

Olive Ayhens, painter

Color is my first language. My painting frequently evolves from a special sense of place, and from transformation of environments in my own quirky ways. Sometimes with a political ecological subtext, but always and most importantly with the love of the paint itself—with layering it, exploring color relationships, building textures, etc. I have fun with personification as well as improbabilities of scale. I am constantly renewed visually by everything around me, a feeling of the uniqueness of each environment where I find myself.

I work in connected series, and often there is a transitional piece that moves my work on to new influences and inspirations. To give examples of some of my selected passions & themes: memories of beasts past; the monumentality of the bridges and anchors of the Dumbo neighborhood, where my studio is currently located; the fabric patterns of the density of New York City; extreme interiors, such as computer labs. I was fed up with the human species: its racism, constant wars, trashing the planet, driving animals to extinction, on & on. I researched what life was here before us in North America, the large mammals. I included some of them in contemporary cityscapes. The notion of these prehistoric creatures appearing in current city environments is playfully absurd and not without humor.

Currently I am very moved by the soft twilight, layers of reflected light in the luxury condos outside my studio window with reflections of trees (a forest), and it is as if the East River is flowing into the building with the cubistic lines of the Manhattan Bridge. It's exciting where this is taking my work.