

“The rule is: Jam to-morrow and jam yesterday-- but never jam to-day.”

Lewis Carrol, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*

“Lions, and tigers, and bears, oh my!”

Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)

P.R.O.M.I.S.E., the acronym that will help you when it comes to understanding my work, I promise.

P- pivot

R- reality vs expectations

O- object

M- magical realism

I- imagination

S- suspension of disbelief

E- existentialism

Pivot: The pivot is a term I use to explain both the elemental framework of my ideas as well as an overall understanding of how I use juxtaposition in my work. At its most elemental unit, the pivot is the idea of turning away from the *void*. The *void* is the blank space, it is the unanswerable beginning, and it is the ever present hole at the edge of our awareness. To think about the *void* is to think about a chasm of unfathomable proportions, and to wonder about what it means to be a human amidst the nothing. The pivot to avoid the void is humanity's ability to create, from lawnmowers to encyclopedias of all that is known and unknown. The pivot is especially the human capability to critique what it is they have created. By turning away from the void we accept our human ideas of how to survive, live, and operate in our human environments.

The pivot in regards to my presentation of the objects I create has two components: 1) the physical and material choices 2) the conceptual choices. These are both based upon juxtaposition. If a pivot is the turning from one point to another, juxtaposition is the understanding of the difference between the sides that the viewer has pivoted between. For instance, when it comes to the material choices for my work, I often think of the juxtaposition of textures. I consider how a crayon scribble is reminiscent of embroidery floss, which is reminiscent of dried pasta, which sits on top of dense, matte, foam. Juxtaposition can highlight the differences between materials. We know crayon wax is not embroidery floss. Juxtaposition can also strengthen the characteristics of each material, so we see that one has more dimension than the other, or that one has a grainy texture. The material properties of my objects can be broken apart and read in this manner, and so the look of the objects can be pinned down and indexically referenced, ie. relates to childhood crafts, Ancient Greek pottery, Byzantine Mosaic, etc.

The conceptual juxtaposition in my artwork is about the gestalt of the objects as well as the objects in their environment with a viewer. The conceptual juxtaposition involves the imagery, the lion, tiger, and bear, etc. The objects and the viewer in the same environment are also conceptually juxtaposed.

This show is arranged with only two walls of four activated with objects. The viewer is pushed to a point in between the walls, and so becomes the point of the pivot.

I use metaphors as a type of conceptual juxtaposition. Just how I liken embroidery floss to crayon scribbles, I compare the fairytale to the expectation of the future as a place a person envisions and progresses towards.

Reality vs Expectations: People envision their futures, whether it be buying insurance for a home or car, or the pursuit of higher education in order to get a desirable job. In order to envision a future, people expect the future to be a place they will arrive at, a day later, a month later, or ten years later. The quote from Alice in Wonderland above points to the impossibility of our envisioned futures ever really occurring. Jam To-Morrow is the idea that the future is an unfulfilled promise. I agree with this idea because as often happens the plans we make for our vacations or five year plans don't play out as we imagine they would, be it because of inclement weather or falling in love. Our expectations collide with reality.

Object: I include this point to explain that the works I have produced reference painting, and the history of painting, but are not really paintings; they are objects. I reference paintings because they have a history, my history, the history of critique, the history of human civilizations. Painting has been around for twenty thousand years. People have come to expect that an image of some sort will be on a flat surface, and that activated surface will be hung on a wall. We accept this occurrence in order to be able to critique the painting, so we can talk about the image instead of thinking about the void. In much the same way that we read Harry Potter and follow him in his adventures to defeat Voldemort, we go along for the ride because we know his adventures exist inside of the pages of a book. We also believe a lion can be made of pasta, because it is on a painting-like object.

Magical Realism: This is a genre of fiction writing or in some cases art. It is when the setting or events within the story are realistically portrayed, but for a few key instances. The fantastical moments make a reader think about why what we think is real is real, and why what we think of as magical is magical. For instance, in a magical realistic book, it can rain for forty years or a knight can ride a purple horse. My favorite author is Italo Calvino, and many of his stories play up the juxtaposition of fantasy and reality to spark joy in my heart.

Imagination: I reference imagination in my conceptual themes. For this work I argue that truth and fairy tales are not different from each other—the difference is imagined. I think in order to separate child-like fantasy from the more important priorities of adults to have insurance, a job, a house, etc. The pivot around the void means that humanity has created their reality, and people can envision their future. Adults who dream about their future home are not so different from children who imagine the cardboard box—that once housed the new refrigerator—to be a rocket ship.

Suspension of Disbelief: We suspend our disbelief and go along on the ride when we watch a movie, read a book, or look at a painting. A child's imagination means that a cardboard box can be a rocket ship that can take them to Pluto. To an adult imagination has become expectations for the future. Expectations help a person make progress in the sphere of their lives. A degree means more tools to be an economic advisor

at a firm in the city. As a freshman in college that degree is believed in, a promise, and so the freshman makes progress until they walk across the stage with four years of experience more than they had. The expectation is that now they are prepared, but once more that preparation is only a promise, a point to progress towards. The graduate has to get the job at the firm to find out. Gaining a degree or buying insurance operates on the same principle as movies, we suspend our disbelief in order to move towards the future. Entertainment or education neither is less *real* than the other, child-like or otherwise.

The suspension of disbelief I use as an entrance into my work, and specifically my ideas. Juxtaposition creates bridges, because it points to how two different things sit beside each other, bridging them. The conceptual juxtapositions I use produce the imagery that is the bridge for the viewer. The imagery is something we believe in, because it looks like a painting.

Dorothy and her friends named their fears— lions and tigers and bears in the woods. What they feared was really all that was unknown, their futures. So the lions, tigers, and bears are metaphors. We employ metaphors, and accepted vehicles of imaginary language to build bridges and entrances. The suspension of disbelief acts like a metaphor, it translates ideas. We know what a lion looks like, we know if we came across one in the woods we would be afraid. We know we are afraid of the ambiguity of the future, and the fear is mainly because we can't really put our finger on what exactly frightens us. So we compare the lion to the future, we bridge them so that we have some steadier ground to begin to build our expectations on top of. Dorothy and her friends sang about the lions, and tigers, and bears, and what did they meet? A lion.

My references to Alice in Wonderland and The Wizard of Oz are the invitation and entrance into my conceptual ideas. Interpreting the work is the point beyond. Interpretation is knowing The Lord of the Rings is a fantastical adventure, full of magic, myth, monsters, heroes, and a happy ending. It is also seeing that on a deeper level it is also a story about friendship, about what people or hobbits believe is worth saving—things that grow, a place where there is freedom from those who desire power. The fantasy does not obscure the universal ideas of comfort and love. It is the vehicle that translates the ideas to the audience. Metaphors, juxtapositions, books, artworks, are bridges by which to talk about how not only you or your friends want their dreams to come true, but that many people also wish to be loved, have a home, and freedom from oppression.

Existentialism: Here is the philosophical point that influences my ideas. Existentialism, along with post-structuralist and deconstructuralist thought, has opened up my thinking as much as Italo Calvino's magical realism has. Existentialism is the train of thought that looks at the void and does not pivot around it, but instead looks into the void and dwells on the question of why we exist. Existentialism is about the beginning of existence, and expectations are about the future of existing. In contrast, my work is about interpreting our present environment. I am interested in humanity, what we create. I reference the void because it is the primer to my thoughts. Existentialism stalls in the void, in the nothing, and the anarchical thoughts that that produces. I think instead on the honest ability a human has to imagine, envision, dream, and wish.