

Dee Small

Artist Statement

I like to work without knowing what the result will be. I make decisions as each painting develops. Every unforeseen occurrence is an opportunity to move a work in a new direction, and to push myself farther into unknown territory. There is nothing more exciting.

My paintings have been shaped through a combination of very physical acts followed by gentle and delicate ones. Both are thoughtful. It's a give-and-take, a back-and-forth process. I work with a mixed bag of manufactured and handmade materials. That allows me to build densely interwoven, multi-layered paintings. Although I use doilies and stencils, my work is not decorative. I build space through transparent planes and flat abstractions, interrupting it by introducing fragmented decorative elements. I also use geometric shapes to redefine various sectors. For example: Large hand-drawn circles transform the focus of a painting, while small circles (made with a cup or a bottle cap) break up space, defining rhythmic passages. Every tool I use supports my desire to continually move beyond what I know.

My paintings embody complexity, permutation. I sometimes think of them as several paintings laid atop one another – as if they had shattered and then been pieced together again. They seem to teeter on the verge of chaos, calamity, and destruction - as if they have climbed as high as they possibly could, and collapsed, bruised and tender, raw and trembling from the effort. There's an honest matter-of-factness about them.