

Sydney Drum-Artistic Statement

My artwork falls into two areas, large paintings and smaller abstract paintings on paper. Each body of work is discussed below.

My large, multi-panel paintings are oil and digital media on linen. These two-, three- or four-panel works explore the intersections of painting, digital media, photography, and other sources. They combine alternating panels of representation (using hand-painted or digitally-printed panels) and abstraction. Some panels are hand-painted (a slow, low-tech method); others use digital technology to explore how this technology has changed the way we view the world around us (an emphatically high-tech process). This juxtaposition is intended to engage the viewer in a dialog about these different approaches in contemporary artwork. Untitled (SD//P128) is representative of these works. The representational right panel, which I hand-painted, depicts Niagara Falls. The digital left panel presents a composite, deliberately disrupted, water vision which I created by manipulating my own digital files. The hand-painted, turquoise abstract middle panel harkens to the hues of the neighboring panels as well as offering its own autonomous color abstraction. In my work, these various modalities interact, but without one mode dominating another, and suggest a dialog of constantly shifting visions. As Michaël Amy, a well-known New York critic has suggested in an essay about my artworks, a connection exists between the alternating modes in my large paintings and our modern way of perceiving the world through fragmented imagery on television and the internet.

Abstraction and my interest in color link the large paintings with my smaller abstract paintings on paper. Each work is created using oil or acrylic on heavy, prepared paper. The abstract works use thin white lines to grid vivid vertical bands of color, some of which have delicately blended areas. Shifts in colors, sometimes gradual, sometimes abrupt, act like color pulses animating abstract fields. Untitled (SD//WP157) shows these ideas. Vertical red and dark blue stripes zip through more muted color swathes of cerulean, magenta and sage. Both the paintings on paper and the large paintings use a range of colors to define their images.