



CAROL COATES | Artist Statement

I've created three major bodies of work over time, including:

The Contact Series - about moment-to-moment choices made in relationships, based on the dance practice called Contact Improvisation.

The MarkMaking Series - based on shoe prints in the sand and my thoughts about each step that we take and the marks that we make.

The Dissonance Series - based on thoughts about how we see and respond to our surrounding circumstance. This series led to the (subset) MindsEye Series, which questions not only how we see the world, but also how we see others.

Each series is a result of experimenting with combined image elements. I never know where the creative path will lead, but my intention is to find meaning that centers on our perception of reality and on the wisdom of our choices in response. How we see/interpret reality is key to how we respond to it.

The MindsEye Series explores the differing lenses which can influence perceptions. I hope that the questions raised by the work will lead to greater insight, consciousness, and wisdom.

I had always been told that I was 'too sensitive'. That sensitivity became my strength in creating humanistic objects and images.

I saw as a child, that there was little tolerance, understanding, or respect for others who were different. "Those Catholics, those Jews, those Poles, those Dutch, those Niggers, those Rich people..." were words that I heard often. Since, I've observed so many people being prejudged by the way they wear their hair, by the way they dress, their weight, etc. I've caught myself prejudging others, and I've seen our human tendencies to protect ourselves by diminishing those who are somehow different and therefore, a threat.

All of my work begins with photo sketches and evolves into either pure or mixed media paintings. The MindsEye Series includes both oil paintings on canvas and mixed media work on board.

This work began with my welded/fabricated sculptures of eyewear; created out of scrap metal parts in a lost moment. I had often thought about how what we see is influenced by the lenses of our belief and experience, and the framework of our expectations. I decided to photograph them and incorporate them in the MindsEye portraits.

The subjects of these paintings include people of different ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, races, personalities, and cultures.

I create eyewear and fashion elements for each, with humor and an understanding about what might have been expected. I hope that the viewer will become aware of their 'lenses' and perceptual bias, and, in turn, have a compassionate laugh along with their insight.