

artist wendy coad

Wendy Coad: People always ask where the inspiration for my paintings comes from...

For the past 30 years I've been fascinated by figurative paintings. My early art history classes required viewing the faded slides of art history labs where images clicked on the screen and the size, scale, color and details were profoundly altered from the originals which were housed in museums and galleries, not yet accessible to me. In fact, as I remember seeing the originals for the first time, the grand masterworks of Titian, Renoir, Goya, el Greco and countless others – they seemed to be the copies – the colors too bright and the surfaces too smooth from my beloved first impressions.

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As long as I can remember, I wanted to make these pastel and faded images my own. I wanted to be able to "step inside" their soft, amber colored worlds or have unlimited entry into their site locations. My intent was to share my vision, through this vista, with others who might neither have access to the originals nor interest in the ("original") warm faded copies. In my early work the figures were large and isolated and haunting. But they were solidly present and stood their ground as if anchored in each frame, as monoliths extolling their presence. The figures, I brought in from the

outside and placed firmly inside the frame allowed me to see through their eyes, eyes that could act as permanent intermediaries for mine.

All the time I realized that I was not only positioning the figures I painted, I was also positioning the viewer. Together we were placed amongst the statues and museum worthy icons of cultures and heritages that were mine – and not theirs or theirs and not mine. We could share a common disconnect with the grandeur and intimidation of the location – a location that I could finally own by painting it for myself.

Marriages of arrangement

Now, I spend my days in the worlds of both ancient and contemporary images, bringing

them together with the same breath, the same affection and the same respect. There is no longer such a need, but rather a love for these "marriages of arrangement".

And in opening my world to the viewer for these moments we share an interruption and integration of the common and the sublime, where time and space stop and shift. Here, punks with body art and classical icons of Western civilization stand on the same ground, hand in hand together, as does the viewer and the artist Wendy Coad. ■

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