

I've always wanted to be the kind of artist who made primarily one kind of work, or worked with one material. But the lure of the world is too much for me and I consider myself highly focused to have narrowed it down to three primary forms, *pyrographs*, *thornworks*, and *video/installation*.

My overriding interest is to find a kind of order in disorder, to transform the frenetic impulse into a calming meditative hum.

#### *The portraits*

For the past year or two I've been working with self-portraits, both as pyrographs and also in video/photography. I regard my portrait as a kind of generic form through which I venture to explore the multiple layers that comprise the individual.

The video piece, "*On Breathing*", currently on the home page, was created after a month long residency in Japan, in the summer of 2010, during which time I was consumed with the idea of melting into the atmosphere. It was very hot and the language barrier formed an invisible shield, which I enjoyed, in an odd manner, being relieved from casual verbal exchanges. I took the occasion to gather as much information as possible through a kind of cultural osmosis. I thought of myself as translucent in a way, accessing the culture through my body. The video is accompanied by Meredith Monk's, *Liquid Air*, which was wonderfully descriptive of the porous nature of my experience.

In terms of the pyrographic portraits, I was interested in expressing a sense of the interior architecture that we all rely on, whether physical or psychological. I see these works as relating to camouflage, to mapping, to interior structures of various sorts...the kinds of things that hold us together in one way or another.

#### *Thorn works*

I use the thorns from the honey locust trees that grow up and around the trunk as well as along the branches. The pieces are constructed following the natural architecture of the thorns. While there are similar patterns of growth apparent over and over throughout the forms, there are, of course, no two alike. I've always loved geometry and the logic of angles. These thorn works afford me the opportunity to explore this science intuitively.

Additionally, the architectural forms are reflective of the experience of domestic living. Families, relationships, the experience of home, whatever it may be, are often vital and elegant in the psychological and physical support that they provide. At the same time, there is a dark side to our domesticities, at one time or another, filled with pain and crafted out of difficulty. Thus these structures are reflective of all that goes into a domestic setting fragile and strong, beautiful and threatening.

*About "related projects"*

These related projects express the underlying psychology behind much of my work no matter the media. This group started with *Action Figures*, an exhibition in 2000 comprised of note cards filled with lists, thoughts, drawings, carried on the backs of stick figures and has evolved to the inkjet prints, *three fifteen am* and *four twenty am*, familiar harpies who interrupt our sleep.

*About the video work:*

Video and photography provides a means of acknowledging 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. Based on the concept that we understand things by virtue of what we already understand, by incorporating some aspect from another's environment into the work, the intent is to draw others in, to the sometimes unfamiliar, world of art.

*My work has been supported by grants from the Salina Art Center, The Lighton International Artist Exchange Program, The Avenue of the Arts Foundation, Creative Capital Foundation Professional Development Workshop and is found in the collections of the Nerman Museum, the Sprint Corporation, Hallmark Cards, Inc., Shook, Hardy & Bacon, the Stowers Institute and H&R Block Corporation and in 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 venues.*

*Susan White  
July 2011*