

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Line is how I start a painting and the only sure way to find my way to the rest. The initial process involves lines placed somewhat arbitrarily over the entire canvas. From there, I start scrubbing with medium into the lines with brush which has a real tactile hostility. My brushes are cheap, nubby bristles – stiff and argumentative. I wear several of them completely down on a single painting and thus experience the incomparable pleasure of not having to clean them. I have found that the reason I like them – aside from the cleaning aspect – is that they connect the line with the space in a way that isn't possible when I use a supple brush whose mark is smooth and polite. The surface itself is lively and varied in character. The vigor of this seems right. As I scrub into the lines, things start opening up and new shapes and spaces are called into being. Simultaneously, when all is well, something like movement begins to occur. This, I would say is the essential yes or no in my work. I like the idea of creating something that seems to extend beyond the perimeters of the canvas.

When the entire surface is saturated with paint and medium, I begin to search out the movement. Space, shape, color – everything – conjoin and are sacrificed to the creation of movement. This part of the process involves applying transparent hues of paint, mixed with medium and thin as silk, in fat, linear strokes. Rhythms of space and line marry to produce a movement which is elemental in its character and its force.

Some people say they see shapes that refer to birds, flowers, sexual imagery, dogs, cats, whatever. Some people see music. For reasons I don't really understand, it's clear to me that the painting of imagery is not what I'm about as an artist. I suppose I want the work to exist and be experienced in purely visual terms without narrative or symbolic interpretation. This is probably impossible but has something to do with my thinking.

When I look at the titles of my work – and mostly, they come unbidden – I realize they're informative, not literally, but as spirit through sound. Looking over a bunch of them, I see that I'm possessed of the usual preoccupations of humanity – food, sex, crime, music, sin, love and language. All of these are ideas or spirits which enter the painting as I work.

All of this stuff has, of course, to do with the filter of personality. People – artists and other folks who have been friends for years – say that the work looks like me. I agree, not quite understanding what they mean, but knowing it is so. Thinking about it right now, one thing that occurs to me is “immediacy.” I've never been one to believe in anything other than now (I'm not recommending it, it's simply so). And now is just a compendium of everything that ever happened on any level, with any of the senses, whenever. If I'm down, it's forever and if I'm up, it was always so. I expect that something of this is reflected in the paintings.

Judith Foosaner, 1992. From Sazama Gallery, Chicago, February 12 – March 13, 1993.