

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work represents a search for the sublime in everyday experience. In my paintings I emphasize different aspects of my experiences with landscapes and architecture--aspects such as chiaroscuro, texture, atmosphere and occasionally color. The subjects of my paintings consist of roadside foliage, once vacant lots and now nonexistent architecture. These spaces exhibit a poignancy that derives partly from their being underappreciated. While I draw inspiration from these spaces my paintings are ultimately about the new spaces being created within the picture. In recent work I have departed somewhat from traditional representation in order to address the abstract qualities of my experiences. Non-objective imagery offers a very different, and sometimes more direct, correlation to the process of visual perception.

Like our perceptions which attempt to reconcile objectivity with subjectivity, my paintings stylistically navigate a middle ground between being exclusively descriptive or suggestive. I am intrigued by the idea that images seen through an objective lens are capable of provoking intensely subjective responses. The method of an image's creation and its removal from the present are two ideas at play in my work. Memory, as it relates to perception, figures prominently in my personal research and inspires me to paint subjects that suggest a link to the past. I do not judge the success of a work by its fidelity to any particular memory or visual source but rather by the painting's ability to function like perception, namely its ability to weave both the past and the present, both the objective and the subjective.

Robert Watkins, 2012