

I'm interested in transforming the frenetic impulse of the every day into a calming, meditative hum.

An artist residency at Youkobo Art Space in Tokyo several years ago influenced my work in myriad ways. My time in Japan caused me to think carefully about air, about breathing, about osmosis, a kind of unconscious assimilation or gathering of information through the atmosphere.

Pyrographs /burn drawings

These works are a meditation on topography, expressive of air, of breathing, of atmosphere suggestive of deep space as well as a kind of molecular intimacy. They are informed by the great prairies of the Midwest, vast acres burned every spring to restore nitrogen to the soil, a fertility ritual in a way, and by the undulating horizon lines of the Flint Hills beneath which limestone is embedded with fossils from prehistoric times when the land was an underground sea.

The pyrographs are works on paper created through a scorching or burning process. I'm interested in the transformation of the material, the process of drawing the mark *from within* the paper, itself. Their subject matter has evolved from architectural infrastructure, to a series of portrait silhouettes relating to camouflage, mapping, interior states of being, and finally and always, to the seminal relationship of the body to the landscape.

Thorn works

I work with the thorns from the honey locust tree to create large-scale installations and discrete sculptures related to architectural form. I think of these works as three-dimensional drawings; the sculptures as drawings in space and the wall installations similar to crosshatch drawings as they make their way across the wall.

The thorns grow up and around the trunk as well as along the branches of the honey locust. They are dangerous and much defiled and difficult to work with, yet I respond to their elegance of form and the cultural metaphors they suggest. With the pencil point tip of a burning tool I make a hole through which the natural thorns are self-doweled. It is a slow and meditative process.

In addition to working with thorns in their natural state, I have begun casting them in bronze. Hesitant at first to embrace this classic media, I have come to value its ability to capture both the ominous qualities and the elegant geometry that compelled me to work with the thorns originally.

Video and Installation

Video and installation provide a means of exploring the everyday. Whether personal notes and drawings, imagery of a construction worker seemingly at the top of the world, or work gloves retrieved from a manufacturing plant as part of an installation, this work is often designed as a lure, to draw people in to an unfamiliar area, an institution, or an underutilized part of the city.

My work has been supported by grants from the Arts Council of Metropolitan Kansas City, the Salina Art Center, The Lighton International Artist Exchange Program, The Avenue of the Arts Foundation, Creative Capital Foundation Professional Development Workshop, and the Daum Museum. It is found in the collections of the Nerman Museum, Sprint Corporation, Hallmark Cards, Inc., Shook, Hardy & Bacon, the Stowers Institute and H&R Block Corporation and numerous other corporate and private collections. Writings about my work have been published in ArtPapers, The Kansas City Star, Review, The Reader, and The Salina Journal, along with various other print and on-line publications.

Susan White