

ALICE'S THOUGHT PROCESS

I have always been fond of creating worlds for people to wander in while encouraging imaginative thinking. When I was 11 years old I made a clay world which grew over the years like a massive puzzle. In the end it could cover my whole bedroom floor if all pieces were laid out.

The clay pieces included everything from a suburb, downtown, old town, thrift shop, internet café and VIP event clubs for celebrities, not to mention the waffle house next to the ski resort or the many different pubs and bars to cover every citizen's requirement. I was inspired by the world around me and I was eager to invent my take on *everything*.

This clay world was perfect in the way that I could rearrange the different parts and change the stories whenever I felt like it, whenever I needed to process new lessons in life.

I have kept the same playfulness and imagination in my painting process from the gathering of inspiration to the practical aspects of painting. I let the characters in my paintings be the actors in an ongoing story. The characters always develop personality wise while I paint and I like to include the same characters in new paintings for new stories to evolve around them. Stories that might come directly from my life or from observed dialogues or lives that are so far away from my own that it fascinates me.

No matter the gravity of the subject or theme, I enjoy the process of narrowing the inspiration down to fragments and symbols. I believe that this simply is a way to cope with life and situations from a different perspective.

My interest in self-expression and identity began while moving around to different places in Sweden as a kid. I was one of these kids with a never ending search for an identity. I remember having the encouraging motto "Always be yourself" repeating in my head when my goofy and naive personality started to clash with the other girls right before my teenage years. In the end I could not resist the longing for a place of inclusion and peace so I began my search.

As we grow up we gather so many experiences that we start to become the idea of ourselves - sticking to that self-image and our principles. We often keep to this idea because we have no reason to transform again, we feel at ease - at least we don't switch out our personality and way of self expression all together over a week.

We have figured out a profession, who we get along with and not, our taste in music, where we stand politically, how much we care about appearance, if we are social or introverted, if we are materialistic or minimalistic, meat eaters or vegan and so forth.

When watching people from afar we can tell a story about a person based on clothes, manners, and even hairstyle.

I like to think that I know my characters' secrets and their stories would surprise you. Things are not always as they seem on the surface.

Alice Herbst