

STATEMENT

I tend to always come back to the line work. I find what I respond to and admire in other artists' work, past or present, is usually the integrity of the line – whether it's a single stroke or a mass of scribble in the shadows. If the strokes are put down with validity and assurance they will resonate and the piece will vibrate. False or uneasy notes stand out and unsettle and even demoralize. A fluidity of movement and gesture coupled with a confident, rhythmic ease of delivery is what is consciously and unconsciously felt and appreciated by the viewer. At least that is how I respond to a work.

For me the scale of larger drawings compels a distinct approach—more gestural, almost calligraphic. The act of drawing itself is highly sensual and pleasurable to me. I hurriedly scribble with a writer's hand in a spontaneously invented language with looping cursive gestures, larger flourishes, and tight punctuations. If the rhythm is there I write my way across the surface as if I were capturing thought in a frenzied rush of note taking.

Because of my photography background and countless hours spent trying to secure a rich array of grays and blacks in the prints, creating a full range of tones in the drawings is important. But for these larger pieces it has been crucial for me to create the tonal range by line alone – without smudging and rubbing the charcoal in any way. Maintaining the crispness of the line work is the goal—not unlike that of an etching, engraving or woodcut—with rich blacks being crucial to the conveyance of shape but also to the sense of bulk and weight.

I have chosen subjects with a great variety of textural surfaces: the idea being to draw these pieces life size, with an archivist's fidelity to scale. In a sense, the process is not unlike scanning the surface of a highly varied landscape from high up—mapping the transitions from rough areas of exuberant detail to the occasional quiet patches. When I first decided to do this series, brought on by the felling of a large old oak in a neighbor's field during a storm, the textures of the bark and decay were what initially caught my eye. Added to that was the sense of massive weight and the anthropomorphic elements in the curvature of the trunk and the large "eye" in the middle. It seemed to resemble a large dying beast, a beached whale for instance, looking out from the finale of a grand and quickly waning life. The vast wealth of mythology, symbolism, and iconography surrounding our historical relationship with trees can't help but inform such encounters.

The surface and scale exploration of the Tree led to the Rhino, with its similar beseeching eye and intricately distinctive, textured hide. Both stare out at us from murky but resonant realms. In the Elephant feet (Umbrella Stands) drawings, with their distinct references to clear cutting and taxidermy, the series headed further toward an ecological and moral imperative and a larger discourse has begun to inform my process. Further works now in progress have a clear connection with the first Oak drawing while enlarging the discussion around environmental confrontation and exploitation. What appears at first glance to be a rather straightforward process of archival documentation expands, perhaps unavoidably and inevitably, to embrace such diverse themes of deforestation, strip mining, species annihilation, overpopulation and pollution and the vast array of environmental challenges facing us. For me these life size records of a specific moment also speak of transience and our responsibility or culpability in that impermanence.