

Dora Atwater Millikin  
Artist Statement for  
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My work is about paint. It is about composition and it is about my struggle with color. I don't ever want my viewer to believe that my paintings are recorded statements on what I think I see. Rather, I want my audience to be aware of how I have interpreted what I see and how I feel about my subject matter and how it can be transformed through paint. Being a hands-on person, I find the activity of painting so complex that I can rarely think my way through the process, instead, I need to feel my way through.

I enjoy rendering potentially unpicturesque motifs and everyday objects and scenes in my life. I wish to present my world as it looks today without the nostalgia and sentimentality attached to past times. In essence, my paintings are created out of my personal experiences in and observations of life as I know it and through using flat patterns and contrasting solid planes of color, I am always searching for ways to deliver the unexpected to my viewer. I have been working on a technique that makes the viewer question: Which is more important the object or the environment in which it sits?

In terms of subject matter, these thirty paintings were created through the underlying tradition of Modernism and its principles of painting the world exactly as it is seen while being painted. Ordinary, mundane objects are featured, not omitted, and the works are meant to engage scenes of contemporary life that transcends the everyday.

My urban subjects depict objects associated with a more leisurely life and are in direct contrast to nature. Their titles such as "No Parking" or "Parking this side only" allude to the complicated network of rules and privileges instated to maintain order in an overly congested world.

As site specific as the places in these images may be, hopefully, anyone can relate to the universal nature of their activity. What is my message? My message is to find the rhythm and beauty in the world around me and to give an interpretation of life in my time as seen through my eyes.