

DEAR FLORENCE,

You requested a more personal description of my work. It is always difficult for me to condense all the elements, feelings and motivations into words. Eventually I feel overwhelmed by the complexity of it all, and frustrated by the limitations of not being able to express fully everything. So please accept this overview of the work - I look forward to talking with you in person in October.

One of the most important aspects of the work is that it is nonfictional. I only paint actual experiences, not fantasies. Within that I elaborate and alter things in the environment, but the activities and the rooms and objects in the interiors are "factual". So in this way I view the paintings as documentary, as a way for me to memorialize events and relationships. The male sex scenes began when a close friend of mine started to go to underground piss parties and became increasingly involved with S/M sex. I had always been fascinated by his anonymous encounters with men. I envied the nonverbal quality and the absolute sexual abandon of his experiences. AIDS confused all this - and I began to wonder about this decision to pursue this despite the consequences. I understood his desire to "connect" through sex regardless of the cost. I viewed this paintings as religious, although I still can't explain this. As I continued to paint I slowly realized that I was identifying, uncomfortably so, with the masochist in the compositions. I switched reluctantly to images of myself when I feel deeply in love with a woman and felt compelled to paint her after our relationship ended. These autobiographical paintings all involve dildoes. Right now, I'm working on a round painting in which I'm fucking myself with one dildo while sucking on a double-headed dildo. The feeling I want to express is of a huge emptiness and isolation. I haven't figured out why dildoes are the central "props" in those paintings. I think it has to do with this false tool - that the mind wants to make real. Using a fake device to try to communicate with a lover or comfort oneself - so in a way this communication or connection is ultimately doomed. The body fragments are selfportraits which I began when I first painted the scenes. In this way I felt it was like a conversation between the intimacy of the details and the voyeuristic, removed quality of the scenes. I feel that both bodies of work concern the same issues - the body fragments address mortality and vulnerability more directly. I chose parts of the body that seemed particularly fragile. The parts are either cut or in a state of exposure to describe the perils of love and simultaneously, the compulsion to love.

You asked about the quantity of the work - why there are so few. The process of painting is very time consuming because I apply the paint in thin layers of oil paint - mostly medium, not very much pigment at one time. I feel this gives the paint an enameled quality that I like.

The building of the substance of the paint has become increasingly important to me. Also the interiors have become more heavily patterned and complex. Most importantly, because the paintings are from real experiences life regulates the process. I need to feel really moved by something and also feel that the experience has a broader symbolic significance that will translate as an image.

In mid-September an interview in the magazine *Arude* will be coming out - which I'll send to you if you would like.

Thank you for sending the articles about your gallery, I enjoyed reading them.

Sincerely, Monica.