



MONA RAY | Artist Statement

The work in my series *Close to Home* draws from landscapes of the many places I call home— my childhood spent on the windswept prairies of Wyoming, my last two decades in San Diego, walking along its trails and coastal waterways, and my daily time working in the studio, with its view of stately trees and the sweeping edge of a distant mesa.

My journey into a painting begins with brushes, palette knives, and plenty of paint, often initially with charcoal or ink, then acrylic, sometimes collage. My approach is intuitive and spontaneous.

I build up colors and textures in the work, drawing into paint and scraping through with various tools. After the first several layers are dry, I may return to the piece with oil paint or oil bars, at each stage considering if the conversation in the piece is coming to a close or if there is more yet to say.

Throughout this process, the painting ebbs and flows between chaos and clarity, destruction and creation, until the dialogue slows and the painting begins to say something that feels true. The piece opens up at this point and becomes three things at once: a landscape, a tangible record of my thoughts and struggles as I created it, and something larger, something I cannot entirely claim as my own— an unlikely collection of colors and marks that comes together to make a whole greater than the sum of its parts.