

Artist-in-Residence

Susan Stephenson

07.09.2024-08.06.2024

Informal Exhibition at The Cottage | Reconnecting Friday, August 2nd 5-8 PM



In panoramic oil paintings developed on site, I transform everyday scenery through an exploration of color and light. Torn between the lovely places that appeal to everyone and locations some might find un-paintable, I navigate a line between attraction and unease. Traffic lights and stop signs inspire me, along with the way sunlight hits the “do not pass” lines in the road. Instead of ignoring electric lines and telephone poles, they break my paintings’ skies into visual patterns, catching the light and becoming orange against the atmosphere. Every day, people are bombarded with chances to see beauty yet often sleepwalk past it; rather than wait for our culture to look back wistfully at some of the things we currently overlook, I prefer to show their beauty right now. Why wait?



My easy relationship with curvilinear perspective is partly due to growing up in a geodesic dome, and after twenty years of using the wraparound view, it now permeates my work. Similarly, the spatial relationships of landscape define my work regardless of genre. Finding equilibrium between a work’s formal relationships and a location’s visual cues has become a form of meditation, and as a result, balancing abstraction and reality now motivates my creativity. Ultimately, I look for a combination of modern life and scenery that sparks that peculiar blend of kooky and beautiful I find so compelling.



About Susan:

Best known for the panoramic oil paintings she develops from direct observation, Susan Stephenson uses scenery from everyday life and transforms it through an exploration of color and light. A native of Louisiana, she received her BFA degree from Louisiana Tech University and her MFA degree from Boston University, where she studied with John Moore. After living and teaching in southern New England for over twenty years, Stephenson now lives in California’s San Joaquin Valley and teaches in the Art Department of the California State University, Stanislaus.