

## Artist's Statement / Jo Ford

Geographical places are unwilling witnesses to the events that take place on their soil, and my response when visiting certain areas in California, where I live and work, is often an overload of conflicting emotions. Sometimes I break down in sorrow, other times I run or skip for joy, but I always sketch or photograph the area and then store that particular location as the beginning of a future art work. Once I start painting, the place transforms into more of a personality; thus, place becomes the first, if not the primary character, even though it is a "background" in all my paintings.

Growing up in the Bay Area I feel privileged to be surrounded by beauty, but I am aware of the many historical events that have occurred, and that continue to have repercussions. I am simultaneously aware of the ahistorical events, such as the death/birth of a baby deer or a precariously placed tree surviving (or not) a fierce storm. Land itself is in constant flux and as I paint I am often reflecting that process by layering and adding, weeding out and re-seeding a variety of colors, ideas and textures that end up buried within the core of the painting.

Many of my human/animal characters are depicted memories of dolls or scrolls or sculptural works my family had when I was a child; other beings, I don't know where they come from; sometimes I start painting and think I am creating one kind of personage, and it ends up being a different creature all together; other times I draw somebody out and the paint allows me to keep it just as I planned it. History does play a big part in my painting and my re-imagining of the past is a juxtaposition of events, of memory with the future added, of sincere emotion with a calculation that for me humor often works better than praying.

I hope you enjoy my work.