

Artist Statement

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Animals display behavior for survival that in humans is considered virtuous. For thousands of years, people have looked to animals for inspiration. My choice to depict animals started with the wolf, which still appears in nearly all of my drawings. College for me was four years in and out of doctors' offices. As a sophomore, I began depicting wolves to remind myself to be strong and endure. When I was a child, my mother told me how the Sioux tribe called the Pawnee 'wolves' because of their high level of endurance. Though animals in my work are often stand-ins for people, in an overarching way, it can be said that they represent the best and worst of human emotions.

Though the origins of my depiction of animals started with a Native American tale, I use symbols from a variety of cultures. As a follower of a Pagan path, I work primarily with symbols and alphabets of interest to other Pagans, but as an art historian, I include elements strongly rooted in the western art historical tradition. Norse, Greco-Roman, Native American, and Celtic symbols are commonly seen in my drawings. The Theban alphabet appears in much of my work. A favorite because of its combination of curved and straight elements, the alphabet also has a long history with the occult. Theban was used in the Middle Ages by followers of Ceremonial Magic to hide their writings from the Church. I write words through my pictures that relate to the image and my intended meaning, but very rarely do I make them legible. My work is often about my emotions, my hopes, or function as self-motivation. At times, my works are spells intended to bring blessings to particular people or praise to the gods. My work is to be contemplated not taken in by a single glance. It is my intention for viewers to connect with the images on their own terms, not for them to understand the iconography, but it is there for those who wish to interpret it. I take my symbols from a wide range of places as diverse as the paths in Paganism.

Though trained to work in numerous media, I usually work with India ink and almost exclusively on paper. As an art historian, I specialize primarily on prints and drawings. My art historical and studio practices inform one another. In addition to India ink, I work with colored pencils and acrylic, which is often used to add a slight hint of color to my black and white works. I work in black because of its intensity and spiritual associations. Likewise, other colors in my work are carefully chosen for their associations and meanings.

Contemporary artwork associated with Paganism is almost always "Fantasy Art." It is not considered Art (with a capital "A"). The most important goal of my work is to create a new genre of Pagan Art. Meaning to create images that take the visual cultures associated with different branches of Paganism and elevates them to "fine art." There are many elements that give life to my work, but at its essence, my work is about myself and nothing is more important to me than my devotion to the gods