

ARTIST STATEMENT: BETSY WEIS

"We do not see what we see ... only what we remember..."* My art is about light, time, perception, beauty and memory. It starts in nature. Looking into a pond, seeing the water simultaneously from above and below as it reflects and absorbs the light moving through dark layers of color into deep fluid space, its surface moving, reflecting its surroundings, redefining space and time -- it captures a fleeting, deep, meaningful experience. I use the digital camera and the computer, which can discern more color and light values than the human eye and enable me to describe more clearly, more intimately and more distinctively the texture of this space. Paradoxically, the digital process, once conceived as anti-human, evolves into a sensuous memory of the natural world stimulating viewers into an intimate experience of the dreamy fluid environs that water evokes.

The digital process of making art is more cerebral and emotional and is closer to conveying my subject matter than painting or photography, for instance (though I have been asked about my art "is it a painting or a photograph?"). We are looking at color and light, data - bits and bytes, not a plastic or chemically reactive process. In describing the experience of nature, I've chosen a medium which is transparent; its physicality doesn't interfere with its content. The digital media defines my work just as an oil painting exists because of the oil paint. I want the content of the picture to meld with its physical structure. To be direct and transparent is most successfully accomplished by the seamless and accommodating digital compact. How do we transport the experience of nature to a wall and stay close to our subject? By extracting only the necessary elements to convey the beauty, memory and perception of nature, which the digital process so brilliantly achieves.

My recent series *Water, Lilies* describes a pond in late fall, the lilies in various states of decay. The changing colors of the lilies suggest a hotter, fertile, lively pond life fading in time and irresistibly connected to that point in the life cycle of plants and animals (the earth and the universe) of death. Slightly blurred forms, muted light and the water's rich black color fading into gray evocatively draw out the memory of a dying aquatic bog. The viewer's mental space, reminded of being in water, the boundaries blurred between outer and personal, is transformed into a state of contemplation of the cycle of life and death, and the experiences of dreaming, sleep and remembering.