

Eileen Starr Moderbacher
ARTIST'S STATEMENT / 2007 / urban landscapes

Though I paint landscapes, I am not a landscape painter. I use the outdoors mainly as a setting for urban and social issues. In this body of work, I have been preoccupied with placing images of industrial or domestic trash in the scenes to create a raucous disharmony with the surroundings. I choose provocative images that trigger an association in my mind or that combined with other ones form the basis for my narratives. They seem to exist in a dream state neither present nor past, neither truth nor fiction. The groups of people who have found their way into these scenes are perhaps bystanders to whatever event they are witnessing.

Since these narratives in reality have never actually occurred, they open up for me the possibility of painting them in a mixture of styles and techniques – line drawings or cartoons intermixed with realistically rendered objects, tightly rendered areas interspersed with smooth gradations of color. Often my work is a constant jarring pairing of visual contrasts – sharp and soft focus, three-dimensional areas and flat areas, textures surrounded by smoothness.

The juxtaposition of the content in these paintings can often be unsettling, as can the formal elements. In this way I hope to challenge myself and viewers to reconsider what aspects of life are real: the threats, the struggle, the private moments.