

To see a shooting star you need really to be alone, with and in the universe; but having seen it, you long to ask, "Did you see that?" Painting is my way of saying "Did you see that?"

My earliest memories are of gardens and the beach, soil and sand. So though I work in a number of media and genres, landscape is always at the heart of the work.

Recent landscapes explore not just the natural world, but its complicated intersections with the human. "The Sad Villa" series deals also with the role of memory and imagination. The place was real: the grounds of an abandoned Tuscan villa, uphill from the house where my family lived in 1972. Fueled by an early diet of English children's literature, my siblings and I trespassed regularly in what could only be described as our own *Secret Garden*. Undeterred by locks we climbed over walls, struck poses in crumbling niches, and fished in decaying pools. Forty years later, I fish for memories and many of the details get away from me. But those I catch make for a new reality with its own truths.

One of these truths has to do with the nature of time and of trauma and how those two elements both batter and burnish us. A recent series of narrative panels, especially the diptych *For all the Sameks*, (an homage to the painter Samuel Bak) asks the viewer to acknowledge our scars and even see the beauty in them. Other still lifes from that series are dark, but offer hope. I show survival as well as our damage. They are typical of my still lifes in that I use tricks of scale and setting to introduce an ambiguity which renders the subjects both familiar and alien. And I set them up as though they were landscapes: islands set in the context of a contrived continent. Islands represent an opposition of sorts: on approach, remote, solitary, unattainable; once on them, knowable and intimate. Both solitary and shared.