

Anne Labovitz

Artist Statement

The driving force behind my portraits is an enduring interest in people; in the human spirit, its emotional resonance and the way over time it manifests in our relationships with others.

Utilizing painting, drawing, and printmaking techniques, my work examines the personal and universal exchanges found in contemporary portraiture, yet through expressive color, luminosity, and gestural mark making, dislocates portrait painting from historical and hierarchical structures. Informed by German Expressionism and embracing exaggerated hues and boldly simplified or distorted forms, I desire to startle the viewer. The notion of the graphic impulse, with its raw, immediate, and unflinching emotional extremes delivering a directness and frankness, characterizes my work. Layered, abstracted marks are cumulative, each stratum revealing visceral and emotional intensities. I attempt to draw the viewer inward to experience an encounter with the subject and the collective consciousness.

The notion of temporality is central in my process; documenting human connections, dialogues and relationships as they morph over time. Fascinated by the development of an individual, the relation and

dependence to others, imagery at times consists of the human form, in others the content contains the written word—text that is layered in legible and illegible mark making.

In the "word" paintings I am expressing my immediate emotions deliberately to convey them. Certain words have universal and visceral connotations and I am compelled to put them on canvas.

There is also a time-based quality to the physicality found in my work. Each piece is created over several months, using layers of polymer mediums between layers of mark-making. I aim to fossilize, preserve and record each set of marks as a single event in the building or rendering of the portrait. By working across multiple pieces at one time, documenting and recording my experiences, memory and emotional responses to the subject means that what lies beneath is sometimes subdued or intentionally hidden. I am compelled by what might be revealed and obscured by this approach. These compilations, with imagery and text sometimes masked, develop over time. Marks made today require a response to the mark of yesterday.