

## That Alice Girl

I do not think of myself as a self-portrait kind of a person and yet many of my recent paintings have one small, fair-haired girl in common: adventuring far, reaching towards the horizon and meditating into unknown distances.

She is not a specific character I set out to paint nor was she intended to represent myself; in some cases she is most definitely not the person I'd intended to paint. Which has made me query my painting process from the initial spark of inspiration to the finished end: trying to understand how my unconscious impulses combine with instinctive intuition to subvert, high jack and otherwise override my more conscious choices.

Usually I am happy with the organic process of my work, allowing cumulative, evolutionary surprises to catch me off guard as I 'feel' my way towards each line, shape and colour as it is 'best, now and in this moment.' In fact, until this moment I've cheerfully ignored any self-analysis, but now I am curious:

If I never intended to paint myself (I didn't), and I never set out to paint a narrative that carried the same character from series to series (again, no), then who exactly have I been painting these last many months?

I have wandered many a musing path since asking this question, and in the end I think I have an answer of sorts ...

She can not be any specific girl, however she might just be a spirit girl - full of possibility and wonder - just at that magical age when we begin to explore the world with increased independence. More Jungian than Brother's Grimm, she crosses the glass threshold and brings us with her.

Innocent in some ways and wise in others, she is a reminder towards staying curious and keeping our minds open. She is the very best part of the time before dreams separated from reality. And while there have been no rabbit holes or magic mirrors, in hindsight she is the perfect guide to take us through a looking glass.

A place where things are truest in their mirror reflection; where the rules of perspective, laws of physiology and the focusing power of shadows can be ignored; where worlds may be painted out of season, landscapes out of place, and stories out of time. A dreamscape where the stars touch the earth, waves caress the sky, solitude is company and adventure beckons from both near and far horizons, even as you're standing still.

You can call her Alice if you like.

After all, she's gone through the looking glass and we are still standing here.