



Maura Doern Danko

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Newsletter #2

Midwinter 2021



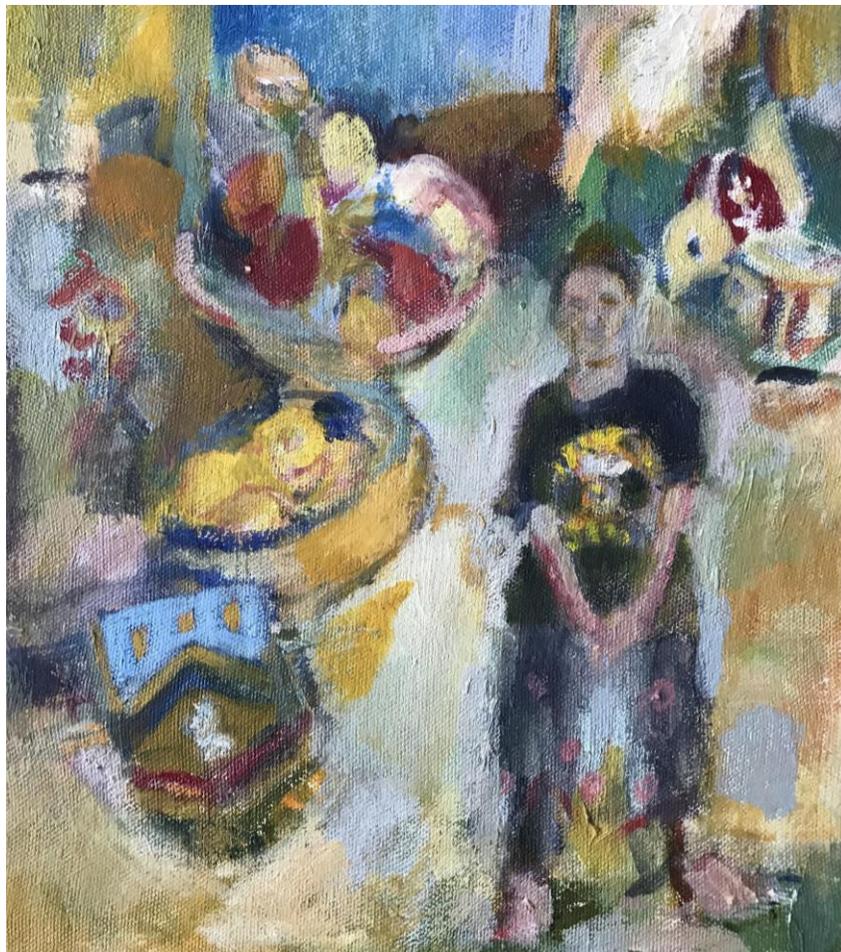
Winter Landscape, 2020 (detail)

While recent days have brought a slightly lighter sensibility, there is still much uncertainty. Shadows still lurk. And my focusing on issues of Painting and Drawing may at some level seem tone deaf, there is so much about it that connects.

The past semesters I have heard myself say to students repeatedly that Drawing is about challenging assumptions. It is more than a metaphor. It is the practice of training for asking questions. As one moves the tool along the surface, in tune with the eye and what it observes, one must always ask about a certain authenticity. Is it real, is it here? How far do you go? (There is always more to see). In Drawing there is a constant state of friction between certainty and uncertainty.

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In the realm of making paintings: I had been combining invented forms with those that I observe. Things not in scale and appearing with a certain randomness reflect the approach in how subjects were gotten – found by some intuitive happenstance. And my charge was to create some overarching unity. Or to make disunity look appealing.

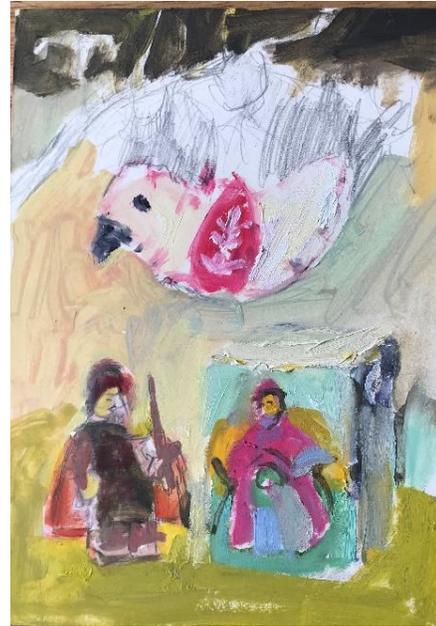


Girl in Steeler Shirt, 2020

Shifts have taken place. My supports became small pieces of illustration board. And in oil I am looking at what is strewn along my tabletop. Working from what is in front of me, still struggling to create unity. (Or coherence). Smitten with gobs of detritus along my tabletop, I slather the paint. Jeweled brooches from the vintage shop, leftover Christmas forms, Molly's *Lord of the Rings* Legos that somehow made their way into the kitchen. These are all fair game. Also objects I find in the street: memorabilia of all sorts. Ephemera. Totems. "Windows into deep time and dream time." [see w.j.t. mitchell's *romanticism and the life of things/ what do pictures want?*]



Gandalf, Scarab



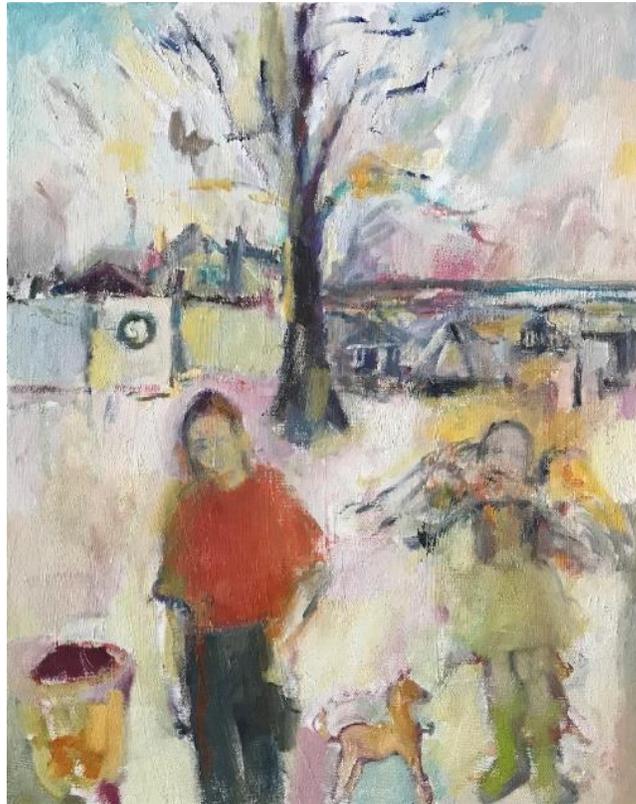
Aragorn and Christmas Angel

In making paintings, and in life, I see these two approaches. Outward intentionality, clarity of purpose at one end. Giving shape to something by willfully coordinating it into existence. And at the other end, a more intuitive approach - an appetite for that is which is more receptive in nature, as if you are welcoming something already there by finding it. Active in noticing, seeing.

The latter seems to need a certain waiting. And the former has the sense of certainty that can be misleading. There we are back to challenging assumptions.

And really, all I am doing is trying to keep after the thing as it presents itself, as I become aware. And the daily practice of making marks allows for the edges to remain fluid.

So we keep on in this socially-distanced, politically fraught landscape. Finding the thing upon which to build. There is a new chapter in the making.



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Thanks for expressing interest in this newsletter. The intention is to make it seasonal, and work on refinements. Be in touch. Stay safe.



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