

“light renovations”

Axis Contemporary Art - Calgary, AB - June 2010

artist statement

This body of work is driven by my fascination with light, object design and spatial relationships. My hope is to connect with my audience through an appreciation of mundane objects in the spaces of our everyday lives. I am attempting to create an assemblage of ideas that imbue modernity / antiquity, industry / handmade and the properties of light and endeavor to bridge these in essence, by renovating paint.

The inspiration for painting light arose after working with and seeing the art of my MFA advisor Robert Youds. He showed me pictures of his “Charger” series from the early 80’s that were based on light. Since that time he has moved away from traditional painting but continues to use light sources and object to metaphorically paint his concepts.

In the summer of 2009 while traveling through Europe I came across a modern lighting store in Zurich that caught my attention. The colours, shapes, spatial juxtapositions and clean lined aesthetic inspired me and I began cropping photos and constructing abstract compositions. There was a multi-dimensional characteristic to the photographs because they were taken from outside the store, which caused reflections on the glass. I immediately envisioned painting...and how the shapes, densities, reflections, diffusion of light, complexity of space would play out on canvas. I later used these photos as a reference tool but on some level it became problematic because the images relied on my memory, which was distant and fading. I began to seek something more tangible.

Eventually there was a convergence of my attraction to light with a more direct experience of object that recalls the spirit of Duchamp’s readymade. This came about because my husband and I bought our first home, a 1914 Edwardian style house. Not surprisingly we have been in the thick of renovations and I’ve noticed the infusion of these

processes and objects into my work. To keep our bathroom fixtures out of the way we put them in the studio and it wasn't long before I found myself placing them directly on the surfaces of the canvas to outline shapes. I find it intriguing how the mundane things in our day-to-day are often such remarkable objects.

When comparing the made up shapes to the traced ones I find the latter more compelling. They relate to me as "that thing" but in 2 dimensions narrowly fitting within the parameters of the canvas. The neutral washy backdrops against the thickly painted cut-out looking objects help to stage the illusion of an entity in space. In some of the works I try to deepen space and in others I compress it. I accomplish this by employing an array of devices including pattern, neutral vs. intense colours, light chroma colours that come to the fore in opposition to dark ones that recede, as well as an intentional entry point into the painting by way of the unfinished or raw canvas. I am concerned with activating the light sources in the paintings by using highly reflective, interference, iridescent, glossy or matte paints to exemplify the properties of light: reflection / absorption / dissolution / diffusion / brilliance and transparency.

Because of the heritage of our house and my appeal for the modernity of the light store I started to think about my natural inclination to draw on design elements from various time periods and try to uncover them. My choice of mint green, rosy beige and the inclusion of lace make me feel sentimental and linked to the era of my grandmother. I believe the things in our immediate environments give us a sense of belonging and bond us to our histories, families and the present day. It is my expectation that the viewer will make some of these associations and experience their own connection to design, space, light, memory, sentimentality and the now.