

# FrameWork 2/13:1

Sandra Meigs on Simple Present Future Anterior

*A Powder of Feelings*



Charles S. Peirce writes: “Time consists in a regularity in the relations of interacting feelings. Like begins to produce like. Then even pairs of unlike feelings begin to have similarity and then these begin to generalize... All this goes on in ways I cannot detail until the feelings are so bound together that a passable approximation to a real time is established. Unrelated feelings are like a powder of matter, psychically imbued. This powder is fine, rare, and evenly distributed.” A life in art is equally rare and equally full of feeling. The artist experiences the chaos of rare feeling brought to some eventual cohesion in form then bound together in works of art.

Both my daughter, Evelyn Feldman, and Susan Hobbs Gallery were born in February, 1993. I conflate these two events in a giant spiral of love, art, life, and business. It is rare and enormous. Here are some entries from my journals over the years.



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February 27, 1993

Inaugural Opening today at Susan Hobbs. Sent in the two framed gouaches from the Red Deer River. “Mary take the child; the river’s rising. Muddy water changing all I know.” Sorry I can’t be there. The baby’s so exhausting.

March 23, 1993

Evelyn slept the longest ever in her life. 5 1/2 hours. And she is taking a rare nap now-- no telling how long-- it could be over any minute now. I think her sleeping ability is developing. If only we could get her to take the bottle. I fear that she never will. Joe keeps trying but she won’t swallow the milk from it. -----I have ideas for new paintings, but I think about the production with fear – when will I ever have time? Evelyn is very beautiful and can be extremely charming.

October 24, 1993

Joe and I took Evelyn for her 9-month check-up. There was a routine weighing, measuring, chest check and questions. Dr. Doyle was concerned about Ev’s lack of weight gain (about 14 3/4 lbs. now) and said we should “force some food down her”. Ev has an ear infection in her right ear. But Dr. Doyle couldn’t tell if the infection was from ear picking or if the ear picking was from the infection. She’s been waking at 4:30 AM, which seems like the middle of the night. I’ve been trying to feed her breakfast twice, once when she first gets up, alternating with the bottle, and an hour later in the high chair. So far I’m able to get a whole jar of cereal and fruit down her, quite a lot more than before. She seems to call everything either Ga or Ba but understands a lot of words like bottle, duck, fan, show, book, juice, bath, bed, dance, and Mommy and Daddy of course. She’s a happy baby and learning new things every day.



June 2, 1994

I opened Baby at the gallery. When she was only 4 weeks old, I took the baby on my research trip to Utah but could not do the drawing that I wanted to because the baby never slept so I wrote the story instead and then put the story of with a long run on panorama painting about a woman who drops her baby and the baby dies and the woman cannot get over her grief ever, cannot stop seeing the baby’s face, even when she closes her eyes. I have heard that Rock-a-Bye Baby is a wish song for respite from the ever-needy infant. A revenge song. I had my text engraved on the frames. Perhaps it is revenge, but I love that I am able to put my love and exhaustion into this painting. It’s very funny I think. An epic comic tragedy.

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June 20, 1995

The baby is off on her own more. Happy to play with friends and read books. We can hardly call her a baby anymore. Sometimes she seems capable of looking after herself. All of a sudden my inner thoughts seem inconsequential. Whereas before I had the baby they were the most important things in the world. Perhaps I'll never paint again. Nothing is ever enough. I try not making a picture and I try making a very distinct picture. I cannot get it right either way.

July 8, 1995

Evy saw the photograph I had taken of myself when I was pregnant. When she asked me about it I told her it was me with her inside. She told me then that she wishes I would eat her up again. I so think that inside and outside are the same. My art is like the baby too. I have all her dollies and I do collages of them with her scrappy craft stuff. They are all sleeping on flat hard beds.

July – October, 1995

And then I made Canadian: a scatology of paint forms swirling outward from the canvas. Texts in round yellow disks float out from the frames.



September 1, 1999

JOYJOYSORROW. Susan picked me up at the airport. She seemed rushed, wired, upset. The police called her about a fire at her house. No details. On the way in she talks about Pamela. Pamela is her new assistant. It's her first day at the gallery. We arrive at the gallery. It's a hot Toronto day. Pamela comes out to the car and talks to Susan. Something serious. It's about the fire. The fire department wants her to get home right away. Pamela looks kind of white and is very quiet. We get my suitcase out of the car. Pamela and I go in. Susan drives off, looking very shaky. We go ahead installing the work, a big job and not much time. I am suddenly bound to Pamela when I want Susan to be there. I want the pieces to be installed crooked, tipsy-like. It is a wave, a big sea enveloping the gallery. JOYJOYSORROW. The work looks so great. I am stunned.

September 2, 1999

The house fire was extensive. Lots of fire damage and smoke damage. I didn't get many details out of Susan. At the opening, Susan doesn't want people to discuss her house fire. There's a weird kind of hush. I don't even think she is telling anyone. It was weird not talking about the elephant in the room. I don't even think it was mentioned at the opening and if it was, it was like a death. She wouldn't be able to sleep there again for many months. Of course I am preoccupied with the show, which was a major production.

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JOYJOYSORROW is so mesmerizing. The wall-to-wall carpet has a sinking effect. The gallery has become a sea upon which the doleful-eyed heads are floating. Upstairs, Scenes on a Sea of Joy and Sorrow.

January 26, 2013

Susan lights the shows. I can't get up on that ladder. Susan twists around up there with the wires, beams and lights, her feet on the top rung of the 9' ladder. Sometimes she curses and swears.

Susan has exacting respect for her artists and her clients. I admire her discretion and business acumen. The Solo Show is prime time for each of us respectively. She does not express her passion or dispassion for the work. I think that, in a strange way, this gives her focus and authority. It shows a kind of respect for the long-term work of the artists. She believes in and understands that making art is a journey.

This is like the powder of feeling. The art comes together not one particular artwork being fixed, until the Life of Art is rarified. Then it becomes the Time of the Artist, in one whole. The baby is born, then you don't talk about this moment or that moment as the best, and not all moments stand out. It is a continuum. A life.

Titles

I have had 11 Solo Shows at the gallery in the past 20 years plus some in the upstairs space at the same time:

Baby, Canadian, Dummies, Resin Heads, JOYJOYSORROW, Swoon, The Newborn, Bump, Ride, Its, The Fold Heads, The Giants, Strange Loop, Scenes on a Sea of Joy and Sorrow, Three Places, What the Inside Sees, Sleeping Dollies.