

2 Layers

For the first month or so of the pandemic, the odd, suspended space of being unusually busy with both work and art while being isolated felt temporary. By month three, I along with the rest of the world, was in unfamiliar territory.

The Coastal Series inspiration was quickly leaving me. I was working on “The Spaces Between” when the pandemic hit. I attempted another similar piece, and then another, but they were unsuccessful.

COVID-19 created a growing underlying uncertainty on a personal level, and watching it affect our community and the world became very heavy. Like everyone I else, I felt the weight of it grow with each passing month. Maybe even a little more than some because in my legislative job, we heard firsthand the distressed outcry from individuals who were not receiving their unemployment benefits. Trying to thrive when others are struggling to survive before your very eyes is both a burden and a gift. You can offer help but not solve the problem. You can gain perspective on what is important, while feeling a tinge of guilt about being okay when others you are interacting with are not.

The turmoil left me uninspired. It was time to change course; to step back rather than start something new. I was pulled back to paintings that I had started and had hoped would lead to new series, but had put aside while I fulfilled obligations of commissions and exhibitions. It was now their time.

“Layers I” had been in the making for over five years. I loved adding something new and working back and forth to excavate, keeping the history of the work done along the way. After, it was obvious that this process was a manifestation of what I was doing internally and psychologically: reshaping my priorities while preserving what brought me here.

“Blue Wave” triptych followed, reflecting the serenity I craved. Layers II and III took place over many months with stops and starts due to many interruptions. I plan to continue this series, because I like the complexity of layers and the simplicity of design.