

Time to Reflect – Pandemic Emotions

By Claire Bentley

The pandemic of 2020 will certainly be remembered! It was such a difficult year and a half for all. Initially, I did not realize my paintings were reflecting my own emotions about the pandemic. They were landscapes but they evoked certain feelings. I expanded the series and put it together as my exhibit. During my show, no titles were displayed for the paintings, only numbers. I provided index cards and invited viewers to comment with their reactions to the paintings. Below is a compilation of these comments by painting. Here I have also provided my titles in parentheses.



(New Normal)



(Waiting)

Viewers Comments

Specific to each painting

Resolve to get through the pandemic with hope and grace.

The painful social isolation of my daughter in London as they implemented strict lockdown, which especially impacted folks who live alone. Her hair is the same color as the person in the painting.

It makes me wonder and think: 'What is she looking at?', 'What is she thinking?', 'Is she happy?' This painting gets me to look at it a bit longer and think and wonder.

I miss seeing people smile.

It made me feel so sad for the pandemic generation of kids who have lost so much.

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At peace.

Blue – saddens – waiting for something ominous to happen

The landscape is a good sharp shot of a view from a moment in time.

Cold, but not despairing

Reminds me of a calm cool evening and gives me a relaxing feeling. It does not feel lonely but rather quiet and inviting.

Nobody is there.

It's giving calm and sad vibes. If I were there I would want to sit on the bench and be in my thoughts while staring at the water.

Realistic looking and a little lonely. In one word: isolated.

Like a photo of my interior in a tranquil moment.

It made me feel calm.



(Sorrow)

It reminded me of how I missed school. I started 5th grade during the late pandemic and for most of the year it was virtual so most of the year I was sad. It made me feel thankful that everything is moving along, and it makes me feel happier, and I think that art is a good reminder of the hard time we all went through.

Not sad memories but rather tears of joy is what comes to me.

It made me feel grief for all the lives lost, but also hope that the tears are stopping.

Reminded me of the last year.

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The extended open hand is a wonderful image of what I would hope more people would do.

I think about the support and help from everyone around me during these hard times. Give me your hand and come, walk with me . .

Release, acceptance.

Ready to help and be helped.

'I am open, honest and helpful.'

Reminded me of reaching out and asking for help.

Beckoning .

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(Reaching)

Strength

No tree is an Island just like no man is an island. Even though in these times we are on our own island, our roots still connect us to each other.

Gives me a refreshing feeling. It seems like an intriguing place.

Shows some things can survive all adversity



(Resilience)



(When)

Sweet child waiting to see their grandparents

I was particularly struck by the maturity in the young boy's eyes. It is a painting of several colors but there feels to be a heaviness behind it that I am drawn to. There is an unnatural severity but it is almost missed.

Long, lonely sadness of our children, disconnected and isolated . . . but still beautiful and bright.

This sweet little boy is precious. I get the feeling of love and contentment.

I want to go to school.

The look of innocence.

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(Apart)

Peace

Reminded me of loneliness.

It made me feel contented and happy both for the couple and the person with the dog.

I want to be there . . . rest and renewal with family . . . hope and washing from the ocean

Evokes pleasant family memories.

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(Praying)

I see two people holding hands while one is passing away.

It reminds me of missing family and getting to see them for the first time this week.

Prayer? Anxiety? Both

Brings out a mix of feelings – solidarity, mutual support, fairness, understanding.

First responders using hand sanitizers.

It reminds me of the tension it created between people, families and political parties.



(Finding a Path)

Made me feel hopeful.

Reminded me of our daily walk. Peaceful

Reminds me of the word 'tangle'.

The Good Shepherd will lead us.

It reminded me of the first few months of lockdown and we were only really able to walk on trails. I did so much walking. It made me realize how beautiful VA is. So peaceful in nature, nice to enjoy and reflect.

It made me feel calm.

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Sunrise or sunset? It is calming.

A new dawning or the sun setting on difficult times.

Hopeful

It captures the ambiguity about where things are headed. We know we are in the midst of a storm and darkness, but is daylight coming? Is the storm clearing? Or are we wistfully looking backward at the light as the sun sets?

Gives me a feeling of rebirth.

The beauty all around us if we just look.



(Dawn of Hope)



(We Can Do It!)

'I'm good, I'm OK'