

ARTIST STATEMENT

My artistic practice for many years has been two-dimensional art - primarily acrylic on canvas. In 2006, I gave up using conventional paint materials in exchange for my own mixed, non-toxic paints. This shift was influenced by knowledge obtained through my university studies of Environmental Science (Carleton University, 2005) as well as a deep devotion to living environmentally conscious. Since this artistic reform, I have transferred these environmentalist ideals to other aspects of my life. This has led me towards an exploration of three-dimensional works, including the shelter I have created for myself in the forest that is both liveable and made without any synthetic man-made materials (example, plastic or metal). I work with natural material around me, including wood, dried plants, felting, and hides. I have spent time researching and trialing alternative paint and drawing mediums. I find a pencil and paper will suffice. Or even scratching rocks together. But I do enjoy egg tempera as well as beeswax crayons, recycled papers, homemade oils, soot, sticks, and organic pigments. Some of my work is archival, while others are ethereal.

My current aspirations are to create exhibitions that combine fine art with function whilst creating a dialogue or confrontation between ourselves and the natural world.

It's an ongoing experiment.

EARTH PAINTS

What's wrong with conventional paints?

Paints are made of 3 major components: Pigment, Medium and Solvent. With today's art supplies and house paints, it is common that one or more of these components are harmful to our environment.

PIGMENTS

Pigments are the colouring agents in our paints. Pigments are made of very fine particles of metal, mineral or organic compounds. The majority of pigments in commercial and artist-quality paints are to some degree toxic. Of these pigments certain metal oxides are very

All rights to reproduction of the works of art identified herein are retained by the Artist

dangerous. For example: Cadmium-red, Cobalt-blue, Chromium-green, and Barium-yellow. These are part of a group termed heavy metals, many of which can react dangerously in living organisms. Cadmium, Cobalt, and Chromium are known carcinogens and overexposure to Barium cases CNS damage. Pouring these or any other toxic pigments down the drain is a hazard to the biosphere we are a part of.

MEDIUMS

There is a wide variety of paint mediums used today. They can be made of many different substances- anything that will hold a pigment and then dry on a desired surface. Common mediums include acrylics, alkyds, oils and glues. Pure acrylic and plant oils are essentially non-toxic, but these mediums are rarely used alone. In oil paint, a type of drying salt is usually present to make sure the paint dries quickly. Drying salts can be highly toxic and commonly contain cobalt. Mediums (continued)

Acrylic house paints are very hazardous to the environment as they contain vinyl polymers. Dioxin and other harmful gases are by-products of vinyl production. Most mediums contain deadly biocides and chemicals to ensure that the paint doesn't rot. Although these chemicals are potent they are used in small amounts, so by law, companies are not forced to list them as ingredients.

SOLVENTS

Solvents are used to make sure that the pigments disperse evenly into the paint medium and to modify the paint's viscosity. Although not all such Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) are toxic, the ones used in paint solvents are. 50% of the toxic VOC's that humans produce globally come from paints. In the atmosphere, paint solvents can account for 12% of the all anthropogenic VOC's. Many of these VOC's are ozone-depleting chemicals.

All rights to reproduction of the works of art identified herein are retained by the Artist

WALL SPACE GALLERY
358 Richmond Rd. Ottawa, ON. K2A 0E8 | 613.729.0003 | info@wallspacegallery.ca

