

Artist's statement by Cathy Comstock

Illuminations

My work as an artist has many expressions and themes, but at its heart, there is an element of pure contemplation that binds it. Contemplative art has always attracted me. Even as a child, I wished to be a monk, scribing and illustrating manuscripts in a monastery. And so, drawing has become an act of contemplation, a form of prayer that enables me to live within my soul.

I consciously decided to draw at the age of eight, and have done so daily for the past 50 years. Simultaneous with my resolve to draw, I began an ongoing attempt to fathom the human condition: What does it really mean to be a human being? And how does one live in the world as a good and true and loving person? When I first began to create, I drew myself into life, to be alive and compassionate against its odds. The act of drawing was then and remains a reaching for “godliness.”

Many of my images are inspirational. They come in prayer as *answers*, arriving as loving gifts to be known. The experience of receiving an image is effortless. But to find a way to convert the image into a drawing that exists outside myself is painstaking. The process is one of literally bringing something to life. In this sense, the drawing's sketch lines are bones that support the image's depth and dimensionality—its body.

Because I have never taken an art class, the task of transposing the internal image—to give it form, shape and luminosity—is a challenge in which I always fall short. The outcome --the “picture” --that finally evolves never conveys the Beauty of the original version, as it appeared to me.

Still, however, I feel privileged in the grace I experience both in receiving the image and creating the art. In these events, I feel I am living in the heart of god, working in a state of ultimate sweetness and peace.