

POINT OF VIEW
BY
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VITA

Artist Statement

I am interested in making work that challenges the fundamental trait of humans to attach meaning to objects while embracing and challenging self-portraiture. The idea for a painting begins with either a recollection of a childhood memory or is ignited by images from current events in the news. I use my image as a vehicle in the painting. I place myself into the memory or situation and become both the subject and the observer.

Artist Profile

Allie Regan graduated with a BFA from the University of Texas at Arlington. She is currently a MFA candidate at Texas Christian University, where she also works as a graphic designer. Her most recent group exhibits include The Panel Exhibits, Fort Worth Community Arts Center, Fort Worth, Texas (2012); The Hand That Feeds Me: TCU/MFA/500X, 500X Gallery, Dallas, Texas (2011); The Chelsea International Fine Art Competition, Agora Gallery, New York (2010); Preservation is the Art of the City, Fort Worth Community Arts Center, Fort Worth, Texas (2010); Small Works Show, National Association of Women Artists, New York, (2010) and Best of the Biennial, Fort Worth Community Arts Center, Fort Worth. She was also a finalist in the Hunting Art Prize competition in Houston, Texas, 2011. The artist currently lives in Fort Worth, Texas.

Art Education/training

MFA candidate Texas Christian University

BFA, University of Texas at Arlington

Course work completed from: Stony Brook University, New York;
San Bernardino Valley College, California, Texas Woman's University

Exhibits & Awards:

2013 - Hunting Art Prize Finalist, Houston, Texas

2012 - New Crop, 500X Gallery, Dallas, Texas

2012 - The Panel Exhibits, Fort Worth Community Arts Center, Fort Worth, Texas

2011 - The Hand That Feeds Me:TCU/MFA/500X, 500X Gallery, Dallas, Texas

2011 - Hunting Art Prize Finalist, Houston, Texas

2010 - The Chelsea International Fine Art Competition, Agora Gallery, New York

2010 - Transmission, Fort Worth Contemporary Art, Fort Worth, Texas

2010 - Preservation is the Art of the City,Fort Worth Community Art Center, Texas (award winner)

2009 - Preservation is the Art of the City,Fort Worth Community Art Center, Texas

2009 - Best of the Biennial, Fort Worth Community Arts Center, Texas

2009 - Small Works Show, National Association of Women Artists, New York

2006 - The Goddess Within, Fort Worth library gallery, Texas

2005 - Her Story, Fort Worth library gallery, Texas

2004 - In My Life, Fort Worth library gallery, Texas

1993 - Pastel Society of the Southwest National Open Show, Dallas, Texas (merit award)

1990 - Pastel Society of the Southwest Juried Competition, Dallas, Texas

1989 - Annual Long Island Artists 32nd Juried Exhibition, Heckscher Museum of Art, New York

Professional:

Currently serving on the panel at the Fort Worth Community Arts Center and a member of the DSVCA, AIGA and CA

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POINT OF VIEW

The work in my show *Point of View* endeavors to tie three strands together; the first strand, the series called the *Miller Place Pond*, the second, paintings outside the *Pond* series, and thirdly, four sculptural pieces made out of clay and metal. The majority of the work is from the *Pond* series. Eight, 24 x 26" paintings hang separately on their own individual wall in the gallery. The four combined walls form a "t" shape that allows the visitor to the gallery to observe the work from different points of view. Each painting is hanging in a predefined order—each at a different viewpoint revolving around a central axis. The largest of the *Pond* series, *The Observer*, is a two panel painting which stands on its own on the right wall of the gallery—distant, but in view. This painting expands the dialogue by including another kind of space. Four clay sculptures in silver boxes are hung like paintings in the gallery in close proximity to the *Rabbit* series at the most inner part of the gallery. Upon entering the gallery wall text appears on the immediate right wall.

From our point of view, the most exciting thing would be if we discovered something really fundamental in our understanding was just off a bit and that now we have a chance to revisit it.

Saul Perlmutter

The quote alludes to the discussions that lead up to the idea for the *Miller Place Pond* series—the main body of work in my show. The idea was sparked by a conversation with siblings about a shared childhood winter playground—a pond in our neighborhood. Though the place and events were the same, each one of us had distinct recall and rare common ground. And when this potpourri of memories were shared, they changed the collective memory and we had the choice of modifying and/or expanding our individual memory of those events. I decided this past childhood playground would set the stage for my next series. I would pose as each of my siblings. Two paintings per person would be made representing each of them each from a different viewpoint; Luci from the front and back, Mike from the 3/4 view front and back, myself from the profile left and right, and Chris from the opposite 3/4 view front and back—the figures completing a circle .

I used my image as a vehicle in the paintings as well as all other paintings in the exhibit. I pose for photographs that would serve as a source for the paintings. I place myself into the memory/situation and became both the subject and the observer. I am an actor playing a part. This enables me to see the work through both objective and subjective eyes.

Before I begin painting, the first phase of the work involves collecting objects, materials and clothing. Harry Broudy, a philosopher of education when talking about semiotics says, "We build up an 'image store,' a cache of almost instantly accessible mental images that can serve as metaphors for understanding." We are unconsciously and uniquely always going to this "Image store" to retrieve images that are tagged with meaning. Everything, I believe, is actually always filtered through our eyes and comes from our unique vantage point formed largely in childhood. It is with this understanding that I stage the paintings.

Many photos are taken in different settings until I find the images that I want to paint. In the *Pond* series, the photos were taken outside in my backyard in front of a white backdrop tacked to the garage. This back drop created a shallow depth of field and was chosen because it could be easily removed at a later stage when work would be done to the images in Photoshop. The photos were taken mostly in the early morning or late evening when the light was the best for rich color and interesting shadows. At times the shadows fell across the figure. I carefully chose clothing for each character drawing on memory of patterns and textures of the clothing worn at the pond, and collected objects that might have been carried. In *Miller Place Pond, Allie facing left*, I chose to dress my character in a brown jacket with a black velvet collar found in my closet, that was similar to a coat I had loved as a child. In *Miller Place Pond, Mike 3/4 view front*, I picked a corduroy jacket from my own clothing that was similar to a jacket my brother had worn. I also included a baseball hat and hockey stick that he often had with him at the pond. In the *Miller Place Pond, Luci facing front*, the figure is looking down. My sister Luci had a recollection of a fear of the dark water she saw moving below the surface of the ice. In the *Chris* paintings, I rummaged for scratchy wool clothing which my sister had complained about wearing. I took photos of myself in these "costumes" at different angles as if revolving around a circle, with the intention of hanging them in the show in this specific order.

In the paintings, the figures are swathed, wrapped, costumed or even coddled in clothing. A feeling of cold is prevalent in all the work. I cover the eyes and parts of the face to remove natural points of focus. Often it is the back of the figure that is all the viewer sees. By carefully staging and costuming the figures I intend to evoke other connotations; masks/veils/religious regalia or ceremonial attire as well as imagery that harkens back to a time when I lived in Iran. The clothing also provides rhythm and patterning to formally tie the work together and allows me to indulge in painting beautifully rendered pattern and decoration and where one often finds specificity. On a visit to the Rachofsky House, I came across a painting by the artist Karel Funk, *Untitled 21*, from his 2006 work. The acrylic on panel, 31 x 27" captivated me. The figure had its back—was it male or female?—to the viewer. A hooded winter jacket is worn, painted in a narrow tonal range. There is subtle rendering in the painting with the exception of a small amount of fur that appears around the hood with great detail and delicacy. I realize now, that it is the reduction of the figure to this simplicity with just one area of extreme specificity that drew me in as well as my affinity toward fabric.

Ultimately, I utilize the figure and other objects such as the rabbit pin as metaphor. Though the shared memory of the pond in the *Pond* series led to the idea for the formal aspects of the major body of work in the show, my intention was not to reduce the paintings to that one simple explanation, but to interweave additional layers of meaning. The images I make are not traditional portraits nor do I intend for them to be perceived as the standard concept of a portrait or represent any one person. I wanted the paintings to be indefinable yet universal.

After many rounds of photography and stacks of images, I cull them down to what, I believe, would make the best paintings. It is here that I make adjustments to the crop, the lighting and the color. I don't gravitate towards primary colors but to subtle shades of grays similar to the palette used by 19th century painters and more recently to the contemporary painter Michael Borremans. Once the photoshop work is done I start painting. I spend three quarters of my time in the process of painting.

All the paintings in the show are done on birch panel because of my preference for this painting surface. I prime the surface with a primer leaving some tooth, so that it lends itself to ragged edges when the brush is pulled across the surface but is also good for detail work. When I started the year, my desire was to paint smooth, almost brushless surfaces. The first two paintings were painted in a room environment. In *Rabbit I*, the figure casts a shadow on the wall behind it. The brush work is almost invisible until you get close to the painting. In *Rabbit II*, the figure became more painterly. The subject matter seemed to lend itself to that. I purchased retro fabric from the seventies in orange and yellow that I hung on the wall behind the figure. In both paintings parts of the face and hands are concealed. In *Rabbit I* a hood trimmed in animal fur covers a head. A delicately painted scarf conceals the lower part of the face while the figure makes intense eye contact with the viewer. The figure wears an oversized coat that is gender-neutral. In *Rabbit II* a figure is wearing a hooded robe. The hood casts a shadow over the eyes. Only the shape of the jawline is a clue that the figure is female. The hands are tucked into the sleeves of the robe and the arms are crossed. In both paintings the stance was chosen with care and intent. The figures merge and fade away into the background.

After painting *Rabbit I* and *Rabbit II*, I felt the need to simplify the imagery, finding those paintings too theatrical and specific in location. In the *Pond* series, (the eight 24 x 26" painting and the two-panel 8 x 8' painting) the figures are removed from a specific landscape. These paintings are not in a specified location and often it is only the shadows cast on them that hint at a place. I refrained from consistent use of traditional elements of realism—depth of field, lighting or perspective—to create the landscape using a minimal amount of information. There is a shallow depth of field that makes the figures seem almost iconic. I reduce volume to flatness in some places so the image will read as an overall solid shape. This decision was influenced partially by my love of Japanese prints. And, was also reinforced by a conversation with other artists that believe our memory of image, is mostly of the main shapes, while most of the precise details fall away. I don't want the colors or brushwork to take a starring role, but go hand-in-hand with the image and ideas. In *Miller Place Pond, Allie facing right*, the brown jacket has very little value shifts or illusionistic painting. What defines the lower part of the sleeve are only brush strokes that are hardly visible except when the light reflects off the painting. The gloves and hat

have just touches of detail. The most specificity is found in an antique pin attached to the hat. I try to bring the paintings to conclusion with a certain realism that eliminates everything that is extraneous.

The Pond series was the first time I had concentrated so intensely on one subject matter. All of the clothing was painted multiple times. This repetition would carry over into my sleep time when my brain wouldn't shut down and I would find myself painting in my sleep. At one point I found myself actually sculpting the figures in my sleep. This sparked a desire to explore my ideas in clay. Working in clay was something I had little experience with in the past. There was a sense of freedom and new discovery working with a new medium and this experience influenced the making of the paintings as well. The clay sculptures in my show are partially hidden in metal boxes that hang on the wall. They deal with space and object in space much the way the paintings do. By placing the sculptures on the wall a connection is made with the painted work. The 3-dimensional work lent itself to the subject of animal as metaphor in a way that was more direct and less illusionistic than the painting work. These works also explore texture and material. In *Beaver view left*, *Rabbit view from above*, *Mole view right* and *Cicada view left*, each box contains an opening where it is possible to view a dark interior that is inhabited by a clay animal. The front of each box has a hinged front that can be opened if desired and also one additional cut out hole in either the left, right or top of the steel box. The inhabitant can be viewed from different points of view.

I put these paintings and sculptures juxtaposed in the show to counterpoise comfortable ideas, question perceptions and expand possible dialogue. One visitor to the show commented that she felt herself to be a voyeur, trespassing on private, ambiguous spaces. At first, she felt rejected, but the textures and patterning seduced her back in. Not everything is as it appears on the surface—not in the *Pond* series nor in the other paintings and sculptures.

PLATES



Artist studio: photoshop printouts/paintings/ungessoed panels



MFA thesis exhibition: *Mike 3/4 view back* *Luci back* and *Rabbit*



MFA thesis exhibition: *Chris 3/4 view front*



MFA thesis exhibition: *The Observer*



MFA thesis exhibition: *Chris 3/4 view back, Allie facing right*



MFA thesis exhibition: *Allie facing right, Rabbit I*



The Observer



Rabbit I



Rabbit II



Luci front view



Mike 3/4 view front



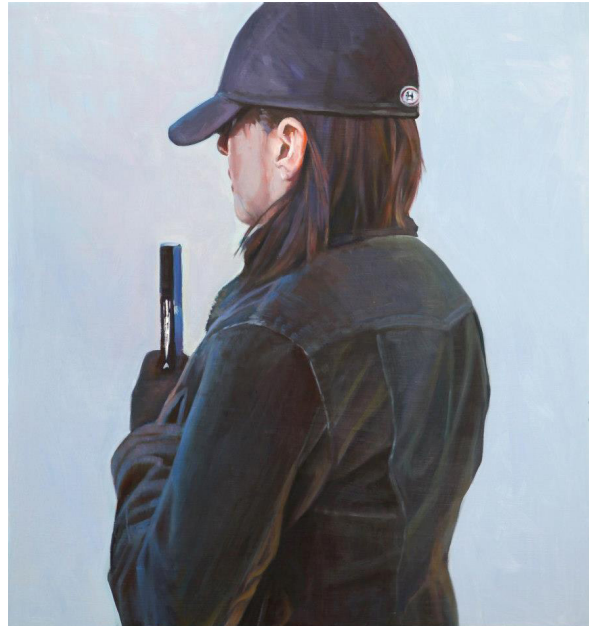
Allie facing right



Chris 3/4 view back



Luci front back



Mike 3/4 view back



Allie facing left



Chris 3/4 view front