

DRAWING WATER

Statement

"...of lying half-asleep, half-awake in bed in the nursery in St. Ives. It is of hearing the waves breaking one, two, one, two and of hearing the splash and sending a splash of water over the beach and then breaking one, two, one, two behind a yellow blind.....It is of lying and hearing the splash and seeing this light, and feeling it almost impossible that I should be here. Of feeling the purest ecstasy I can conceive.....I could fill pages remembering one thing after another that made summer in St. Ives the best beginning to a life conceivable...." -Virginia Woolf, Moments of Being.

The themes I am exploring in my current work have emerged from spontaneous, involuntary imaginings and memories of the sea. An undercurrent also emerges from close readings of Virginia Woolf's descriptions of her childhood memories. Much of my childhood was spent in the same place as Virginia Woolf. We looked at similar views and heard similar sounds. We have remembered similar things. Traversal along the cliffs of the Pacific coastal region in which I live often triggers memories of the Atlantic coastal region in which I was born. My experience is like a palimpsest - I ponder similarities and differences and what lies beneath.

Memories are also prompted by the acquired and inherited objects in my studio. Some are enigmatic objects, such as books about wave formation. There are also pictures of people and places I know which, paradoxically, evoke a deep sense of mystery. I use various media to describe these experiences, observations and states of mind. In my primary medium of watercolor, I try to make exact representations, even though I know exact representation is not possible. Sometimes these are presented on my drawing table, as work in progress, as if I were there. The subject matter is placed alongside its representation, as visual rhetoric - the painting questioning its subject. Among the watercolors in this body of work are painstaking copies of postcards of the house I was born in as, long before I was born, colossal waves crash against it and envelop it in surf. It's an improbable image. Did this really happen? Well, yes; I do remember being in the house when this occurred, but I still wonder. While these are specific experiences and objects, I believe I am presenting the real but evoking the imaginary. The process involves close observation, pattern recognition and questioning. There are similarities and differences, both for myself and the observer. The studio is suggested as both real and imaginary space, flooding with an imaginary sea. Real and not real. The animations describe things which may or may not have happened. Virginia Woolf,

for instance, walks past the house in which I was born. This probably occurred multiple times, but not in the way I describe. Ultimately, as with much of my work, these seemingly simple procedures result in a mise en abyme, where meaning shifts between fact, fiction and hallucination.

