thought of it instead as supporting your art?

Although I had drawn and painted my daughter, I had been somewhat hesitant about it. Now I felt some support for drawing themes from my life at the time. This led to my thesis topic concerning my relationship with my child and how I felt that had affected my experience of the rest of my life as well.

The issue this raises is about how art works with my life. I became an artist after I became a mother, so there hasn’t been a time when the time it takes to be a mother and the time it takes to support us, hasn’t conflicted with the time to do art. Yet I cannot imagine being who I am, nor my art being what it is, without the experience of mothering my child. I am sure that I am not a bohemian artist, for whom art is the only reality for which family and other things must be sacrificed if they get in the way. I think my art would be sterile if I didn’t also have a commitment to the people in my life. The question is how to balance these things so that they enrich each other, and also the pragmatic one of what kind of artmaking schedule really works best for me without assuming that more hours is always better.
Sources of imagery:

Another issue that arose out of my undergraduate experience was about the source of my imagery. Pure abstraction had no appeal for me. On the other hand, though I loved realistic drawing, and was convinced of its importance, I was still uncertain whether realistic imagery would be my main concern.

The last year and a half I had concentrated on flattened, simplified, fantasy paintings that came from my imagination, fed by things that I had seen and liked, dream images, doodling and sketches. I felt the strongest connection to the early paintings of this type. Later, as I was encouraged to paint this way, I felt that I pushed it too much and began to feel disconnected from the imagery and the work. The symbolic element of these paintings was very important to me, and they were a development of my personal language. However the symbols were a distillation of experience that, it seemed to me, needed to be allowed to happen, rather than pushed. I didn't feel that I could rely on them as a regular source of imagery. They were like a gift when they came, and I wanted to treat them that way, so how to arrive at what to paint on a regular basis was still a question.

Meaning:

I grew up writing, and had a sense of its meaning that arose out of long experience with it. Also, being a verbal medium, its meaning may be more apparent. With artwork I didn't have the organic feel of its meaning. There was the initial rush with realistic work. Then came school with its push to abstraction which I felt was artificial for me at that stage. I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to say with art. In some ways the symbolic paintings gave me a sense of meaning. At first they felt meaningful. Later I felt that I was trying to come up with meaning in advance, in terms of content that
could be verbalized, and that the images no longer came from the same deep level. The meaning that came out of concentration on rendering was much more apparent to me.

Self-Trust/Following One's Impulses:

Although I don't totally believe it, I at least fear that creativity is a fragile thing that is easily destroyed, and that might vanish unless constantly exercised with self-imposed discipline. This is reasonable in a way since we are taught from early on that art, poetry, music etc. are sidelines to the real business of living, not central.

During my last year as an undergraduate I happened to read a book which presented a different point of view. Basically the book said that we could trust our impulses, and that one's creative impulses could be trusted to create their own momentum if one paid attention to impulses rather than shoulds. When I thought about this, it was really more consistent with my own experience than the fears which I had. Throughout my life I had done some form of creative work. If one form was impossible for me for some reason then I turned to something else.

I tried to really pay attention to my impulses, but found I could not (at least not in the context of my thesis year with its schedule of deadlines) - the anxiety created was just too much.

Influences (Other People's Art)

Most of the artists who influence or appeal to me do so because of the emotional content of their work, rather than the formal - though, of course, since the formal elements influence content I don't mean to discount them. There are a few artists that I have looked at very much on a formal basis, including particularly Cezanne, Bonnard
and Matisse in their use of color.

Kathe Kollwitz is someone who impresses me very much with the strength and directions of her statement; with how much she is able to say in black and white; with art that can speak to people in general without speaking down to them; and how her art makes political statements without dividing the world up into us and them. I particularly respond to the self-portraits which she did over the course of her life, in their direct and unromantic portrayal, especially as she grew older.

Paula Modersohn-Becker seems to me to have taken the best of the formal experiments of the time (around 1890's) - a bolder, freer use of color; simplification of forms; use of pattern - and assimilated them into strong emotional statements. Like Kathe Kollwitz she did many self-portraits, though hers are painted in strong colors, and often nude from the waist up. They are among the few paintings of nude women in art, or of women at all, in which the woman is there within her body, conscious and looking out, rather than painted as an aesthetic or sexual object, yet her paintings are also very sensuous.

Morris Graves and Paul Klee are both artist who appeal to me because of the strength of their invented imagery. The spiritual aspect of their imagery is more apparent in Grave's work, but I think it is there in Klee as well, along with a playfulness and inventiveness.

Another influence has been Susan Valadon's drawings of her son, Utrillo. They are direct and a bit awkward. To me they show a connection to her son and bring you into his world, but without sentimentality, or the idealization of childhood that, for instance, Picasso's drawing or paintings of his children often show.
GRADUATE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

First Months in Ohio

My arrival at Ohio State came after a two year period during which I had not had time to do art consistently. I had been in three different jobs in two years, and perhaps because of all the changes, wasn't able to develop a consistent routine of artmaking, though I did work sporadically. The form of my work was changing at this time - I was attempting to create painted constructions that worked as houses and figures at the same time - and I didn't feel really satisfied with any of the pieces. Some of my motive for coming to Ohio was fear that I would not be able to continue as an artist if I continued to work full-time.

On arrival here I felt very disconnected. Moving after 17 years in one city was more unsettling than I had expected. I didn't feel very much a part of a program here. It seemed like I taught and painted pretty much in isolation. This was disappointing for I had hoped to feel myself a part of a community of artists.

My plan had been to reinvolve myself with art by beginning with a life drawing class. This was impossible due to my teaching schedule. At first I felt flooded by possibilities that attracted me: drawing from nature; doing quick gestural studies of people in unposed situations; drawing from memory; welding; constructions; formal studies in space, color, anatomy that there hadn't previously been time for. I spent a short period exploring a few of these possibilities - some quick drawing from nature, and from memories, and working from the book, Form, Space and Vision, by Graham
Collier.

However I was feeling overwhelmed still and felt like I needed a direction to follow. I finally settled on a continuation of the work I had been doing in undergraduate school when I had last had consistent time to work. This was working with invented imagery, figurative but using simplified forms in a flattened space. While it provided a direction, this kind of work still had all the same problems that I had felt with it earlier - feeling like I was pushing too much for ideas or ways of expressing them.

I worked as I had worked earlier by making little sketches, in black and white, of the basic composition. In the past having the sketches that were not very detailed had helped to free me from compositional struggles so that I was able to deal with color and paint application. Now, instead, they seemed to make my work too stiff, and too much idea rather than involvement with painting. There was too much separation of images from the ground, and from each other.

Some of this was probably due to the need to reacquaint myself with painting; some with the disruption of moving, and therefore needing to hold onto things in other areas such as painting, so that I was less fluid; but also, I think, because I had played out that mode of painting, at least for the time being.

Issues

The issue of meaning was still very much there, because I felt that I was pushing for meaning and not experiencing it. I wasn't sure why I was painting, what it really meant to me. Coming up with things to paint I felt as a burden.
In addition there was the issue of following my own impulses in regard to artwork. So far I had had two very different experiences of doing art: the experience of the outer discipline of school; followed by an attempt at inner discipline in the midst of demands of the outer world to support me and my daughter, and having little time for art. I didn't want just a period of intense artwork of two years then back again into the world at the same time that I was over exhausted by the pace of school. I wanted to discover a pace of working that I could continue over a lifetime of doing art.

Ideally this involved developing a sense of my own rhythm of working, independent of outside deadlines, while I had the time to work consistently, and paying attention to my own impulses to work and to rest in order to learn to trust them. I wanted to find out how much time was really best for me to spend doing artwork; how much involved with other things.

Once again I found this to be impossible due to my inability to ignore outside demands. However, I feel in a bit stronger place to trust myself outside of school in the future.

Beginning Again From Reality

My urge to draw from observation increased, until finally I began anew, first with value drawings, a still life and a drawing of my room at home (plate III, "interior"). Immediately I was aware of the sense of light, and the movement of light throughout the drawings. I realized that this sense of light had been absent from the earlier work. There was also greater integration in the drawings as a whole because they were unified through the movement of the light throughout.
After that I found some stuffed birds, drawing them and self-portraits (plate IV, "Self-Portrait"). When the new quarter began I was able to attend a life drawing class, and felt once again the freedom of drawing from the figure, and the almost sensuous involvement with the drawing.

Returning to painting I began to use the value drawings as a new start for painting. I incorporated the idea of painting the way that I draw (a suggestion made by Pheoris West), that is, erasing as much as painting, by using turpentine to create the lights. It was helpful for me to experience painting as a process arising out of the way that I draw rather than being different in kind, and I have continued to think about it this way. What did not work for me in these paintings was the process of working from such well developed drawings. Though I liked the paintings, I felt the absence of discovery. There was nothing new in it for me.

This period of drawing from observation caused me to realize again how meaning is transmitted by elements other than the subject matter - by light and dark relationships, or how the marks are drawn, for instance. I felt a release from the struggle to achieve meaning. Instead the process was one of allowing meaning to emerge as I didn't concentrate on it, but rather on the process of drawing. Nonetheless my feeling was that drawing from observation would not be the form of most of my artwork. This still left the problem of how to arrive at imagery that was not realistic, and also was not contrived.
Beginning To Work More Intuitively

One possible resolution of how to arrive at imagery without working realistically would be to take an abstract expressionistic approach, simply putting down paint on the canvas and working until the painting seemed resolved to me. There were two reasons why I hadn't previously explored this possibility.

One was that I didn't feel connected to completely nonrepresentational art, although some biomorphic abstraction, i.e., Gottlieb, Gorky in his more abstract pieces, does appeal to me. I thought of this approach as if it went hand in hand with abstraction so I didn't really consider it as a possibility.

The second reason was that the few times when I had started a painting with no idea, or only a vague one, in mind, it led to chaos, or to weak or problematic compositions. It seemed to work best for me to have a minimal sketch to keep me from bogging down in compositional problems. However as I talked with Larry Shineman about possible approaches to imagery I was reminded of some more successful experiments. A few times, without anything in particular in mind, I had darkened a paper with pencil or charcoal marks, then erased back into it, resulting in some images that I like, and in some more convincing figures than I was able to draw directly from imagination or memory. There were also some assignments I had done for an undergraduate course in advanced drawing. These began with filling a piece of drawing paper with marks, avoiding any kind of structure. Later I had used a similar process to create interesting surfaces for painting.

The fact that Larry used an unplanned approach for paintings that were not nonrepresentational encouraged me to try it. Using a combination of these two things,
erasure and artmaking, resulted in a process of working which I began to use on a small scale. I worked with pencil, eraser, and small pieces of drawing paper, 9"x12" maximum, usually smaller.

The process began with marks put down without any drawing (composition or imagery) in mind. As the paper began to be filled up I would also use my eraser, to erase and also to smudge or change the texture of the marks. As I drew the marks might begin to remind me of something. I tried not to resolve them too soon. Especially, as I worked more with the process, I would resist the first faces that I would almost always see. Frequently I would start to help an image to emerge - trying not to push it - then be dissatisfied with how the drawing was coming and erase or mark over the old image.

"Man in the Grass" (plate V) is one of the early drawings done this way. Although I didn't think of the imagery of composition of the drawing, I did experiment with them a little. For instance, I tried thinking of a memory or a dream as I worked, just keeping it in mind but without trying to draw or recreate it in the drawing. "Water Dreams" (plate VI) was one of these experiments. I never saw any direct connection between what I thought about and what I drew. A few times I wrote in advance of drawing, writing down the dream or memory first. Again, I could see no direct connection between the writing and the images that occurred in the drawing.

Working on these small black and white drawings has been very important to me. I found that if I started with this disorganized artmaking that something did, in fact, emerge, with some consistency, that had meaning to me as well as order. This gave me some confidence to trust my impulses. The images that came out of the process were generally very powerful for me. They were unexpected, yet I recognized them. The
questions of meaning, or ever pushing for symbolism, simply didn’t arise in the process. They are definitely my drawings, connected to me, and the meaning is there, apparent to me. I can feel it even if I can’t describe it. Probably for the first time since my initial experience of life drawing, I had a very clear sense of the language of drawing, different form a verbal language.

For me the visual language is an emotional one. The strokes to create the images are energetic, often frantic. They move through the drawing, usually filling the space completely, creating a sense of continual activity that occasionally resolves itself into an area of calm. The images are a reflection of the artmaking. Offsetting crowded areas of images there is often a human or animal figure, a little off to one side, or in a corner, who appears to be a calm observer of all that occurs.

As I continued to do the drawings one thing that I noticed was how I would begin to make rules for myself as I worked, even with such a simple process. I would be drawing with a dark pencil, and say to myself that I did that too much, now use the light pencil; or that I should avoid creating an image for a longer time; or use only short strokes for a while; or not be satisfied with the first images, work longer; or I would think that it worked best before when I did such and such. It is not that I think that this is totally bad. What interests me is how hard it is to keep oneself from structuring an experience.

Technically the drawings made a big jump in one area. There was much more movement through the entire piece, less division between figure/ground, or into separate areas, as seen, for example in "Running" (plate VII), or "Landscape with Fish" (plate VIII). This happened organically as a result of the process of images developed through working the ground.
The drawings also gave me confidence that I could continue to work, even during periods of my life in which time was very scarce, because I could complete a work in a relatively short (2-4 hours, usually), though very intense, period of working.

Since I have often been as moved by a small drawing as by a large painting I rejected any notion that either large size or color is necessary for significant art, or that drawing is any less significant than painting. A visiting artist was very helpful to my thinking about this. He asked me if I felt limited by size. When I said that I didn't he said that there was a lot of pressure to work big, but that the only real reason for working bigger was if you felt limited or confined by the size.

Still, I liked color, and knew that I would eventually want to work with it as well as with black and white. So I made some color experiments on a small scale, but found painting at that scale overly careful and precious. Drawing with a colored pencil, or painting over a drawing, as I did with "Birds" (plate IX, acrylic washes over graphite drawing), lacked the freedom and range that I felt in the graphite pencil drawing. Later on in the quarter I tried working with color using an unplanned approach on a larger scale. This also failed for me in that I began to think of color as something very difficult. At that point painting consumed more energy than it generated.

Since I had enjoyed color before, I didn't understand why it didn't work for me then. Eventually I decided that the real problem was not my ability to work with color, but that at that time color was not what I wanted or needed to deal with. I was feeling like I should experiment - and so the color didn't work.

The result was that I dropped painting for awhile and continued to draw. Summer quarter I worked with lithography, using the same process of drawing and erasing, with litho crayon on stone, that I had used with graphite on paper. Lithography had the
advantage of darker darks, and of being able to etch back to a complete white even after extensive reworking of an image, but otherwise it felt very much the same.

Color Again

I began to feel like it was time to work with color again. I tried cattle markers for the first time and liked the medium. Because they stayed workable for longer than acrylic paint, yet dried in a day, unlike oil, I felt that they suited my process of working better than paint. Also, being in stick form, using them was as much drawing as painting.

At first I went back and forth between two ways of working. Some of the time I painted just as I drew, beginning by making marks, continuing with scraping off and making more marks until I felt satisfied by the result. However with that additional complication of color and scale I found it much more difficult to resolve a painting, and rarely felt as good about a painting as I had about the drawings. The first few paintings I tried this way were approximately 22"x30", and were fairly successful (see plate X, "Musicians"). When I moved to a bigger size (approximately 30"x40"), I had more trouble. I felt very frustrated in that it seemed to me that it took so much longer for any kind of coherent image to emerge, and even when they did the pieces often felt fractured with too much of a jump in color form area to area, and various compositional problems. As a result I decided that perhaps this approach didn't work for me on a large scale, and I needed something to cope with the extra element of color.

I decided to use the small drawings a source for painting, reasoning that if I used them that way then my imagery would still be based on forms that emerged through a
drawing process rather than being thought out, yet I would have some structure to begin with when starting a painting. This approach also failed. The drawings were already complete artworks, and, even though I struggled not to, I tended to follow the first solution too closely. The paintings just didn't have the spontaneity and energy of the original drawing. Part of the problem, I finally realized, was that I felt under pressure to produce a lot of work. If I began with artmaking on a large scale, using color, it might take me a whole quarter to resolve a painting. Talking to my committee members about the pressure I felt enabled me to have more patience with the paintings. As a result I was more able to resolve paintings, often at a point just slightly past that where I had felt overwhelmingly frustrated in the past.

I decided that I would make a commitment to the informal approach for the duration of my thesis work, rather than going back and forth. I still had, and have, questions about this process. The first paintings seemed more a collection of images (plate XI, "Silver Landscape") worked together through the paint strokes than a single coherent image, so I wondered whether only certain kinds of painting should emerge using this approach. However the work changed again and the images became fewer and more coherent, as in "Head in Red" (plate XII) and "Man With Two Horses" (plate XIII). Again it was a matter of continuing past the relatively fractured images.

Assessing the work right now, the paintings seem to me to be more varied in results than the small drawings. Among them are paintings that I consider as strong, and perhaps stronger, than any I have ever done (plate XIV, "Figure Inside of Head"), but I have also discarded many that I was never able to resolve to my satisfaction even after considerable reworking. I don't feel quite as much confidence in the process. It may be that after some time working this way that I may learn to recognize which paintings
will never be resolved no matter how much I rework them. I also don't feel quite the same sense of intimacy and recognition that I did with the drawing - they don't feel so reliably a part of me. On the other hand I feel some of them as very powerful, and, after a period in which they felt strange, I have felt a strong connection. This varies too from painting to painting. I don't know why there is this difference between the painting and the drawing, whether it will disappear as I work more this way in painting, or if it is something intrinsic to the change of size, or medium, or both.
SUMMARY AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

When I think of the period after graduate school my initial feeling is one of relief at being free of external demands on my artwork. Over the last two years I have periodically asked myself what kind of artwork I would be doing if I weren't in graduate school, and then proceeded to do it. So it is not that the work would have been different, but just that my feeling would be different.

The second thing that I feel is fear at how I will meet the demands of supporting myself and my daughter and still work as an artist. Still, I feel somewhat more confident in my ability to continue with art despite obstacles. I have gained a lot by exploring a new approach to my work, that is, by starting drawings and paintings without any preconceived idea or plan of what the result will be. Relaxing my emphasis on subject matter in a painting has allowed both subject matter and content to emerge out of the painting process itself, and the result has been that I have a stronger intuitive sense of what the artworks are about.

Nonetheless, though I may continue to work this way for a long while, I don't think of this approach as being the ultimate right one for me, simply because I don't think that there is necessarily an ultimate right way to work. Other approaches, such as working from sketches, worked for awhile and then stopped being useful. Then, too, if I ever decided to do overtly political art, I think that I would have to use a different approach, and I expect that I will continue to return to drawing from observation from time to time. What I hope to do is to pay attention to my impulses and perhaps
recognize a bit sooner when some process has become a dead end for me.

As I write this I am realizing that one thing which I have not done as much as I wanted is the combining of writing and painting. I would like to return to the experiments of writing about memories, or about dreams, or possibly even about people in my life, and then working on a drawing or painting as I thought about the memory or dream or person. Just recently I have begun doing this again, by writing first, and then painting over the top of the writing, with the possibility of letting some of the writing remain.
PLATE I, "ERIN SLEEPING"
PLATE II, "PREGNANCY"
PLATE III, "INTERIOR"
PLATE IV, "SELF-PORTRAIT"
PLATE V, "MAN IN THE GRASS"
PLATE VI, "WATER DREAMS"
PLAE VIII, "LANDSCAPE WITH FISH"
PLATE IX, "BIRDS"
PLATE X, "MUSICIANS"
PLATE XI, "SILVER LANDSCAPE"
PLAE XII, "HEAD IN RED"
PLATE XIII, "MAN WITH TWO HORSES"
PLATE XIV, "FIGURE INSIDE OF HEAD"