





TOUCHSTONEGALLERY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 4 - 29, 2020

Transitional Spaces by Dana Brotman

Opening Reception: Friday, March 13, 6 - 8:30pm

Psychoanalyzing Creativity: Transitional Spaces. An interview with painter and psychologist Dana Brotman: Saturday, March 21, 1pm

Interviewer: Michael Krass, psychoanalyst

"It is in the space between inner and outer world, which is also the space between people -- the transitional space -- that intimate relationships and creativity occur."
D.W. Winnicott, 1951

In this series of paintings for Transitional Spaces, Brotman explores the liminal space between what is here and what is gone, what is remembered and what is only dreamed, what is real and what is imagined, what is desired and simply and, at times, regrettably, what one does and does not have.

Brotman's paintings for the exhibit continue her fascination with the face. Her portraits are sometimes of people she knows well, people she has seen in passing, or people who she has seen only in her mind. She combines traditional, at times even formal, qualities of portraiture with the use of the face as a medium for conveying the experience of deep reverie, the experience of being both in the now and in the then, of both memory and remembering.

Brotman's exhibit will be shown alongside that of her close friend, painter Steve Alderton. Tragically, Alderton died quite suddenly this past summer at the age of 67 while preparing for his show. In thinking about whether it was even possible to show her work with a friend and fellow artist who is no longer present, Brotman delved into the places between the two of them, into the places where, through countless conversations about their art, their minds met, melded and came away with a renewed creative vision. She had to find a way to paint alongside someone who was both *not there* and *there* at the same time. As a result, many of the works she has painted for the exhibit seek to remember him to the exhibit's viewers.






One way she brings memory of Alderton into her work is to use tubes of paint she found in his studio while cleaning it up after he died. These paints are in an entirely different palette than that which she has previously used: his bold pastels in contrast to her tendency toward primary colors, as well as deep, somber purples and olives. This difference is most evident in *Renata* (a name which, Brotman learned after naming the painting, means "rebirth"). This portrait of a young woman is done in a style typical of Brotman: stately yet off-kilter, the woman staring both beyond the viewer and into her own mind, both antique and modernist, set as it is in a frame painted into the composition that is both baroquely ornate and fluid like melted wax. Yet the colors are distinctly Alderton: an Easter egg lavender matte, bubble gum pink frock and improbably turquoise hair. Even the black background on which the frame sits intermingles with flecks of purple.



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The idea of creating transitional spaces started for Brotman while Alderton was alive. She had developed a practice of painting her own compositions over paintings he had discarded and given to her for that purpose. The paintings she laid atop his had no direct relation to the ones beneath. Yet the influence of his work could not be refuted: it acted unconsciously on her process, guiding her, emboldening her and urging her on. In addition, she purposely allowed some of his paint to peek through her own compositions and, in this way, incorporated the materiality of his work into hers.

In *Jacqueline*, a portrait of an adolescent girl, she captures the subject's personality and state of mind while exploring space, color and emotional tone. Again she uses Alderton's paints: magenta for the background, lilac for the dress, a pale pink for the flesh and a cerulean blue for the girl's hair, darkening these hues by applying them over a base of black, thereby creating a mood of solemnity, pensiveness and stillness. She used no brushes, only a scouring pad, thus the paint is not smooth. Rather it is scratched across the surface.

Camille appears, at first glance, to be staring directly out at the viewer but, upon closer inspection, her eyes are ever-so-slightly askew, looking at a point somewhere either before or behind the viewer. What stands out most is her face, the color of what Brotman describes as a "blue raspberry Slurpee," which appears to blend into her squiggle-shaped pendant. All is mottled: her skin, her white blouse, the background evoking crushed red velvet in shadow. And to her right is a mysterious dark flower, out of scale and with no apparent context. Yet it frames her and offsets her radiance, the blue and white that nearly lifts off the canvas.

In *Transitional Spaces*, Brotman invites the viewer to take part in the act of grieving, a process of holding her lost friend in her mind in order to release him, and in seeking to transform the holes he left behind into spaces for remembering and creating.

Brotman has been a member of Touchstone Gallery for seven years. Her work has been shown in the DC and Baltimore metropolitan areas, was used as the centerpiece for a modern music performance by Fuse Ensemble at Atlas Performing Arts Center as well as for the cover of composer Gina Biver's first album, (*from where I sit*). In addition to her work as a painter and photographer, she practices clinical psychology in Falls Church, VA.

Images: Jacqueline, Renata, Camille

For information about Dana Brotman and other Touchstone artists, as well as about current and future exhibits, visit Touchstone Gallery

For information about psychoanalysis, training in psychoanalysis and continuing education programs for mental health clinicians, visit The Contemporary Freudian Society

For more information please contact Ksenia Grishkova, Director, at info@touchstonegallery.com or 202-347-2787.