

Janis Anton
bio

From Memphis to Oakland.
Two decades following where the paint takes me.

I come from a family of women who practice every kind of handwork from Swedish Embroidery to woodworking. The desire *to make* came with the air I breathed.

My first real enchantment was in a small pottery studio in Eads Tennessee. As I struggled to center a piece of clay, my teacher asked “Do you know why we center clay?” Before I could say through gritted teeth “to make a bowl”, she smiled “We center the clay to center ourselves”. I breathed in; I was in love with spinning clay; with fire in a raku kiln. I felt the fire in the belly that compels me to make art.

I also wanted a narrative in what I made, a desire for story telling. I had an idea that women’s stories need to be told and heard. I was lucky enough to receive a grant I used to create a performance piece, “Around the Kitchen Table”, It featured a series of women’s stories brought to life by dancers, actors, musicians. I found a community of women artists in Memphis who actually made it happen.

When I came to Oakland I was gifted an art education. At CCA I breathed deeply and learned to paint, make prints, to understand art history, to see and to draw. Amid this wellspring of imagery and critique, I found *the conversation*; the connection to the viewer. I stretched to make visual art that invited investigation (when the work is good that connection happens).

I have joyfully spent the last 20 years deepening my art practice, always mindful of why I am making the work and what it says.