August 28, 2019

Damaged

The idea of HOME, and what that incorporates, is a very individual understanding. For me HOME signifies not only a place in its physicality, but even more so, a sense of belonging. The place of safety, not only in the concrete understanding. By looking at the world and trying to understand other people's insights and emotions regarding their perception of HOME, I've used the tactile and tangible things that people take with them, or in some cases, leave behind, to puzzle together an image or impression of who people are. I've always done this as a voyeur, not wanting to be influenced by convoluted compensatory explanations of meaning, especially when it has to do with memory.

I've always believed that through my images a key can be found by the viewer, allowing them into this old, present, or future world that is represented by these objects. It may not be my key, it may not be the right key, but it is never the wrong key if it awakens an idea, emotion, or memory. We all have "baggage" that we carry, some more effortlessly than others, that is due to be looked into.

Even though this notion is always in my mind, I turned my eye inwards for the very first time. I began this series of drawings without any preconceptions. After the death of my mother last year I discovered an old black & white photo amongst a pile of other pictures. I totally intuitively began to draw this portrait. In the process, and during its eventual repetition, it took on a somewhat cathartic sensibility, for me and for the drawings in themselves. The decision to stay away from color, my usual mainstay, became a clearer search for truth in the expression of the girl, and in that, her truth was able to come through more clearly to me.

The scratch on her face became a symbol of non-perfection, not just physically, but emotionally. The representation of that scratch is especially poignant, because it

occurred at a time when realization of place in the world, and a sense of security were important and could and were so easily stripped away. A scratch/cut heals but other wounds are buried, carried or maybe never recede, or disappear. I recently heard the journalist Anderson Cooper talk about his experience of losing his father and brother when he was a child, and that had wished that he had a large scar down the middle of his face, so that everyone would know right away that he had lived through something that was painful. That DAMAGED him. I look at this little girl autobiographically with personal anguish and hurt, but at the same time I look at her and see the faces of many little girls and boys, all over the world, who will carry the scars of experiences that cannot be easily shed or forgotten, but become part of the trajectory of their life, whether they have experienced displacement, due to war, famine, abuse, or politics or lived through emotional dysfunction. Could, would, things have been different if? is always a lingering question. Yes, No, or maybe. Would they have been better? difficult to say.

Life is all about confrontations and choices. We adapt in the best way we know how, sometimes we become all the stronger for it, and sometimes it leaves us with a piece of ourselves chipped away, and other times it guides us to somewhere new, and if we are lucky, we eventually find our way HOME , DAMAGED, but hopefully more outstanding because of it.

And lastly, a quote from the culture critic Lee Siegel:

"Genuine art makes you stake your credulity on the patently counterfeit. It takes you by surprise. And for art to take you by surprise, you have to put yourself in the power of another world- the work of art -and in the power of another person – the artist."

Amy Simon