

Barbara Sternberger

artisttrust.org/artists/barbara-sternberger

Artist Profile - Barbara Sternberger

2020 SOLA
Awards



Discipline

Visual

Barbara Sternberger, *Beneath*, oil on linen, 32 x 40 inches, 2019

Barbara Sternberger was born in Vancouver, Canada in 1957. She studied painting at the University of California at Irvine, receiving her MFA in 1983. Sternberger's art career commenced in Southern California, then seamlessly continued in the Pacific Northwest when she and her husband artist, Ed Bereal, moved to Bellingham, WA in 1993.

Sternberger has exhibited both regionally and nationally, and her paintings are included in numerous private and public collections. Her work is deeply influenced by tenets of Ch'an Buddhism and its relationship to painting: essence, truth, spirit resonance and breath. Sternberger does not pre-plan her paintings, instead the content of the painting is revealed as she creates it. The works are self-generating, and gradually evolve, not impacted by the

Artist Trust received 42 applications for the 2020 Twining Humber & SOLA Awards. The applications were reviewed and the awardees were selected by an independent peer-review panel consisting of visual artists **Pamela Awana Lee** of Pullman, **Barbara De Pirro** of Allyn, and **Deborah Lawrence** of Seattle. This was the first Artist Trust grant panel to be held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic – to learn more about this process visit our blog.



Artist Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to support and encourage individual artists working in all disciplines to enrich community life throughout Washington State. Since its founding in 1986, Artist Trust has invested over \$11 million in individual artists through its grant programs. The organization also provides a comprehensive suite of professional development training and resources to help artists achieve their career goals. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, Artist Trust launched The COVID-19 Artist Trust Relief Fund. The Fund is part of the organization's immediate shift towards rapid response programming, with \$650,000 reaching nearly 400 artists throughout 20 Washington State counties. As a fundraising organization, Artist Trust is grateful to the many donors and partners who make our work possible. Learn more at artisttrust.org.

external world of objects, or by the desire to depict a “thing.” Her paintings appear somehow familiar but are inexact. They offer mysterious hints of shared knowledge or experience.

Long-time representation with Elizabeth Leach Gallery in Portland, OR, presented nine solo shows of Sternberger’s work to date. Her paintings have been the subject of two solo museum exhibitions: at the Museum of Northwest Art and the Whatcom Art Museum. Sternberger’s work has been featured in the U.S. Art in Embassies Program.

A few times a year Sternberger shares her painting philosophy in private workshops conducted from her annex studio. And although she does not hold an adjunct position, Barbara has taught a painting course at Western Washington University every summer for the past twenty-five years.

https://artisttrust.org/index.php/award-winners/artist-profile/barbara_sternberger

Award Winners / Artist Profile



Photo: Ed Bereal, 2018

Barbara Sternberger, 2018 Fellowship Winner

About the Artist

Abstract painter Barbara Sternberger (Bellingham) was born in Vancouver, Canada in 1957. In 1980, she earned her BFA and MFA in 1983 from the University of California at Irvine. Barbara has lived and worked in Bellingham since 1993.

For 20 years, Elizabeth Leach Gallery in Portland, Oregon has represented Barbara and recently she also shows with Linda Hodges Gallery in Seattle. Solo museum exhibitions include the Museum of Northwest Art, the Whatcom Museum, and her work was featured in the U.S. Art

in Embassies Program. Since 1996, Barbara has taught painting at Western Washington University every summer and she also teaches private classes.

To better express her elusive subject matter, she stopped the traditional use of oil paint application in favor of unique “handheld oil paint bars” that she makes herself. Her exhibition *Confluence* debuted these paintings and was reviewed by Richard Speer in October 2013 *ARTnews Magazine*.

From the Artist

I am incredibly grateful to Artist Trust and the selection panelists for this award. Beyond providing the much needed and greatly appreciated financial support, this award offers valued recognition and encouragement from Washington’s arts community.

At this particular juncture in my career, the timing of this award couldn’t be better. Several years ago, my painting subject matter necessitated a transformation of how I apply paint to canvas. After extensive experimenting, I gradually developed handheld oil paint bars. These bars have become an integral and indispensable part to my painting process. However, making these bars is extremely labor and time intensive. As a recipient of the Artist Trust Fellowship, I will use the funds to upgrade my ‘paint bar-making’ equipment. The new equipment will substantially reduce the time it takes to make the bars, thereby freeing my time for more painting.

Barbara Sternberger

OCTOBER 2013

ARTnews

**Keeping
New
Media
New**



**How Hopper
Created
*Nighthawks***

**China's
Growing
Auction Giant**

**Wyeth
Family's
High Point**



Jonathan Perlowsky, *The Cimmerian Legend of Baby Blue*, 2013, lacquer on birch, 80" x 48". Morrison.

artist. In all of his work, the tension between random gestural forms and studied, meticulous lines creates a dramatic dialogue between hard-edge and free-form. Indeed, the artist has said in an interview that he prefers to "guide the color into the spaces it wants to go with drips that are both controlled and surprising."

—**Tonia Shoumatoff**

Ariel Freiberg

Miller Yezerski
Boston

Unlikely objects overlap and collide in Ariel Freiberg's lush oil paintings on panel and linen. Of the seven works on view in "Blazoning Arms" at the newly merged Miller Yezerski Gallery, four were oils on linen, all two-feet square, offering startling portraits of stiletto heels juxtaposed with gardening tools. At first glance, sharp edges appear to dominate these shoe works, which Freiberg considers riffs on heraldry. Depicted lying on their sides—one pair to a painting—with spiky heels either meeting at the center or thrusting outward toward the work's edges, the shoes are visually bisected by such implements as a trowel or a cultivating fork.

If the themes of gardening and fashion suggest a gentle, feminine universe,

these charged compositions challenge that notion. The artist wields her paints with the skill of a gardener handling tools, setting these pointy objects against backgrounds of soft zigzags or sunset-like streaks. The shoes demonstrate her painterly abilities—from the bronze sheen of the pumps in *Shake Fork* (2012) to the palette-like dappling of the red pair in *Blazoning Arms* (2013).

Another sort of tension emerges in the three smaller pieces on panel, which present collages of illusionistic faces and body parts, interspersed with seeming tears in wallpaper or patterned fabric. Within these abstract arrangements—which evoke layers of tattered posters



Ariel Freiberg, *Shake Fork*, 2012, oil on linen, 24" x 24". Miller Yezerski.

on a wall—a cheek, an eyebrow, or another feature flickers into view, only to recede into the play of color and form. In *In Praise of Surfaces* (2013), slices of fleshy pink intermingle with noirish bits of mesh and shadows and strips in gaudy lipstick shades. Despite partial glimpses of a nose and eye, the painting revels in what remains unknown. Throughout this show, Freiberg's surfaces do not tell the whole story, instead challenging the viewer to dig deeper.

—**Joanne Silver**

Barbara Sternberger

Elizabeth Leach
Portland, Oregon

In the spring of 2012, feeling curtailed by the constant need to reload her brush with pigment, Washington artist Barbara Sternberger improvised a solution. She packed dry pigments and a

liquid wax binder into a snow-cone cup. Once the mixture hardened, she removed the cup and painted with the remaining mass, increasing the endurance of her gestures. For the 2012–13 abstract and semi-abstract oil paintings in this show, titled "Confluence," Sternberger coupled this approach with traditional brushwork. The results were dramatic—broad, luxuriant smears against quick slashes and jots, offering a balance between serenity and nervous energy.

In some works, lines and shapes congeal into recognizable objects—a woman's shoe in *Amble*, a mason jar in *Mason*, and a champagne cork popping in *Release*. But the strongest compositions are those with ambiguous forms that lend themselves to the viewer's imagination and projection. In *Segue Blue* and *Sojourn*, kernels of form float atop a nuanced background, the shapes relating in dynamic spatial dialogue. The artist set up two earth-toned masses in horizontal opposition to one another in *Make Believe*. The passageway of negative space between them recalls the almost-touching-but-not-quite fingers of God and Adam in Michelangelo's iconic *Creation of Adam*.

Though Sternberger used her signature palette of periwinkle and gunmetal blues for the paintings in this show, they were less architectonically structured, and more buoyant and ethereal, than her past works—perhaps owing to the greater freedom afforded by the artist's new technique. Her intuitive deployment of gesture to stoke emotional resonance in the viewer places her squarely within the ongoing lineage of Abstract Expressionists and Color Field painters.

—**Richard Speer**



Barbara Sternberger, *Mason*, 2013, oil on canvas, 20" x 20". Elizabeth Leach.

Cascadia Weekly: The Art of Caring

 cascadiaweekly.com/cw/currents/the_art_of_caring

Healing Visions

The Art of Caring

By Amy Kepferle

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Nine years ago, the first “Healing through Art” exhibition at Bellingham’s PeaceHealth St. Joseph Hospital proved that medical personnel weren’t the only ones capable of helping patients and their loved ones on the journey to wellness.

Curator Linda Gardner says that initial display—which featured works by iconic Pacific Northwest painter and sculptor Guy Anderson—was the stepping stone to a successful series that started when a member of the PeaceHealth board asked her to help bring fine art to the hospital in an attempt to brighten otherwise dull spaces and create a healing environment for patients, visitors and staff.

“Many people loved the show, but there were some who called into question the appropriateness of pieces which included nudity,” Gardner says.

“I love the memo that then went out to all medical center caregivers from the Chief Executive at the time. It included these lines: ‘I love seeing pharmacists, housekeepers, nurses and visitors standing together talking about how they feel about a painting. I love that we are talking, and that the paintings will change and that we will have continuing opportunities to have conversations about the art on the wall.’”

Nearly a decade later, those dialogues around the bimonthly art shows have continued, the hospital’s permanent art collection has expanded in a big way, and many of the region’s major artistic talents have shown their work in the hallways, cafes, waiting rooms and entryways of PeaceHealth.

When the “Art of Caring” opens Thurs., Jan. 31 with a reception in the hospital’s Grounds and Grains Cafe, the event will bring home the sheer amount of talent that has gone into the “Healing Through Art” series.

The group show will feature works by 33 regional fine artists who have previously participated in the program—including (deep breath) Chuck Bankuti, Gerald Baron, Susan Bennerstrom, Lloyd Blakeley, Jane Burns, Nancy Canyon, R. R. Clark, Douglas Clark, Annie Howell Adams, Mary Ennes Davis, Caryn Friedlander, Trish Harding, Jenny Jansen, Sandra Lepper, Lorna Libert, Lanny

Little, Dana Mattson, Steve Mayo, Ann Morris, Terry Nelson, Dave Nichols, Jim Orvik, Lynne Oulman, James Lapp, Jim Papp, Ron Pattern, Alan Sanders, David Scherrer, Cathy Schoenberg, Barbara Sternberger, Robin Wassong, E. V. Wick, and Thomas Wood.

“The artists who have shown at the medical center believe in the importance of contributing to the culture of our community,” Gardner says. “They have been positive and generous in their participation in the exhibits. It is clear that they realize the importance of fine art in the hospital setting and the effect it has on our community.”

Additionally, Gardner points out, the PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Foundation and a number of generous donors have provided the financial support that has made the program possible and helped expand the permanent collection.

The “Art of Caring” shows through March 30, so if a planned surgery or an unforeseen accident doesn’t bring you through the doors of PeaceHealth by that date, make sure and get to the hospital before then to peruse and possibly purchase the works.

“It is exciting to see such an abundance of talent in one show,” Gardner says. “Due to the unusually large number of featured artists, this is a major opportunity for the community to get a taste of the many artists that our region enjoys.”

Please note that the image by painter Dale Gottlieb in the print version of this story will not be available for sale at the “Art of Caring” exhibit. The work belongs to the hospital, and is in their permanent collection.

Arts & Entertainment

Artists evoke imagination, mystery

MoNA exhibit features Barbara Sternberger and Michael Dailey

BY NANCY WALBECK
Arts Editor

La CONNER — Oil painter Barbara Sternberger uses familiar forms and shapes to jog memory, evoke imagination, while Michael Dailey, who works in acrylics, infuses his pure color paintings with meditative mystery.

Clearly individualists in their genres, both abstract artists use their innate skills as colorists to redefine light and space — the external and internal landscapes. More interesting, though, is their juxtaposition in the current Museum of Northwest Art exhibit, *The Indefinable Lightness of Seeing*, on view through July 7.

This painterly pair reintroduces to arts fans the quintessential difference among fine-arts genres — and why a sure command of color drives the art. Both painters embrace that aspect, using that finely honed tool to unearth imagination, explore transcendence. These are powerful artworks, although the approach differs, as does the final “picture” within the frame.

For Sternberger, the female torso, rural landscapes, domesticity and other ordinary visions are revealed in the mind’s eye. She uses paint to move from color to form and back again, while merged imagery moves through the work. Like a poem, or a musical riff, Sternberger works toward balance, a fusion, of her real and internal selves.

For instance, in *From Her*, 2000, a woman walks away in the painting. Mostly seen from the waist down, she is fluid movement, pulling us into and along. In *Margin Swings*, two backyard kids’ swings undulate wildly in the wind, their wooden seats nearly touching, the swing ropes threatening to tangle.

Again, the air moves and shifts, offers glimpses of a faraway house, a slice of white-picket fence. The lonely reverie of the abandoned swings, their playful dance, resonates in memory.

Sternberger returns often to the female torso, almost as a personal revelation. These women move through their lives in ambiguity — strong, purposeful, but edged with uncertainty. The painter shapes their lives as a short story — spare, exact, perfectly edited.

A Bellingham resident, Sternberger also interprets rural landscapes and scenes, some

Review



NANCY WALBECK

Barbara Sternberger's oil, *Margin Swings*, 1995, uses color and movement to prick memory. The artist, known for her poetic rural landscapes, has her work on exhibit through July 7 at the Museum of Northwest Art in La Conner.

with a studied pathos, such as *Three Houses* 1996. Sun-blasted color merges and emphasizes, mixed with grays and blacks. But what is most noticeable is the air rushing through, the earth moving on its axis. This slipknot of time, for Sternberger, is where she paints all of it.

Dailey, who uses pure, deep color to define his landscapes, could be charged with creating “beautiful” art. But too much intellect and rigor has gone into his compositions for that opinion to hold up. The purity in the paintings is what captures first, then holds. But, as with Sternberger, what follows is a found poem, a musical line from Bach.

Dailey, who moved from oils to acrylics because of a chronic illness, also works in the transcendent, the world of metaphor. A fierce study in royal blue, *Deep Blue Sea No. 4*, and *Sulu Sunset*, in brilliant orange, recall the color of air, in imagination. These suffused seascapes and landscapes linger behind the eyes, splinter beginning dreams before deep sleep.

The painter eschews the sentimental, frames his pure-color densities in right-angled “frames.” Some resemble the flat fields of a summer-soaked Kansas or the fold of a cloth at a window frame, changing as the light recedes. These edges bring reality to bear, give context, set limits to the sheer beauty.

But, foremost, Dailey’s intense paintings celebrate their own exuberance — untainted, amorphous but clear at once. His merged light serves as elegy, shifting and revealing the longer we hold it in. Its longing, its melancholy, surprises, but it shouldn’t. Dailey offers his reverential gift, but also the surety of its loss.

Works by Sternberger and Dailey will be on exhibit at MoNA through July 7. Hours at the museum, 121 S. First St., La Conner, are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays.

For more information, call 466-4446, or check the Web site at www.museumofnwart.org.



THURSDAY ♦ MARCH 7, 2002

CRITIC'S PICKS

The gallery season is picking up as the month's bounty of fine shows attests. Here are some exhibits to keep in mind while touring the streets. The artwalk is from 6 to 9 p.m., and admission is free.

Elizabeth Leach Gallery: Washington artist Barbara Sternberger's heavily textured, process-oriented works have won her regional acclaim. Also showing are works on paper from the estate of Hans Hofmann, the influential German-born Abstract Expressionist. (207 S.W. Pine St.)

pear gallery: The nonprofit organization devoted to helping at-risk youth through art education kicks off its first gallery show with a benefit that includes works by homeless youth and a slew of Portland-area artists. (809 S.W. Alder St.)

Philip Feldman Gallery at the Pacific Northwest College of Art: Heidi Cody, a Portland-bred New Yorker, has been gaining national attention with her vivid, Warhol-inspired light-box installations that gently poke fun at the worlds of advertising and commercial packaging. (1241 N.W. Johnson St.)

Pulliam Deffenbaugh Gallery: George Johanson has been an important figure in the Portland art world as a 25-year veteran teacher at the Pacific Northwest College of Art and expert drawer and painter. The gallery unveils a 50-year retrospective of Johanson's paintings. (522 N.W. 12th Ave.)

Laura Russo Gallery: Always one of Portland's most gifted painters, Jay Backstrand has seen ups and downs in his long career. But in the past several years, the artist, who is in his mid-60s, has been painting with youthful vigor and relish. (805 N.W. 21st Ave.)

— D. K. Row



A detail of Jay Backstrand's "Something About a Square, Something About a Chair" at Laura Russo Gallery.

FROM SHADOW TO LIGHT



"CLOWN," BY BARBARA STERNBERGER. COLLECTION OF SAM SCHATZ



BY KIE RELVEA
THE BELLINGHAM HERALD
Barbara Sternberger's visions move like memory — formless but imbued with clues, suggestions of some inner sanctum. Finding the way there, though, takes time, and requires looking in a different way. Because, as the 44-year-old Bellingham artist explains, her paintings are not about what she sees outside, rather what's going on inside. They're not instant because they're not about

See LIGHT, Page C4, Col. 1



PHILIP A. DWYER HERALD PHOTOS

"What comes out of your paintings are the needs you have."

▼ OFF C1/LIFESTYLE

Light

Continued from Page C1

image. You don't look at them and say, 'Oh, they're so and so.' You look at it and say, 'I need to experience this.'"

That can be done at "Barbara Sternberger: Shifting Light," which runs through March 17 at the Whatcom Museum of History & Art in Bellingham. The survey exhibition brings together the paintings she created while living in Southern California and the Pacific Northwest. It's a body of work that ranges from 1987 to 2001.

The title comes from how light has affected Sternberger's work, but not in the way expected.

A STRANGE, WONDERFUL FLUKE

It had been some few years since Sternberger's 1983 graduation from the University of California, Irvine, with a master's in fine arts.

She was holding down a full-time job while creating her art at night, following the advice of a woman who admonished graduates to wait five years after graduate school before trying to get into the gallery scene. "Develop your own voice" first, she told them.

Sternberger was working on it. "It was demanding," Sternberger recalls.

Then along came a fire.

And it gave her the artist's life.

Sternberger's former brother-in-law owned a construction management company that worked on estates in Los Angeles. He knew she would leave soon to focus on painting and promised to provide her with six-months' severance pay.

They were working on a project for one of the Fields — as in Marshall Field's, the upscale department store chain based in the Midwest — when something sparked a fire in the spa. They were fired.

Suddenly, everyone was out of work. But her brother-in-law (the fire wasn't his fault, Sternberger says) stuck to his word.

She stretched the money out over a year. That strange and wonderful fluke gave her the luxury of long stretches of time she needed to create.

"I need to work without interruption," she says, noting that her work is measured out in a season.

At the end of that period, she took her paintings to a gallery in the L.A. area.

"And, you know, your ego is at stake," she recalls. "Los Angeles, let's face it, they have very cutting-edge art and here I come with these pastoral scenes."

But her work was different enough to intrigue. The gallery agreed to represent her and did so until shortly after her move to



PHILIP A. DWYER HERALD PHOTO

CREATIVE VISION: Bellingham artist Barbara Sternberger describes the process of creating abstract paintings at her home studio.

▼ Exhibit

"Barbara Sternberger: Shifting Light" runs through March 17 at the Whatcom Museum of History & Art, 121 Prospect St.

Museum hours are noon-5 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday.

Sternberger will give a slide presentation at 2 p.m., Feb. 3 at the museum.

Both events are free.

Information: 676-6981 or www.whatcommuseum.org.

Bellingham in 1993.

Today, she shares a 5-acre piece of land with husband Ed Bereal, an artist who also teaches painting at Western Washington University, and a barnyard full of animals — dogs, cats, llamas, donkeys, chickens, roosters and one cow. Her studio is the converted loft of a big red barn.

SHIFTING LIGHT

When Sternberger moved from Southern California to the Pacific Northwest, the change went beyond geography.

"When I was in Los Angeles, I

was in a cement jungle."

Part of her longed to return to something less crazy, more akin to the landscape of her birthplace in Vancouver, B.C.

So she painted pastoral landscapes with lots of green because she didn't have any. And darker colors dominated because she was blanketed in sunshine.

Then that changed.

"I came up here and the weirdest thing happened. It flipped. I started painting lighter, using brighter colors. It was because I had all the green I needed but I didn't have the light. It was dark here, it was gray here."

Also, her paintings began to delve into the landscape of the female psyche.

"What comes out of your paintings are the needs you have," Sternberger says.

That can be seen in "Ed's Garden" (1990) and "Out Building" (1994), two oils on canvas placed next to each other in the exhibit.

While "Ed's Garden" is bathed

in layers of dark green with allusions to cloud and sun, "Out Building" is dominated by a muted yet exuberant yellow-white near long slashes of bright orange suggesting a door.

AN UNFOLDING

For Sternberger, a piece begins with a mark. That leads to the next mark, one building on the other in a process — a kind of intuitive immediacy — that can take up to five months per painting.

"They unfold. They don't know what they're going to be yet," she explains. "It's not closing my eyes and scribbling."

But it's also not recreating what she sees. It's being lead by the subconscious to create a visual language using the interplay of paint, color and form.

"I'm not trying to communicate about objects. I'm trying to have the paint speak," she says.

Inspiration comes then from creation, and the connection made once there.

"You feel this place that is indescribable and that is inspiring. It's such a genuine place. It's like looking in the mirror, you cannot lie. It's there and it's reflecting it right back at you."

But that connection is brief.

"You can't hold it. You can't grab it. You can't own it. It's a separate thing that you visit and it visits through you."

"What is that all about? That's a lot of the reason why my work is not representational, because it's not about depicting something. It's about experiencing something."

Kie Relyea can be reached at 715-2234 or krelyea@bellingham-gannett.com.

Elizabeth Leach

G A L L E R Y

BARBARA STERNBERGER

Only through art can we get outside of ourselves and know another's view of the universe which is not the same as ours and see landscapes which would otherwise have remained unknown to us like the landscapes of the moon.

- Marcel Proust

In 1965, Clement Greenberg wrote that illusionistic painting used art to hide art and modernism used art to call attention to art. Barbara Sternberger uses art to allude to art. Like poetry, her paintings allude to a number of processes: the process of making the work, the process of seeing and the process of remembering. She works in such a way as to reveal process--not so directly as people like to say of Jackson Pollock's work, that it "records" process, but rather in a slow, layered way. The viewer must engage actively with the work, because these paintings do not narrate their meaning. Sternberger employs veils, like memories: many objects, many thoughts existing in the same space at the same time, but each occupying its own discrete realm as well. The translucence of the intersecting motifs allows them to flow into and out of each other without any abrupt transition from one object to the next.

In her studio, Sternberger hangs several canvases on the wall at one time, so that she may have two to five in the making at any moment. Though she does not premeditate the final outcome, her marks are not arbitrary. The first form reveals the next; the image evolves as she lays the paint upon the canvas. The process is not necessarily mystical, but mysterious. Sternberger responds to the developing forms and certain elements recur throughout her work: a rural landscape, a rounded female torso, flowers and domestic animals. The forms are not always recognizable, but always grounded in the visible and memorable. Her forms shift and move, but slowly and quietly. She works some areas of the canvas over and over, covering and revealing different objects in the picture. The successive layers give up the preceding ones in *pentimenti*, the shadows of covered forms still showing from beneath. The key to experiencing Barbara Sternberger's paintings lies in this sense of motion, that sense of transition between forms. In this way, her paintings are akin to the jazz solos of John Coltrane or Miles Davis. Where the musicians use notes and intonation, Sternberger uses color and paint to explore the interstices, the space between tonal shifts and before the forms take shape. In a Coltrane solo, the listener and the player each wait to see what sound will follow each note, and this gives the greatest weight to the moment before the sound emerges, that moment of anticipation. Sternberger's paintings also simulate this effect; the painter and the viewer both move from the color to the form, but the movement itself drives experience of the painting, not the apprehension of recognizable form.

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Elizabeth Leach

G A L L E R Y

Sternberger spent her early childhood in Vancouver, British Columbia, then moved to southern California and spent much of her adulthood in Los Angeles, California before moving to Bellingham, Washington in 1993. Here she works in a spacious studio in the converted loft of a bright red barn. In what could be seen as an act of irony, her work from the years in Southern California employ the darker, richer tones associated with the Northwest, while the work done since 1993 draws on the bright, sunwashed tones of SoCal. The act of memory makes present in the paintings what is absent in her physical surroundings in terms of shifting light and color.

These paintings more than most defy verbal assessment, because they are so much about vision, both internal and external. In that way, they are more like the work of Kandinsky, who also likened his paintings to music, rather than the contemporary artists with whom Sternberger has been compared: Richard Diebenkorn's work is more urban; Susan Rothenberg's more frenetic. Barbara Sternberger's paintings sit on the edge of illusionism and modernism in a space all their own: the poetic world of allusion.

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