

## Farrell Brickhouse- Narrative Statement 2013- 14

As a second year student at Queens College in New York City, I was awarded a summer scholarship to Boston University's Tangelwood program. A year later in the summer of 1971 I was awarded a scholarship to the Skowhegan School in Maine. It was the first supportive pluralistic creative community of artists I had shared in and was a formative experience. A friend I made that summer and I formed an apartment painting contracting crew and we supported ourselves in NYC that way for the next few years. What was it to move a red or blue on the canvas an inch or two when you were moving walls and painting ceilings high gloss pink. I then spent three years fishing in Montauk to take a break from life in Manhattan but continued my artistic efforts and worked on Robert Wilson productions and others at The Kitchen in winters when it was too rough to fish. This going to sea greatly influenced my work to this day. By 1978 I was having my first one-person exhibit with the Julian Pretto Gallery in what is now Tribeca, NYC. Julian provided a wonderful atmosphere in which to enter the art world. His building sized space attracted prominent artists and critics and I received my first review by John Russell in the New York Times and met many of my peers.

Julian closed in 1979 and I had my first one-person exhibit with Max Protetch in that same year. I continued to show with Max and was awarded both a CAPS grant and an Emerging Artists grant from the NEA in 1980 followed by a full NEA in 1983. In 1980 I was also invited to become an Instructor of Painting at the School of Visual Arts in NYC.

I was able to give my partners in the contracting business notice in 1979 but the success with Max Protetch created professional pressures to produce I found destructive. In 1984, after two successful one person shows with Max and numerous group shows, I decided to withdraw from the market place. After four years of working without the demand to finish things, and allowing my art to mature, I joined the Pamela Auchincloss Gallery of NYC in 1988. Over the next eight years I had four one-person exhibits there and established a creative pace that suited me. There were numerous reviews of my work, invitations to guest teach at universities and I became a full- fledged member of the artistic community. I was asked to write recommendations for fellow artists for grants, students sought me out to help them secure scholarships and I was able to help my peers in their careers. I guest taught at Ohio State University, Columbia, and the New York Studio School as well as other institutions.

The changing market and family caused Pamela Auchincloss to alter the nature of her operation in 1996 and I took that opportunity to once again withdraw from showing. My wife, documentary film- maker Beverly Peterson, and I became foster parents to children with Aids and we adopted an eight year old boy named Andre' in 1995. Working and living with HIV positive children under great stress brought a terrible beauty into our lives. It also of course informed my work.

With Andre' in our home I gravitated to an art more accessible to him and his friends and family that came to visit. Actual portraits emerged and we collaborated on several paintings. Andre' passed away in 1996. I had been

diagnosed with Hepatitis C in 1994 and found my productivity was falling and in 2000 I successfully completed the difficult treatment. A Pollock-Krasner grant was of great help. I was just returning to the studio again when the disaster of 9/11 struck. We were living one block north of the Trade Center and it was months before I could return to our home and studio. A Gottlieb award greatly helped in my recovery from the WTC disaster. My own life threatening disease and the WTC bombing changed my outlook on my career. I was now just looking to work and make a life for myself beyond showing and the art world.

My wife and I decided to leave lower Manhattan in 2004 and move to Staten Island. There was no longer any "there" there in Tribeca (Trisurbia) and life had become too expensive and our health was suffering from the proximity to the Trade Center site. Living downtown for nearly 30 years, I had evolved a vocabulary that included the architectural drama of that narrowed part of the Island between the Rivers. This vocabulary enabled me to bring the events that reshaped life in Tribeca into my work. My decision to abandon Tribeca, make the "Crossing" and adopt the surprising environment of Staten Island further informed and enriched my art. After one year on S.I. I was awarded a COAHSI Grant and found a lively supportive creative community here. I had two showings of my work in the Project Room at The Painting Center in 2005-06 that focused on that transition and a show here on S.I. at Wagner College as part of the COAHSI award program.

Several years ago I logged onto Facebook. Artists never seem to be able to hold onto their geographically based communities. Traditionally we move into undesirable neighborhoods, renovate dilapidated spaces and create neighborhoods that become in time the next "It" place. Since most of us are of modest economic means, we rarely are able to buy our homes and find ourselves facing ever- increasing rents as our landlords realize there are others now willing to pay considerably more for their once marginal real estate. We become dispersed. But now there is another community, within a much larger neighborhood, that we have created. What ever negatives we perceive that are visited upon us by a seemingly ever changing Facebook or that are inherent in a digital world, it is an amazing moment in history that allows us to have this living bulletin board where anyone, anywhere there is access, may post what interests them and share a life's work. Because of my presence online and particularly Facebook, I have had multiple sales of my work, I was invited to show at Scope Art Fair in New York and ArtParis by Saatchi Online, have been in multiple group shows mostly at Artstrand in Provincetown and Phili, have been interviewed by artists and editors and critics and have had studio visits from artists from around the world and am being encouraged to enter the European art scene by artists there. I was invited to OG in August, 2011 to work for two weeks in Steamboat Springs, Colorado with Master Printer Sue Oehme and her team. I completed 2 Editions of Etchings and 58 monotypes which will be part of her group of artists' works showing in Museums and Fairs cross the US. I was picked up by John Davis Gallery in Hudson, NY and have had two one- person exhibits there in 2010 and 2012 . R.C. Morgan and Jason Stopa both wrote wonderful reviews for the Brooklyn Rail and the shows were successful especially in the response of

my peers and sales. The past year 2013-2014 has been remarkably busy with a 2 person show at Fred Giampietro Gallery in New Haven, CT, a group show curated by Jason Stopa at Brian Morris Gallery on the LES, NY, the project room at Honey Ramka Gallery and a group show at Elgin Gallery in Brookklyn, NY, a seminal show Outside/ In at Life on Mars Gallery where I am now a "Featured Artist" and will be having a 3 person show in May 2014 and a one person show in October of 2014, work going to George Lawson Gallery in SF for the "Brooklyn Bridge" show and in November 2014 a project room show at Gerald Peters Gallery in Sante Fe and continued opportunities to show my work and participate in panels and talks on art.

It has been an exciting time these past few years as I allow myself to explore the full range of my artistic history. As a mature artist I find I have this large vocabulary to draw from and the skills needed to restate my imagery in exciting new ways as new forms with old ties emerge. I'm excited by how well young artists in the arts community and advanced painting students at SVA respond to my work and their desire to reinvigorate painting as a vital means of expression. I look forward to what tomorrow holds for me.