



michele sudduth paintings

The most consistent goal I've had as an artist is to make artwork that is difficult to focus on . . . never the end goal of course, it's more like a technique to hold onto as I explore the nature of viewpoint.

Shaking up viewpoint

My work has always been concerned with questions of viewpoint. I think of viewpoint as a template that gives form to our lives and shapes how we see things.



BLUE SHIFT 54 x 54 in. 2003

We don't just passively view the world; we actively create the world with every blink of the eye, using viewpoints built up over lifetimes.

In a world of infinite perspectives and viewpoints on any given subject, where often what we see right now was different just a moment ago and in the next moment will change yet again, how important is viewpoint?

Is it possible to create art that opens the viewpoint?

Developing a kaleidoscopic view

Visual information passes through us like quarks, infinitesimally small bits moving so fast that we are not consciously aware of the effect they have on us.

It's almost as if what we see isn't that important as long as something keeps coming at us, as long as the movement continues.

In this kaleidoscopic world of infinite ways of seeing, we're often forced up against opposing perspectives, making it tempting to solidify our views into defensible positions.

But, in reality, our perspective changes all the time, both figuratively and literally. I think this is our natural condition.



JELLY BEING 54 x 54 in. 2009

A less hierarchical perspective

I often merge, or conflate, figure and ground. It's easy to view our world with ourselves and our beliefs in the foreground and others relegated to background roles. But how do we live in a more flattened "picture plane," more as equals with each other and the rest of the world?

I think of these as paintings that you don't look at in the way we often look at things; that is, looking at, looking for, or looking into. The viewpoint I'm looking for is similar to what happens when I'm out in the natural world: My gaze opens and ranges widely, without necessarily focusing on specific items.

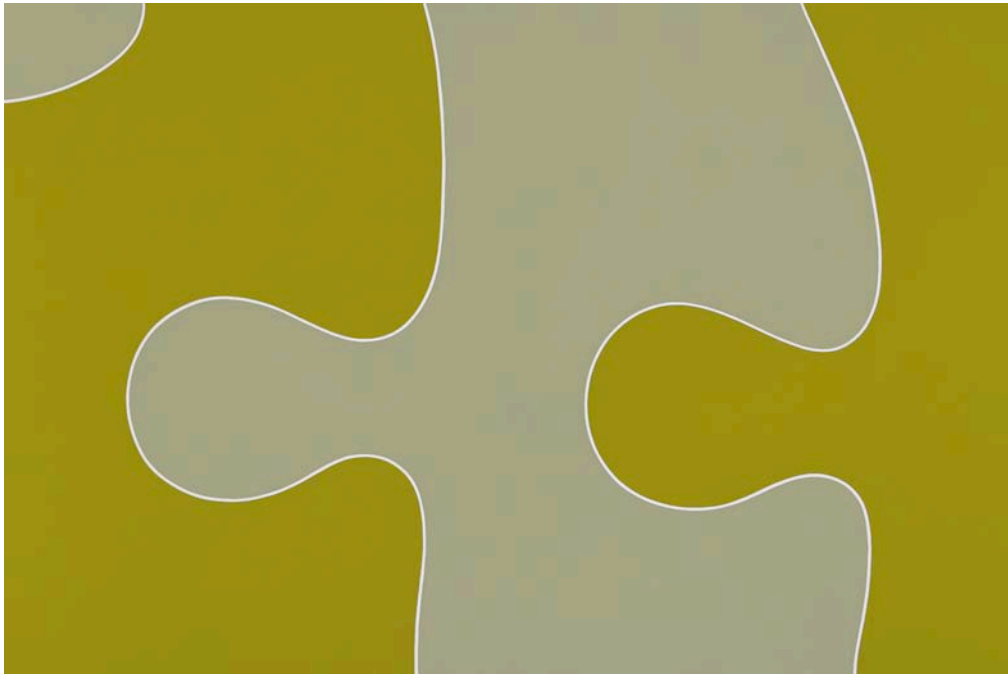


VELOCITY 56 x 82 in. 2010

Movement in stillness

Movement is important in my paintings, even when they appear to be still. The goal is an infinitely vibrating and alive response to what is right before us. In a binary world of Right vs. Wrong, Us vs. Them, it's not how we're used to seeing.

It's a challenge to stay wide open in a world of constant change and contradiction, with a willingness to accept ambiguity. If we could begin to see this way, what might it look like?



STRING ALONG 56 x 82 in. 2009

Medium and technique

I work within the boundaries of acrylic paint on canvas because it's direct and environmentally friendly. I wrap the painting around the edge of the stretcher bars so the image becomes more a part of the physical structure of the painting.

The color is flat, without reflection, built up in thin layers of paint of different tonalities to create luminosity and vibration. Sometimes I use white space like air to breathe in possibility and openness.



BLUE MOON (Side View) 24 x 24 in. 2009

In several recent paintings, I use the same form over and over, changing only the color from painting to painting. Though the specific circumstances of our lives are ever changing, the underlying patterns often remain the same.

What's not in my paintings is as important as what is. What I don't know informs my life as much as what I do know.



BOLDER 66 x 66 in. 2008

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Cover: *CHECKER* 24 x 24 in. 2009