

Jen Corace : Artist Statement

My work is based in nonlinear narrative. As a children's book illustrator I follow a manuscript and a determined flow of words. In my own paintings I am free to tell a story through images without regard to chronology.

For the last few years my work has been exploring one's place in community -- uncovering your own place, finding your way, and connecting to others. My last two shows, *Within* and *Without*, investigated those ideas with respect to nature. The pieces in *Within* were indoors, revealing a landscape of order, décor and design with varying degrees of pattern and control. *Without* left the built environment for the outdoors – examining living within and alongside nature, plants, woods, and the unknown.

The work in *Ruins* is still about making community, but also examines the importance of solitude and the difference between solitude and isolation. I am also thinking about the trappings of material culture as identity, and that our belongings often keep us from living simpler, more meaningful, and less harmful lives.

How can we let go of the things that no longer work for us and never did? How can we recognize systems that do?

The larger context for community and nature – the direction of our planet is taking – is intertwined in these images as well. I live with anxiety that any change we make is unlikely to prevent the death of the planet. Our human efforts at repair come in small increments and nature just isn't going to wait.

There is an odd peace in knowing that nature will prevail. It doesn't mean I give up on living more sustainably or deliberately, but there is a rhythm in reaping what we sow. And that rhythm has a certain beauty.

Bio

born in New Jersey, happiest being left alone in my room to draw, graduated with a BFA in Illustration from RISD in 1996, traveled a chunk, worked a lot of day jobs, quit them, became serious about illustration at 27, worked on some gallery shows (Portland OR, Seattle WA, New York NY, Tokyo Japan, Philadelphia PA, Los Angeles CA, Providence RI), worked on some children's books (*Little Pea*, *Mathilda the Orange Balloon*, *Sweet Dreams*, *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, *Telephone ...*), dabbled in other illustration projects (*Crate and Barrel*, *Real Simple*, *Polygon*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, *Shambhala Publications*, *Tin House*), learned about boundaries around the mid thirties (that was a REAL moment, everyone), lives and works in Providence RI, loves her house, loves her dog, loves her friends, loves her family, loves breakfast, loves breakfast for dinner more, loves biking, loves walking more, currently fully realizing and embracing that NJ kid who is most content* in a room, at a desk making sense of lines and shapes and colors.

*my version of 'content' involves a certain degree of consternation