

## **Liberty Blake 2024**

### **Bio/Statement**

Liberty Blake is an English born artist, currently living in the United States. An abstract collage artist, her work explores themes of the natural world and the human condition. With a focus on landscape; inspired by both the wild natural places of Utah and Northern California—that she explores on her bike— and the mythological places of the mind. The inspiration for these pieces can come from a momentary passing view, or a place that she knows very well. She works from memory, fusing the visual stimulus with her emotional response to it, which creates an abstracted interpretation of her experience. She explains, “abstraction is like a private language, a way to talk about a personal experience with a place, or about ideas or emotions that might be difficult to express in a conventional way.” She says she “makes art to document her experience and to capture moments, in the same way people keep a written journal.”

Liberty’s collage “integrates a sophisticated sense of composition and design with an evolved restraint,” she is interested in color relationships, relative scale, and the challenge of describing natural environments with intentionally undisguised and simple shapes of paper. The placement and shape of each piece in relation to another is precise and specific. Often purposefully awkward and uncomfortable, precariously balanced or wedged together to give the impression that they are holding each other up, creating both tension and balance.

Some of her recent body’s of work, ‘self portraits’ and ‘mythological landscapes’ have come about in response to the isolation of the pandemic lockdowns. Less opportunity for actual exploration has redirected her attention on an inward journey of self reflection, an inquiry into emotional growth and personal responsibility. She is also working on an ongoing series of landscapes documenting the impact of wildfires, their increasing severity, and growing threat.

She has shown extensively in Utah, in group and solo shows, she is currently represented by The Phillips Gallery in Salt Lake City. Her work is housed in private collections across the United States, Europe, and Canada.

### **Ongoing bodies of work:**

‘Landscapes’ - Most of my work fits into the category of landscape, including the most recent ‘Wildfire Series’. This work stems from wildfires in California, some of which threatened my partner’s childhood

home. As a child, I had a rather irrational but severe fire phobia, and every night, before I could go to sleep, I planned my escape from the house. As the fires in California and the rest of the world grow more threatening every year—spurred on by logging practice and the climate crisis—I have felt my anxiety resurfacing. The 'Wildfire Series' is an exploration of that. Each collage is based on a specific fire that has impacted either a person or place of personal significance.

'Tideline Series' - The 'Tideline Series' explores borderlands and convergence: The transitional areas where cities meet wilderness; waters meet land; one person or culture blends with another; where consciousness touches unconsciousness and where ideas meet and merge.

'Hilltop Garden Series' - This most recent series, uses the idea of a 'hilltop' garden to symbolize a place for healing, contemplation and solace, to escape from the anxieties of everyday life. I imagine these gardens at the top of mountains, on rooftops and hidden away in places that are hard to reach. The quest to find them is part of the narrative, an imagined physical challenge that helps in the healing process.

'Basement Series' - Explores urbanization and the man-made strata of human impact. Having grown up in England where human history is always evident, I developed an intense curiosity for what lay beneath any surface. Each generational contribution hidden under the one that follows, to be occasionally exposed and rediscovered as an artifact. This series honors things we leave behind, the remnants of life unearthed.

'Self Portrait's' - These abstracted self portraits are created to document particular situations or ideas associated with intense emotions that require an outlet. Like a journal or diary they describe an experience, memories or feelings, but in a visual form. This series was started back in 2015, with the collage 'Self Portrait on a Red Background - After H.M.'

'Radiant Crown' Series - Collaged heads, adorned with elaborate crowns and made with vintage papers, have been created as I ponder human connection, and communication, neural synchrony, body language, empathy, telepathy and duality.