

## UP

Look UP, be UP, warm UP, send UP, wake UP, climb UP, dream UP, show UP, make UP, love Up.

Somewhere along the line I learned that one should always “look up” to art. The context relates to the hanging of art on a wall...a little higher is better than lower. In retrospect, throughout my career as an artist, I have been inspired to create images that move the observer up—physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Sometimes it feels like life serves us a ubiquitous diet of “DOWN”. News is rarely news unless it is bad—a fire, a murder, a hurricane, a death. The market is down; another leader has fallen; a child is abducted; a plane crashes. Another terrorist attacks, another marriage breaks; another friend is diagnosed with cancer. When is gossip ever empowering?

I consider this preoccupation with “DOWN” a fundamental distortion of life. Certainly life presents its challenges. The stresses we feel are real. Our grief can be deep. But to me, being human means that we cultivate the ability to tap internal and external resources of power to bring light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, order out of chaos, and life out of death. Metaphorically, while the climb may be steep and treacherous, nevertheless, we climb.

UP is fundamentally about hope.

Hope is not wishful thinking. Hope is rather the ability to stand amid what is broken and chaotic and envision a positive future story. Hope is based on an honest assessment of individual and community resources and the commitment to employ these in a personal and collaborative way to create an environment in which people can thrive. Hope is therefore the catalyst of power and the antithesis of victimization.

Throughout my career, through a variety of media, my mission as an artist has been to inspire hope and its corollaries—dialogue, joy, encouragement, strategy, peace, kindness, and imagination. This approach is not the least bit sentimental; given the challenges that we face, hope demands courage, commitment, endurance and renewal—the best expressions of the human spirit.

Throughout history and in every culture, women and men have symbolized hope through varieties of color and shape—birds, sticks, rectangles, checkerboards, rainbows and religious images, to name a few. Out of this tradition, my art employs these primitive and modern symbols to create a dialogue with the viewer (and among viewers) and ultimately to inspire actions that shape the future by bringing to life the voices, talents, achievements and aspirations of those who experience it.

My personal journey of coming to see and understand the world through art has followed what has been for me an interesting and integrated path. Exploring one idea or area of focus has consistently led me to the next. As a child drawing a ballerina on point, experiencing the feast of senses I discovered in the forest next to our home, spending many hours with my father in his

workshop as he cut and fit glass and mirror into perfect rectangular shapes, or watching my mother carefully meld mosaic shapes into colorful designs—all these early experiences have influenced both what I have come to recognize as “familiar” in the world and what I have chosen as the symbols of hope in my work.