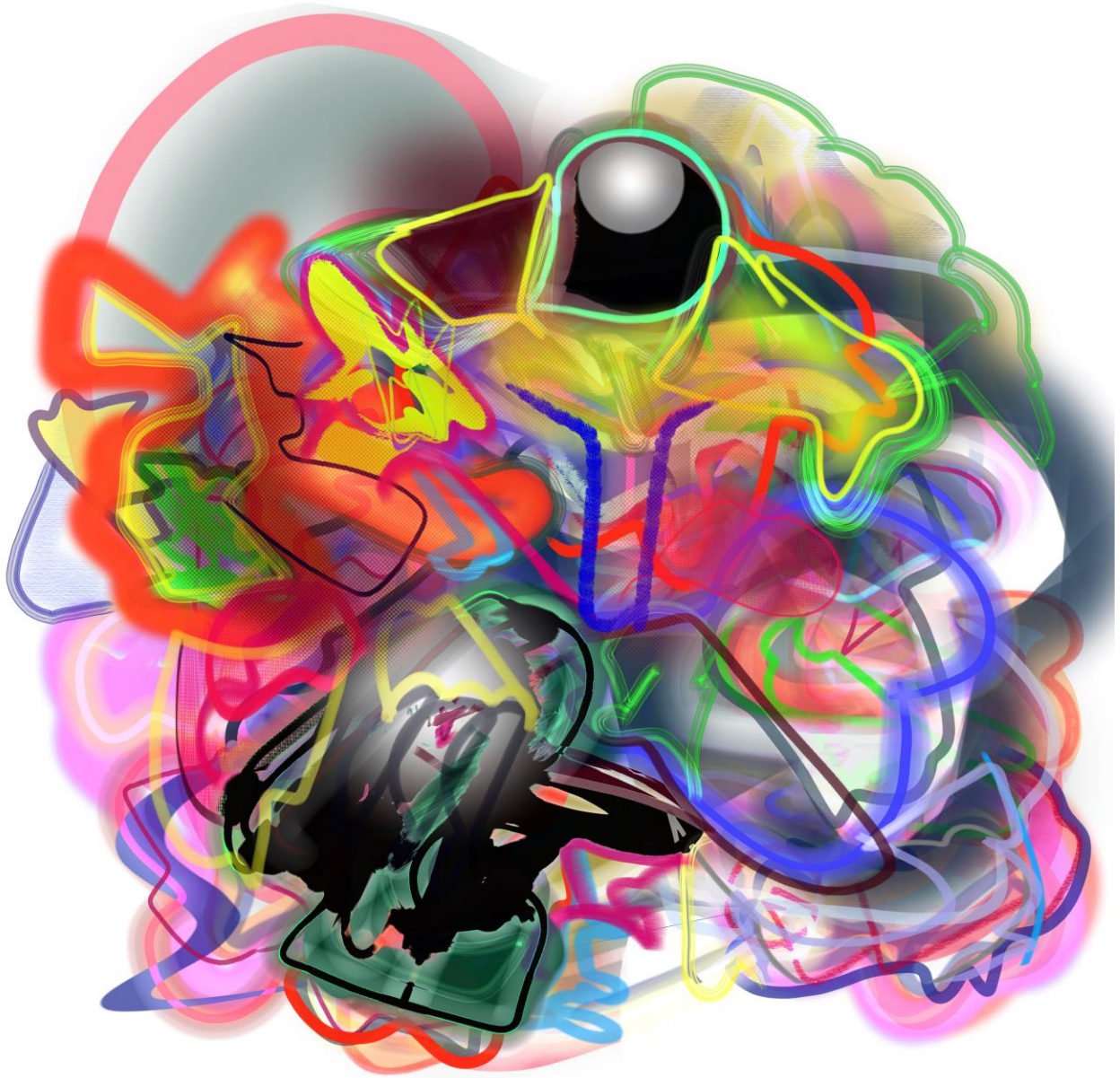


chimera caught in the ether



Suzanne Bybee

What are your favorite recent trends in Southern California Contemporary Art?

I am very curious about the trend in ceramics happening in SoCal – the color and textures have been very interesting, cartoony, gritty and full; also SoCal printmaking

How does being a Southern California artist define you and your work?

I would broaden it to West Coast – colors, landscape and culture - I take it wherever I may be. A state of mind

Who is your favorite Southern California Artist of all time and why?

John Altoon, kinship to his line and color

What inspires you artistically? (Other artists, poetry literature, places, feelings etc.)

History, research, preservation, urban topics, writings of Vilém Flusser, telematics, aesthetics, decoration, design, collaboration, conversation

Have you always worked in your medium, if not briefly explain your artistic journey?

I have always been someone who draws: I copied images first, wanted to be an animator, painted in oils and made my way back to drawing by way of painting

Please briefly explain your process?

Drawing as painting. Questioning insularity

What do you think the role of the artist is in our modern world?

To steady the course of innovation and creativity





Comments:

Drawing is at the center of what I do. Swirling around this are many 'loves' I keep close - they enliven and accentuate the lines, actions and colors I choose when creating. The pieces are conversations; my aim is to listen and be a part of the dialogue developing, learning from the visual information generated. I engage in tangible and intangible line-work.

So as a painter who draws, my influencers include Odilon Redon, many of the Italian Futurists (more specifically Giacomo Balla), Emily Carr and John Altoon. Other prominent painters and cartoonists who have impacted my art making are Agnolo di Cosimo (known as Bronzino), Doménikos Theotokópoulos (known as El Greco), Joseph Ward Cohen Jr. (known as Jay Ward), and Isadore "Friz" Freleng. So many of these styles, patterns and lines percolate in my repertoire.

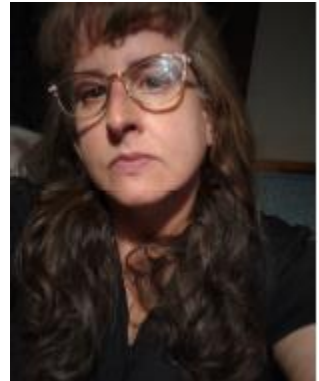
Many of the influences I have encountered over time have remained. The variety of points coming from different locations is intoxicating: visual art, aesthetics, design, writing, theatre, graffiti, craft, music and so on. A lot spills in and I try things on and respond in kind, darting in and out of different realms, moments and memories.

I started as a copier of figurative images, graduated to being a painter (primarily in oils) focused on narrative rendering, and ended up pushing into abstraction experimenting with cartoony contraptions and calligraphic text. To an extent I am still this painter.

I feel as though some of my earlier paintings and drawings anticipated the digital images I create; when I began creating digital work I had a lot of questions about its validity alongside my analog art making. Vilém Flusser came up in my research and I have been reading and rereading his works ever since as a way to navigate image making in general. His writings loom large in my mind - specifically his book, *Into the Universe of Technical Images*:

And this improbable world of envisioning power surrounds the whirring particle universe like a skin, giving it a meaning. The power to envision is the power that sets out to make concrete sense of the abstract and absurd universe into which we are falling. - p. 37 *To Envision, Into the Universe of Technical Images*, Vilém Flusser, 1985

I continue to look for deeper info on what these things are, these chimera caught in the ether. My analog and digital artworks proceed as reciprocal investigations of image creation.



Images:

1. All Seer with Anvil
2. The Top of Stillness Part IV
3. (detail) Sincere Pumpjack (Abandoned Well) Part II, Untitled (Bowling Figure) Part I, One Punch (For You) Part III
4. Portrait of Suzanne Bybee

Images Courtesy of the Artist