

JOSEPHINE HADEN

Starting with landscapes, I found myself creating mysterious and distant places that hovered on the edge of reality. Filling the canvas with lush vegetation and dense forests, I played with scale and space while relying on a base ground of gestural abstraction. These landscapes evolved as I began to include figures and create scenes dealing with the contradictions and complexities of contemporary life where no one is real.

Landscape is my springboard for presenting reality but my intention is not to create a naturalistic, symbolic, or site specific setting. And, if something appears to be happening in my painting, my intention is neither allegorical nor representational.

The people I portray are derived from the many constructs that we see everyday such as advertisements, calendars, and family photos. They present contemporary life with its characteristics and contradictions. There is a mix of the high and the low, the mundane, the personal, and the stereotypical. Common day activities are portrayed in concept and are intermixed in scenes where the end game is never revealed. Sometimes, it is about what we anticipate and what may never happen, or what could happen next. I stop short of revealing more. While contemporary life should be predictable, we are still subject to the shock of the extraordinary occurrence for which we are never prepared.

My world view may appear to tell a story but in the absence of a shared mythology the story becomes the onlooker's fantasy. There may be pieces of stories. The figures portrayed may or may not belong to the space in which they are portrayed. They may be from some other place, from some other story or scene. The animals and the people are sometimes disoriented, trying to find their way, and sometimes thrilled with where they stand.

I like to create delight and intrigue.

This exhibition which I call "Attitude" includes works on paper, on wood, and on canvas from my "Nobody's Real" and "Globalization" series. The common thread is that everyone has an attitude. That is what intrigued me to carry them into the context of another world of artificial settings that resemble landscapes. They are movie stars, celebrities, fashion models, or just people with an attitude that I have photographed with or without their consent.

The works on paper allowed me to explore the figure, roughly painted to evoke a pure emotion. This prepared the way for the paintings on wood that started out as misty and intentional color fields rubbed into oak planks. The figures, which are pulled in from multiple sources, are painted in gesso in black and white. They play across the color field on their own terms oblivious to one another yet strangely interconnected. The paintings on canvas are my Globalization paintings where land, sea and mountains meet in great grandeur to envelope the figures and bring them back to nature where they land in some unusual setting. I see globalization as a setting where all occurrences, no matter how remote, affect one another in a world unified through abstract concepts.