

Melissa Staiger
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Artist Statment

“I work with various materials that vary greatly in scale and construction. Consistently you will see bold color, texture, gesture that holds sensitivity and harmony among its parts. Collage and assemblage are key mediums that guide my playful process of seeing the possibilities before making a choice of composition.

Moving paint around is a sensual experience for me. The marks that I make in the form organic shapes and curves are painted to express a constant state of flow. Color is a potent expression and medicine.

In 2013, I was nominated to attend the Robert Rauschenberg Artist Residency. The staff graciously took us to the massive metal scrap yard where Rauschenberg would find materials for his works. I started playing with scraps that I hadn't thought of using before. A green metal piece became a major key player in my understanding on how found objects can give the surface of a painting so much 3D texture. This put me on a path of creating many assemblages with various materials.

All of these experiences I took back to the studio and my work. Combining physical objects with paint adds another dimension to my art. From the most expensive tubes of paint to a broken tile found on the floor, both hold an energy and vibration of color. I carefully arrange objects, shapes, lines, and colors. I pay attention to the relationships, patterns, and shifts of movement. I arrange them in my works and play around with it.

I need time to immerse, experiment, listen, and draw in my sketchbook to push my work further. In this creative process, I control what I produce and can deem myself authentic as the creator. In my creative process, circles, mark making, collage, painting, assemblage, and texturizing are taking me to a path of color, structure, and layering. I love the hard edge, and making marks and using color as the structure in my work opens up a glimpse of understanding that I crave within my inner self. When I am able to use my entire body and make sweeping marks on the floor, I am reaching for a composition to form. Then suddenly, the work feels right and then I have a moment of accomplishment right before I release it into the world.” – Melissa Staiger

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Curator Quotes

“For Staiger, paint—along with other materials, including paper, marble, wood, and rigid plastic—become sculptural elements. Embracing the hard edge, the artist methodically assembles and arranges gestures, shapes, and lines—layering textures and structures—to create collages and sculptural paintings. Staiger explains, “When working with materials, I listen to their demands.” Seeking stasis, the artist makes connections between the body, mind, and soul.” – Eileen Lynch

“The artist has said that opening her heart (the door), and letting her emotions propel her work has become her guiding principle. “I pay attention to relationships, patterns, and shifts of movement... Using color as the structure in my work opens up a glimpse of understanding that I crave within my inner self.” Her scaffolding of high-keyed hues is attentive and thoughtful, recalling strands of painting’s history that reach back to artists like Matisse, Frankenthaler and Kelly. There is also wit and subtle playfulness in her eclectic and inspired juxtapositions, including that of textures and surfaces, manufactured and found. While Staiger’s art exudes liveliness and occasions pleasure, its beauty has depth. It contains moments of complication and darkness. She works with the full spectrum, so the joy and generosity of its many bright moments seem earned.” – Ken Weathersby