

Artist Statement

Through the development of this creative work and research, I investigate how the process of building large, sculptural eye forms, combined with aspects of the natural world, allows me to create an original approach to confronting the viewer in a way that is not possible in illusionistic space. The direction of my thought processes concerning this premise has continuously evolved, allowing the artwork to progress as well. Although trained in how to use materials and methods in the production of illusionistic space in two-dimensional artwork, I have become far more interested in creating work which pushes beyond the illusion of depth by building forms in sculptural, high relief and using materials rarely associated with painting. Creating nontraditional paintings that combine with the sculptural utilizes the modern/contemporary idea of paintings as objects in and of themselves – an idea made popular by a range of artists such as Duchamp, the Surrealists, and Jasper Johns. The construction of this series of artwork has posed many challenges. As a painter, initially unaware of the properties of the materials being utilized, it became important to learn through making. As an overall series, the cutting out of forms in fiberboard and insulation, piecing together eyeballs and eyelids, and stretching canvas over complex surfaces becomes a challenge as each form is different in size and shape.

Spurring partially from an interest in Surrealist painting, the human eye is chosen as primary subject matter. In my painting constructions, the eye becomes object as an entity on its own and a symbol for the artist, the viewer, the reflection, and the reciprocating gaze. Influenced by the Surrealist and Modern concepts involving objects and looking, my current body of work takes apart the objects of the everyday world and combines the pieces with the imagination to form new juxtapositions and multi-level symbolism. Building forms that attempt to take on multiple layers of meaning, whether literal or symbolic, allocate the eye in an iconographic stance. The eye forms combined with images and objects from the natural world do not think, or move, but their stoic, yet active, passivity allows them to become indestructible. It is the sculptural eye's unflinching, unblinking nature as a familiar and unfamiliar object which allows my work to confront the viewer in a way that illusionistic, two-dimensional space does not. The eye, in sculptural relief form stands as the mediator, the door that swings both ways, between not only dimensions, but also in the possibilities of association between an object and its metaphors.

The content of these forms started as a testament to spirituality based on a balance struck between humanity and nature and the constant interaction between the two. As the content has evolved, the various metaphors for the eye, the human element, are integrated with natural forms as an expression of personal and collective concern for the environment. The process of building these confronting objects has been a confrontation to my own artistic, and even human, sensibilities as eyelids are pasted together, pupils punctured, and skin "scraped" – allowing my work to become a cycle of expression and objectification. Through objectification and symbolism, the eye form becomes the reflection of the viewer and the anti-reflection of the viewer; a contradiction allowed by the sculptural qualities my work utilizes and their larger-than-life size. The combination of humanity and natural forms also helps to personify nature in order to bring about the idea of a community shared between all living things.

Unlike some paintings which show the viewer a world but do not, and can not, welcome the viewer into it, this body of work is meant to cross such boundaries. These eye forms, combined with elements of the natural world, ask permission to enter our world and confront with a strangely familiar and uncomfortable gaze. This body of work is meant to confront the viewer and be interacted with; so, return the gaze, feel the surface, turn on the light or just allow oneself to be watched because the eyes have it.