

For decades I've used snapshots, prints, and found materials as grounds in my work. Sometimes I take my own photographs for a painting, usually when I see a pattern or texture I want to repeat. Recently, it was aerial views during a cross-country flight. But often it's that random element that gets me intrigued—the finding of an image. Sometimes these pictures get buried in the paint, but I'm always aware of them as they create a pulse that leads to the overarching composition. A lot of what happens then is the response between paint and pre-existing image. As the composition builds, the space tends to get distorted, the picture plane frequently in flux. The narrative often tends toward the collision and collusion between the natural world and human-made civilization: boardwalks sinking, seas rising, trees growing out of abandoned cars. In some pieces I've moved into outer space, with paintings about our junk floating around out there. Yet the work is generally a slow burn—you wouldn't look at a painting and say, That's a bunch of our junk floating out in space. You would see a lot of color and a lot of movement and then gradually notice astronauts in one corner and satellites and a space shuttle crossing the center. The composition as a whole overrules the individual elements.

The various mixed-media series explore hybrids of plant, animal, and human-derived imagery using photos and mixed media on both sides of vellum tracing paper, exploiting its transparent quality and the response of the crunchy paper to the mediums. The individual parts reassemble into a more fantastical form. Drawings may come before a related painting, or a painting may become a study for a drawing.

The "Books" series is intermittent, again reflecting my attraction to found materials, as well as thoughts about the book as record. It has become an on-and-off journal of time in the studio—the fired clay dates back to classes at a Philadelphia clay studio, some of the found wood dates from my early NYC days scrounging around the Lower East Side. The titles play with my affection for years of paperbacks I cannot part with.

"The Corpses," my ongoing collaborative-collage series with poet Ian Ganassi, who I met at the Millay Colony, is a convergence of text, drawing, painting, and found objects. We have been mailing the collages back and forth between NYC and New Haven, CT, since 2005, with more than 300 finished pieces and work-in-progress in transit.

Working in tandem with pre-existing images and found objects transforms the world into material, creating a continual call-and-response between that world and what happens in the studio. Always in view—no matter the media—is that click of significance: Richard Dreyfuss shaping mashed potatoes in *Close Encounters*, insisting, "This means something."