

## “Why I Do What I Do”

I've been in love with color since I held my first crayon. Over 75yrs later, I'm still using crayons in my “fauvist-like” mixed media collages, using colorful strips of pattern, origami/papers from around the world, and contemporary magazine images to make imaginary landscapes.

I use the waxy transparency of crayons to cover the “white” edge of cut papers, blending them into a smooth transition, making the composition look more like a painting rather than a collage.

Early on, I was influenced by the “Modern” compositional ideas of Cezanne, who flattened the picture plane, discovered warm colors advance and cool colors recede, and fostered the scientific concept of “binocular” vision - with the focal point at the position of the viewer and NOT at the horizon line, the reverse of what is taught in traditional Western “perspective”. I am mesmerized by the Fauvist colors used by Matisse, his use of multiple patterns and his combination of both two and three dimensional components in the same artwork.

But, like so many other artists, my career path diverged after college and I got a “day job” while continuing to create artwork, taking Fine Art Classes in the evenings. I watched American Rebel Artists in New York City transition into Pop Art, Abstract Expressionism and Modern Art.

Inspired by Robert Rauschenberg's concepts of expanded boundaries, I experimented with incorporating a wide range of techniques and materials into my artwork, using wax, fibers, feathers, beads and found objects. Like Rauschenberg, I incorporated “found” images, including prints and images from magazine and books. Like both Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol, I rebel against the esthetics and precedents of a traditional “Western” “Classical” approach to Art.

Fortunately for me, I had the opportunity to visit several cities in Japan, studying elements of Zen design as found in the Ukiyo-e woodblock prints from the 17th-19th centuries, as well as Japanese techniques for paper making, marbling, book binding and painting with stone. The same way many of the Japanese Zen design concepts influenced Post Impressionists such as Van Gogh and Toulouse Lautrec, they influence my work and I pass them on to my students over the past nineteen years.

I got the opportunity to quit my job and became a full time artist. I went back to school and got a Fine Arts degree in Design and started teaching at the college where I attained my degree and joined several art galleries to exhibit and sell my artwork.

Although working in a representational format, I flatten my picture plane, often using a “worm's eye-view” with the focal point at the viewer and incorporate intricate pattern. I also use both two and three dimensional elements in the same picture. I use bold, saturated colors and rely on my use of color to establish the concept of depth of field.

I paint with paper, using pieces of colored paper, handmade or printed from around the world. I compose intuitively, without any drawing or “real” image as a reference. I rely on some basic geometric diagonal shapes for composition and strip in vertical patterns for trees. Then I use inks, oil pastels, and crayons on top of the pieces of paper to draw realistic details and use the crayons to integrate all the divergent pieces into a comprehensive “rational” landscape.

My goal is to draw the viewer into the artwork by using pattern to flatten the picture plane, while at the same time, using color to provide a realistic illusion of perspective, or depth of field. Thus, by presenting both two and three dimensional elements in the same artwork the viewer's mind is captured by the intrigue and the viewer realizes that it is both contrary to past Western precedents but is in keeping with the “reality” of our scientifically accurate binocular vision.

I love the “faux” aspect of making up my fantasy landscapes - it's like making a puzzle of thousands of pieces without the picture on the top of the box. Each line I cut is part of the composition's design. I use small pieces of paper and drawing to present realistic details. I truly enjoy watching viewers stand, figuring out how I incorporate both two and three dimensions into the same landscape and still have it “look real.”

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