

## Artist's Statement 2021

Painting is my way of making sense out of our world. My life is full. I make time for family, friends and fun. I work hard and I play hard. I make time to laugh, love, sing, and make music and I make time to worry, cry, argue and think. My paintings are cluttered and busy and frantic and loud. Painting is my meditation, my calming grace. The painting process is at first fast and furious, then tentative and time consuming and finally slow and tedious.

My paintings deal with the organization of interrelating patterns and spatial planes that develop one behind another, often emphasizing the play between "real" and "unreal." I like to manipulate images that are of a very personal nature. Because I was born, grew up and have always lived in Florida, I inevitably include many "Florida" images in my paintings. But these images resonate with people everywhere. I want my paintings to read like good books... novels with several layers of plot... sometimes very blunt and easily understood and sometimes tenuous and vague. I like to interweave my images like the plots and subplots in these novels. The layers of image, symbolism, spatial planes, color and pattern hopefully work together to create tension and harmony...with a little humor.

I grew up in Tampa and Temple Terrace, Florida in the 1950's and 60's, with mangrove and cabbage palms as my landscape. I roasted marshmallows on palmetto frond skewers and rolled my eyes when I saw tourists in their turquoise Bermuda shorts and flamingo blouses ... which frankly don't seem so tacky now! I marveled at the stuffed baby alligators dressed up like dolls in the Stuckey's when we traveled our state. I caught fish in the gulf, rivers and lakes, raised messes of tadpoles, fed ants to the doodlebugs, played with my pet green lizards and sometimes corn snakes and big black racers and kept my eyes peeled at night in search of live armadillos.

My first run-in with art was at age four when I entered a coloring contest along with my older sister, Pam. The scene was of children playing on the beach. I colored everything black. My sister won a Ginny doll and I didn't, but my parents bought me one. They were worried about me. Growing up, I was often encouraged to draw. It was a diversion to keep me quiet in church... and at home and school. It is still an excellent diversion and I still like black.

I studied art in college and graduate school. I taught art on the high school and college level and worked in a variety of art related occupations and projects. I also painted and exhibited my work.

My paintings begin with a collection of thoughts. I try to get these thoughts on paper before they disappear. They take the form of quick subconscious drawings or written words. The drawings are in my journals that I carry with me everywhere. The written thoughts are all over my house and studio... on legal pads, in my calendar, and especially on bright green index cards. These cards are in my purse, taped on the wall behind my computer, in the junk drawer, in the car, tacked to my studio wall, in my make-up dresser, on the table next to my chair. They are everywhere...along with grocery lists, to do lists, books to read,

resolutions, passwords, and recipes. Sometimes I gather them. Sometimes they inspire me to take up my camera and photograph places or things. Mostly they haunt me until something clicks. These thoughts become images and then part of the greater image which will become my painting. I recreate that visual image on canvas. The combinations which become the composition are satisfying...sometimes disturbing or even humorous. But they seem right.

Many of my paintings are combinations of my enjoyment of the outdoors and my need to be busy. I am an outdoors kind of person. I like to walk in the woods ... run on the beach ... hike in the mountains. I like to plant things in the earth. I walk or run along the water every day... I like to feel the heat and cold, the wind and humidity, and I like to see the things around me ... manatees, stingrays, mullet ...even alligators and snakes. Also pelicans, crows, parakeets, ibis...as well as inanimate objects ... car keys, baby shoes, pirate beads... When I am inside, I like to have pen and paper with me at all times, just in case. I always listen and wait and think better when I am putting pen to paper...often subconsciously. I draw innocuous, sometimes realistic, sometimes cartoonish, sometimes silly, sometimes pointed little drawings in my journals.

Many of my paintings are created by juxtaposing these journal drawings with a combination of cutout shapes and pieces of flora and fauna imagery. I like this combination of real and realistic.

I most often begin my compositions with a background of landscape that I spend a great deal of time discovering, photographing and positioning. And then I cover it up. I add and subtract images on top and under, and woven through and around ... and little by little the background almost disappears.

In my most recent paintings, I am concentrating on the landscape images themselves, perhaps adding layers of the same landscape or parts of other landscape images. I want to develop and create an overall image that gives a sense of being surrounded or overwhelmed by the landscape. These are familiar landscape images and each image affects me differently. I am exploring these emotions in the color and light and contrast used in each composition.