

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My sculptures look like landscapes and seascapes. Their forms could not be better known: a raging sea, a forest, a snow-topped mountain peak, a grand vista. They are the settings of novels, the scenery of films, the backdrops of history, and the most prized snapshots of tourists. They have become the logos of companies. So embedded within our culture, these topographies have acquired strata upon strata of meaning in the abstract. The specificity of site declines in emotive relevance, and the symbolic or even archetypal ascends.

I look within the realm of popular culture for manifestations of these loaded scenes. I seek imagery to borrow, color schemes to lift, words and descriptions to lend sculptural form. It is my belief that the prevalence of this imagery within our visual culture is suggestive of its underlying emotive import. At a paint counter, surveying the palm-sized swatches, one is presented with Avalanche, Stone Chasm, Cosmos, and Far Horizon. At the grocery store, one is faced with a petrified cascade of bottled waters: Ice Mountain, Iceland Springs, Crystal Geyser, Oasis, Fiji, and Blue Falls – they dazzle in the radiance of fluorescent lights.

Here is a passage written by the American poet William Cullen Bryant (1794 — 1878) to describe the paintings of the Hudson River School artists:

[These are] pictures which carried the eye over scenes of wild grandeur particular to our country, over our aerial mountain tops with their mighty growth of forest never touched by the ax, along the banks of streams never deformed by culture, and into the depth of skies bright with the hues of our own climate, skies such as few but Cole could ever paint, and through the transparent abyss of which you might send an arrow out of sight.

Although written to describe 19th century landscape paintings, this language could also be extended to the water bottle imagery and paint swatches of today. I imagine a pendulum of landscape representation, with the far end of its trajectory in the realm of 19th century Romanticism and the near edge in the territory of water bottles and paint swatches. In the distance the romance is earnestly projected onto the land. However, as the pendulum swings closer, the romance is dislodged, displaced onto store-bought items, and dissolved.

My sculptures interfere with the pendulum's trajectory. They re-locate the romance within these 2-dimensional fragments of consumer culture and extrude it into 3-dimensional form. Thus, neither fully romantic nor systematic, my work brings together the languages of both extremes. The expanse of a grand vista and the containment of a geologist's slice, the expressive ease of painterly gesture and the micro-management of surface detail, the illusion of a perfect view and the reveal of the mechanisms of mirage: these are the incongruous pairings with which I work. I seek to elicit a cognitive friction within these unlikely pairings that finds its logic in the realm of the nonverbal.