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Tapestry

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Alana Medina

May 3rd, 2016

Artist Statement 2.0

The objective of my work is to connect the viewer back to the earth. My works focus on the ways the world around me evolves, changing forms, expanding on the ways we might understand it. I currently have three bodies of work; soft sculptures, dyed fabric paintings, and oil paintings of clouded skies. My soft sculptures resemble the earth and the flow back into the ground. They are dyed brown, blue, tan, with tints of orange to represent the many colors of flesh or the many pigments of rocks, trees, and mountains. My dyed fabric paintings connect the soft sculptures to the wall, partnering to reflect off one another. Hand stitched patches of lines creating a slower sewn brush stroke with blotches of reds and brown representing blood and simultaneously representing flesh and earth.

I often paint clouds. I do this because clouds are constantly changing, constantly moving, appearing all over the world and disappearing in sight. The sky holds importance throughout the world's religions, the resting place of the gods in eastern and western perspectives. Ancient Hindu beliefs say that the *Rig Veda* might be 7000 years old (5000 BC or earlier) one of the main players Indra, controlled the heavens, the beginning of god being in the sky. The Ramayana was dated back to 3067 BCE and in that text, Indra was literally in charge of the place that is heaven, very similar to the Christian metaphor of the kingdom of heaven, it was his kingdom in the sky, he owned it. Christians believe that when Christ returns the second time he is described to return "in the clouds." (Matthew 17:5, 24:30; Acts 1:9 Acts 1:11)

The Hebrews believe that clouds in the sky is a symbol of divine presence indicating the splendor if that glory which it conceals.

God's in the sky, no matter if it is eastern or western. Except for ancient Semitic religion, some primal/ indigenous tribes, and Ameterasu of Shinto of Japan. The Native Americans believe that the sky and the clouds are favorable omens. Some tribes have separate words for soft "female" clouds and a word for violent "male" storms. They also have cloud clans including Hopi, Mohave, and Pueblo tribes. The Shawnee Grandmother spirit was the creator of everything and she is known as cloud woman. God was patriarchal, always masculine and always an ideal representation of a man in both the east and the west. Divinity was seen at a distance, the supreme reality in the heavens. The sky was sacred for millennia's until the modern age. It is important to me because it reminds me of a womb, round like a placenta, and the earth is its child it is protecting. The placenta is made up of layers and so is the sky. I feel like I take the masculine god out of the sky, not by making it feminine, however just letting it simply become something as an outcome of creativity.

I am drawn to the night sky, the pollution in our atmosphere, climate change, and geological and meteorological phenomena. I'm also drawn to freak storms, tornados, hail storms, blood moons, volcano eruptions, smoke stacks; all contributing to my compositions and setting a mood of sublime. I add my own interpretations to reproduce dramatic effects of the sky, raising questions of what could happen in the future by global warming and climate change, maybe even evoking emotion in the viewer. I want viewers to question how to read the work,

whether it is a close-up or seen at a distance, visualizing what could happen if a cloudscape that I created was reality, since there is a new pattern of super storms. My clouds represent thoughts and daydreams just passing through, always changing, continuous, yet sometimes never there.

To create my work, I use various undefined forms, laying formations and overlapping shapes with configurations, arranged to create overall compositions. I collage pieces of clouded skies together, rearranging them, moving them upside down, connecting the heavier sides together, or the side closest to the ground to create the illusion of joined horizons that can be rotated to be viewed as an entirely new skyscape. I play with open spaces of backgrounds that are colorful and sometimes muddy of dull grays, and sections dividing subject matter and framing off focal points, or with no focal points with just linear composition and arrangement. Sometimes I change the color of what these forms originally were or stretch them out to be something new, once altered the skylscapes can take on different readings and intentions, some are very heavenly while others are very depressing. I experiment with imagined shapes in spaces built around the blue sky. I take dirty skies and make them into something that brings me in.

My soft sculptural forms are six sided, similar to giant odd- shaped pillows that I paint before or after depending upon the piece. I am drawn to brown dye because it reminds me of flesh and represents nature. When I paint or dye my sculptures I am free to do what ever I want to at that moment. When I take my sculptures off the wall and put them on the floor, the hierarchy of the painting is questioned. I would rather have a room full of them to play with, to relax upon, with

full interaction and durability. I need it to be an enjoyment. I believe it would be a change not to want my paintings to go on the wall but rather go on the floor emphasizing the comfort of body and mind. My “pillows” also mimic the human form; they have a presence that they take up space like bodies, like individuals existing in the world.

As an individual I use art to make my voice be heard. Because I have a voice within my art, I am accomplishing what I always dreamed of doing, now realizing that I enjoy making art, that I’m always thinking of ways to make art and express my ideas. Such ideas as the sacred act of painting and expressing visually what I am feeling and thinking. Ideas of forgiveness and unforgiveness and what would be the form and color of the unforgiving aspect of myself, also the idea of living as a wounded painter, burdened by my conscious and setbacks, with imperfection yet carrying wisdom and patience. Within the spiritual side of creating cloudscapes, it is the only outcome that helps me survive.