

Mary O'Shaughnessy

Aurora Loop Gallery + Studio, Port Townsend, WA

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My artwork has to do with memories, and how they affect and infect our perceptions of each moment of our lives, both consciously and unconsciously. I work in collage techniques, layering memory images that are from diverse moments, but intersect in symbolic ways to create a deeper idea of how we merge our memories internally to create our own mythology. I use letterpress prints and mono printing to create depth in a two-dimensional form.



Portal To the Past has the layering of two iconic sites in Port Townsend: the old ferry dock, and the Point Wilson Lighthouse. These two images are set in a monoprint background that creates an ethereal atmosphere, taking each of the images out of their known context, and into one that is singular. This creates a dialogue with the viewers, asking them to create a new story about what they perceive.

Foggy Morning has a base layer that is a four color (CMYK) print of Admiralty Bay from the Schooner Adventuress, which peeks through the monoprint that I layered over it. This informed the image that I wanted to use as the final layer. That is an image of the

inlet by the Deception Pass State Park. It was a still and quiet morning, so different from the waters under the bridge, I needed to record the sense of quietude that came over me, and felt that this combination evoked that sense, both of that moment, and of the place that I now live.

Bio: I have always loved to create. With degrees in Set Design, Interior Design and Architecture, I was able to be gainfully employed and satisfy the need of the creative monkey on my back. After running a commercial gallery for over a decade, I went full tilt into my own art career, working mostly three dimensionally. I have explored many different mediums, usually what I am trying to say with my art informs what medium I will use.

After living in Chicago most of my life, my husband and I moved to Port Townsend, Washington in 2014. This area has informed and altered my art. The long view over the water, the mountains' ever changing images and the textures of the forests all have made me move away from the industrial city life, and embrace the natural.

2020 brought a change to the world, and each of us had to learn how we were going to deal with it. I started to take early morning, long distance walks with our dog, Max, exploring the town we'd moved to in 2014. I took photos of scenes and vignettes that grabbed my eye, and I'd post them on Facebook with a haiku-ish poem. People began to look forward to what I posted, and I sought out details that get lost on a normal walk. I delved deeper into how the quarantine affected our town, trying to show the solitude that I felt as I walked, in the photos that I shot.



From this exercise, my series, One Hundred Days of Solitude, came to fruition. Stark, black, photopolymer letterpress images of iconic scenes, devoid of people,

pared down to an essence of simplicity. The creation of these helped coalesce my feelings about the pandemic, and that beauty can emerge from the depths. I like to work in series, to create a narrative that has chapters. In the Time Portal series, I did monoprints over some of the letterpress prints, allowing the under image to peek through, creating depth. I then printed an image over the monoprint, and a final image of the “time portal” (old ferry dock) over those.



Worked them all with colored pencils and pan pastels, adding details. These are a 180 degrees reaction to the last series, using many of the same images, adding layers of complexity and color, just as we are also attempting to do after a year or more of solitariness. Life is messy, which makes it rich, and looking back at memories, they mutate as time passes, this is what I was thinking as I worked on these.

As I move into my new studio, I look forward to expanding this dialogue into larger works, seeing how far I can push an idea, and the technology that I will be working in, letterpress printing, papermaking, and some cast glass. I look forward to the journey.

Education:

M.Arch. University of Illinois at Chicago, 1991
B.A. Barat College, 1974

Recent Exhibitions:

2021-24 Washington State Artist Roster
2023 A Sense of Place, Two Person Show, Aurora Loop Gallery
2021 Group Show, Printmaker’s Hand, Jeanette Best Gallery
2021 Solo Show, Virginia Inn, Seattle
2021 Lost Words, Group Show, Grover Gallery
2020 A Hundred Days of Solitude, Solo Show, Grover Gallery
2017 Art Port Townsend, Group Show, Northwind Arts Center
2017, Fiber Fusion, SDA of Washington Traveling Show
2013 Chicago State University, Two Person Show
2012 University of Dallas, Two Person Show
2012 Contemplum, Evanston Art Center, Curator

2009 Jane Sauer Gallery, Santa Fe NM, One Person Show