

Some of what's behind the paintings.

In the house we lived in from the time I was three years old until I was nine, we had a basement playroom. It was an "unfinished basement" with rough unattractive walls. My brother had his trains and comic book collection there and I had my thirteen dolls in the crib my father made for them.

My mother attempted to upgrade the look of this space by pasting to the walls wallpaper samples that she got from Mr. Handleman, the house painter who lived next door. There were stripes and paisleys and plaids and lots and lots of flowers — big ones, little ones, buds, blossoms and leaves in all kinds of colors and patterns, impossible to coordinate into any sort of harmony.

It was the safest place in the world. Mama was upstairs doing something in the kitchen and Pop was in his shop in another part of the basement. The place smelled of the coal that went into the furnace and the sawdust my father made with his machines.

I believe the joy I find in painting patterns, textures and stripes, and flowers, and putting them together plus the pure pleasure of working with color comes from that early experience when all was right in the world.