APPALACHIA: ANGELS, ANIMALS AND ADDICTIONS


ABOUT THE EXHIBIT

This exhibit was funded by Berea College's Appalachian Music Fellowship. In preparation for studio work on the paintings, Christine spent two months listening to a variety of selections from Berea's digital archives. These included traditional ballads and folk tales, Old Primitive Baptist sermons, congregations “lining out” hymns and recorded works by individual singers and musicians. Christine was particularly moved by the singing of Elder Steve Pratt, who recorded selections from The Sweet Songster hymnody. In addition to listening to a huge cross-section of the audio archives, Christine also viewed a variety of videos and read journals and books dealing with traditional Appalachian religious and cultural practices. While working in the studio, Christine listened extensively to selections from the digital archives, using them as a springboard for her imagination and as a source of inspiration.

ABOUT THE SOUNDTRACK

The soundtrack for this exhibit was created by Duane Lundy, using tracks sampled from the archival materials. Duane Lundy brings a cinematographer's sensibility to production; he creates soundtracks for the mind in the recording studio. Lundy has shown a flair for delicate, atmospheric tones, both in producing material for other musicians and as a recording artist and composer/remixer for TV/Film/Advertising. Stressing emotional vibrancy over the technical aspects of making albums, Lundy works in typically organic, stripped-down styles (guitar-based pop/rock, roots rock, singer/songwriter records, world music). Lundy's unorthodox techniques—low-fidelity distortion, vintage compressors and effects pedals, mic filters made from everyday found objects, and so on—has given his work a distinctive, immediately identifiable sound. The results of this visceral approach have ranged from the soaring intensity of Chico Fellini to the moody, understated passion of Yim Yames/Ben Sollee/ Danel Martin (Sub Pop).

ABOUT THE PAINTINGS

The artwork in this exhibit was inspired by listening to music and sermons from Berea's Appalachian Music Archives. I listened to selections continually while doing all phases of the studio work. In general, my work is process-oriented. It begins with the assembly of items of interest—things which attract me from an aesthetic viewpoint or things which catch my fancy or make me smile. These items generally fall into a few categories: 1) dried plant materials, such as dried flower petals, bark from trees, leaves, etc. 2) tissue paper (I love the transparency!) and other random scraps of paper like the tags from clothing, identification cards of strangers, old photos, doodles, etc. and 3) sand and dirt from sacred sites around the world. The sand and dirt not only add texture, but I hope they will carry with them some of the healing properties found at the holy sites. After all the relevant materials have been collected, they are collaged onto a hardwood ground. Handmade walnut ink, gold leaf, oil and acrylic paints and inks are then applied to create an abstract work with a pleasing compositional and color balance. The work is then sat aside in a visible portion of my studio. I look at the work intently, day after day, until an image appears. Once the image has appeared in my mind, its manifestation in paint and ink is usually a very rapid and intuitive process. I often don’t understand the imagery until later on when the title and the meaning makes itself apparent to my conscious mind. The resulting imagery is often mythic with archetypal elements.
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