

Words from Roxie Munro



I have always been fascinated by architecture; it provides all sorts of rich material for artists. To me, buildings are like huge

sculptures, with interesting shapes and varied masses. Even the space created between buildings excites me. Most buildings seem very individual, like a person with his or her own character. Each one is made for a specific reason, by an individual architect or builder, at a particular time in history, and this makes them seem especially human.

The decorative elements in architecture are continuously amusing to me. Regardless of the function of a building, from the most magnificent to the most humble, humans manage to decorate their structures. All sorts of styles and patterns appear on buildings. It seems as though people feel a real necessity to go beyond function and to manipulate form. The ways in which this is done charm me immensely.

I grew up in a small town in rural Maryland located on the Chesapeake Bay. I didn't have close friends nearby, so much of my time was spent reading and daydreaming. My parents encouraged their children to make their own toys, to draw (my older sister is also a professional artist), and of course to read. When I was eleven, I complained to my parents that I had read all the books in my school's library. The scheduled visits of the county bookmobile, and my mother's weekly trip to the public library which was twenty miles away, were red-letter days. We also traveled a lot, taking family vacations by car, driving throughout the South, New England, and out West, visiting the cities and the countryside.

My work is an art that develops out of visual perception. It is very spatial; ideas form through active seeing. When I walk down the street, ride a bus, or go up an escalator, I feel the changing space and notice the flow of patterns. I see paintings everywhere. My mind organizes reality. I'll notice two gray cars, a red car, a black car, and two more red cars - aha! a pattern. When I am working on a painting - perhaps a fantasy landscape, maybe a real view from atop a building - I sometimes imagine myself within the scene. Suddenly, I am in the tiny car on the winding road or swinging down the big-city avenue.

Not until my late thirties did I go back to my home library and look again at books that had affected me as a child. I was amazed to find that every line, shape, and color, every figure and setting of the exquisite illustrations by Arthur Szyk in Andersen's Fairy Tales were totally familiar to me. It was as if I'd seen them yesterday, rather than thirty years ago.

I remember, as a child pouring over the book many times, drinking up the richness of the paintings, never tiring, and always being fascinated. I am certain that my work is influenced by those early impressions of rich color, ornate patterns, and dynamic use of space.