

Ellen Richman Interview 2020

1. Your first memory of painting.
My first memory of painting is with my sister when I was a girl. We always made art at home together.
2. How did you decide to become a painter?
I never wanted to be a painter because my mother was a professional artist and my sister went to art school. They made representational work that didn't interest me. Originally I went to art school for sculpture but took a painting class as a requirement. To my great surprise at the time the instructor thought I was really good and encouraged me to continue taking his class.
3. Did an artist particularly inspire you?
Yes, at the time I was going to art school I met the painter Edward Dugmore. He was an abstract expressionist painter by then who was in his late 70's and had hung out in NYC with Willem de Kooning and others in the 1950's. He moved to Minneapolis to be with his daughter who was the partner of a friend. I loved his work.
4. Do you need to understand to love a painting?
Not intellectually. I think the best understanding is when it hits you emotionally. I remember loving Ellsworth Kelly and Alexander Calder the most as a child and not "understanding" their work, but connecting almost spiritually and being in awe.
5. Is there a work for which you said to yourself ," This is exactly what I wanted to do?"
When I saw Dugmore's work I knew that was "it" for me.
6. The famous work that you don't like...
I've never appreciated Salvador Dali'.
7. What is essential for your creation?
I need a lot of time alone without interruption.
8. What is your relationship to recognition?
I have been known in the art community of Minneapolis since the early 2000's and I branched out to Chicago later on. I was not known by many outside the US until Instagram. It happened quickly, and it feels good.
9. If tomorrow you could no longer be a painter, what would you do?
I made jewelry for a short time in my early 20's. It would be fun to make wearables again, or large outdoor public sculptures. Work in 3D with shape and form.
10. Your artistic dream...
I would love to have an enormous studio space to work in multimedia and to be invited to travel internationally for exhibitions or commissions for paintings and/or sculpture.

