



PRESERVED: Barbara Vogel

Memories are the hardest to hold onto; edges become fuzzy, details fade. We are left with the essence of the spirit, the feeling of the day or the space.

The work of Barbara Vogel encapsulates what that is- what is preserved in our mind's eye when what we are left with is the memory.



The work of Barbara Vogel is both compelling and disconcerting. The edges are fuzzy, faces blurred, eyes not clear. Yet, we cannot stop looking. We see what we feel- the spirit of life, the recording of the energy within.

Harking back to traditional portraiture, the limner's job was to create a rendering that captured not only a physical likeness, but also the soul of the sitter.

Using a hand-held scanner, Vogel documents the subject with a method that usually reproduces an exact representation. However, instead of the precise physical portrayal, we have what seems to be a spiritual representation. The essence of what makes the sitter human is documented.

Over the surface, Vogel has applied an encaustic coating, to preserve the image –the memory, just as we would preserve fruit in a jar with a layer of wax.

The florals are also teeming with life. Painters such as Charles Burchfield and Walter Anderson worked to record the mood, the light, and the energy in plant life and landscapes. Here, we have Vogel, through the use of light, depth, and atmosphere, immersing the viewer in an inescapable environment, we dive deeper and deeper below the surface to find the stem, the root, a horizon, or the earth. None appear, and we float quite comfortably in the semiabstract –hence semi recognizable- landscapes.



Also on view are Vogel's wood carvings. Starting with a photographic image applied to wood, paint is applied, and a process of carving begins. Some areas are removed, while parts of the original image remain. We can see eyes, teeth, hair, perhaps a dimple peeking through the overlays of color. Again, we see the artist looking for what is below the surface, we see a glimpse of the soul under the mask. The palette is much brighter than the scanned based works, and the color may become part the of psychological over lay of interpretation into these works.

