

ARTIST STATEMENT - COLLAGE SPIRIT ANIMALS

I have painted in different styles and mediums over the years primarily in figurative, collage and abstract work. The main theme of my practice has always been about one thing, connection; connection to each other and to our internal and external worlds. I explore these connections by highlighting human interactions as well as objects and patterns that symbolize these interactions. In my latest body of work, I am bridging a connection to wildlife with fantasized scenes between creature and person. The technique I developed to construct these collage paintings involves applying vacillating layers of different materials. The subject matter is rendered with vibrant color and texture intended to excite the eye with energetic patterns, movement and vibrancy.

These new works incorporate animals and insects which are both representational and symbolic. They are playful allegories that depict my desire to become more connected to the natural world. This desire for connection resulted from the isolation I experienced in the past year. During this time, I became immersed in watching nature programs and disturbed by the loss of biodiversity and how the increasing human demand has exceeded the Earth's ability to regenerate its resources. The mere existence of animals and insects fortifies our planet, and allows it to thrive. These creatures, almost oblivious to our existence, heal us. We need them. These "Spirit Animals" are our guardians. Watching these programs, I was overcome with the realization that I, myself, felt so removed from that which sustains us. These latest paintings reflect my personal need to be more connected to what lies outside of the insular human habitat.

For these collage paintings, I have experimented and developed a specific technique that achieves a multi-dimensional surface. My process starts with a painted rendering of an image, some fabricated, some embellished from photographs of everyday scenes. I use a variety of materials: paint, charcoal, painted paper and canvas, and papers collected from all over the world. Applying the mixed mediums in multiple layers generates surfaces that are imbued with uncertainty and surprise, giving the painting a life of its own. It is a tedious and time consuming process that only ends when a unified image appears from all the intricate pieces. I incorporate all these elements to force the eye to slow down, find figure and space, and feel the vibration of color that is woven throughout. My hope is that viewer is captivated by the visual allure of the surface and the playful depiction to appreciate the connection to those creatures that nurture us.