

ARTIST STATEMENT

The inception for my most current works, in the *Poetic Response* series, lies in the poetry of Arizona poet Lois Roma-Deeley, among others. I created the works in response to Roma-Deeley's poetic text, spurred by the many rich visual images made manifest while reading the poems. This group of works had its conceptual origin in a residency at the Ragdale Foundation, where I met fellow resident poet Roma-Deeley in 2004. As I read poetry while there, I found that the written imagery, cadence, and rhythms of the poetic language were being integrated into my own paintings. The language of poetry, so copious in metaphor, provides a natural impetus for visual metaphor. The idea of the evocation of memory inherent in language draws its parallels in the visual memory informing my work. The works address human fragility as their subject, using symbolism of landscape, nature and cultural symbols integrated with text.

I created *The Poetic Response* works after curating two exhibitions of *The Poetic Dialogue Project*, exhibitions in which I paired contemporary visual artists with contemporary women poets in collaboration to create works in response to the visual or written work of the other. The curating of these exhibitions further encouraged my own interest in pursuing a larger series of pieces created in response to poetry. These new works deal with issues of fragility and vulnerability, utilizing visual metaphor, combining symbolic images and words to convey meaning. My works are narrative in nature, telling stories, and creating memories and connections through symbols and sometimes jarring combinations of images. The work combines plant forms, the symbolic interpretation of landscape, architectural references, objects both real and imaginary, and cultural symbols traditionally associated with women through history, with text and language, to weave a narrative that is oblique, often personal, and sometimes political or issue-oriented.

The works are mixed media on paper, combining watercolor with acrylic, colored pencil, pencil and collage.

--Beth Shadur

