

2009 Statement on Paintings

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I wanted to be a stewardess until age four, and then wanted to be an artist. Born in Japan, I moved with my family to the U.S. West Coast, East Coast, and to the Midwest. I have lived in thirteen states, all suburban areas until college. Contact with nature was limited. The only family pet was a guppy in 1970.

My undergraduate degree is in design. At twenty-three, bidding farewell to high heels and an office with a red leather couch on the thirty-third floor of Rockefeller Center in NYC, I quit Time/Life and began to paint. The paintings are influenced by place: Kansas, Japan, New York, and Oregon. While the work has a personal narrative, viewers have their own interpretations. I am driven by the mysterious and the ephemeral. There is a word in the Japanese language, *kehai*, which is the feeling that something has just happened or is about to: a footstep, a whiff, a stirring. I attempt to make a lasting image out of *kehai* -- the fleeting moment.

When visiting a museum I look for pentimenti, when certain colors become transparent over time. Similar to an X-ray of a painting, pentimenti allows one to see the under-painting, for example the gesture of the hand before it was redone. Some works, like *Down Dog*, are quickly executed, while *Roger and Janet* was worked on for eleven years. Because of egg tempera's transparent nature, change and correction are apparent in completed work. Models or photographic references are rarely used, because of a fascination with memory; specifically, that which we choose to remember and that which we choose to forget. The alterations of memory give some of the paintings a dream-like quality, though dreams are rarely used as subject matter.

Studio time is divided between narrative paintings and an ongoing ten-year project called *The Last Supper*. *The Last Supper* plates illustrate 400 final meal requests of US death row inmates. While the plates are quite different than the paintings, both are observations of contemporary society. I am driven to the studio to make some sense of our world: painting as questioning and meditation. Andy Warhol said the artist of the future will simply point. I paint to point.