

Biography and Creative Statement

Although my work is largely paper based, my training and approach is that of a painter and that pervades everything I do. From early on I fell in love and awe of Roman wall painting, fresco painting and the works of Trecento and Renaissance Italy. I made sure that study there was included in my training. I loved the drawing part of the great fresco art and, in general, the technique and craft, behind it fascinated me. So in this love affair with Italy and it's art, there were many trips and finally a home, that allowed me to be there for longer periods of time.

One of the most important experiences I had was to be invited to work in the ceramic factories near my home in Umbria. This completely changed my work in a number of ways and led to my mature work. For several summers I painted ceramics in the Grazia factory. I learned their particular technique, which involved the use of a perforated stencil (the "spolvero") to transfer a detailed geometric design to the surface of a terracotta vessel. I saw this technique used by local artist to create drawings on paper and I decided to experiment using powdered pigment and my own imagery. At the same time, being in the environment of that factory, seeing the stacks of "multiples" (cups, plates, bowls etc) every day worked on my mind. One night I had a dream of a fully realized artwork completely different than what I had been working on until then, which was "traditional" abstract painting.

My first new work was the dream work: a kind of stacked wall hung "endless column" created by painting a simple symmetrical black shape on the face of a set of flat white ceramic disks. I made a complete break from painting not long after that and continued with the works on paper and 3-dimensional multiples. This led to my first important show at The Drawing Center in NYC.

My ongoing travels to Italy continued to offer new inspiration, in particular the design, proportions and ornament of facades of historic churches as well as in situ and panel painting that might exist inside these same structures. I loved the decorative elements that integrated fresco into the architecture as much as the constructed narratives they framed. I was fascinated by the underlying linear and geometric structures, their spatial systems that marry form and content. I was drawn not only to the invention employed in the works but also to how they were crafted.

From this point on, symmetry and repetition played a part in my work. This led to a shift toward a problem-solving approach and working in series. A lot of freedom can be gained working within rules. I did not leave chance behind and I incorporated "accidents" that happened in the process. I define beauty, which is essential to me, to be about these very elements: chance, accidents, found marks, structure, control, traditional materials and the construction of new forms. On the basis of these ideas, I have built my work.

No matter whether I am working on drawings, prints, paintings or 3-dimensional works, in the planning stages I establish symmetry by folding paper. I work on transparent tracing paper and cut stencils to trace forms. In my painting I use stencils I cut directly on the canvas or use tape to define boundaries. It's difficult to say why these forms and structural constraints fascinate me but I think it is rooted in the primacy of simple energized symbols that are part of our cosmic consciousness and found in early cave paintings and surface decoration.

I hope this statement helps in the understanding of my work and it's motivation and goals.

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