

JESSICA ROHRER ARTIST STATEMENT



Drone 7 – 2016, India ink on paper, 12 ½ x 12 ½ inches

For more than a decade the source material for my work has been the homes and neighborhoods in which I have lived from Wisconsin to Brooklyn to New Jersey. I have focused on domestic spaces – medicine cabinets, refrigerators, and closets – and narrowed in on individual objects. At times the paintings are interiors, viewed through a mirror or window, and at others it's the exterior façade of my home or street views of the neighborhood.

This subject matter allows me to explore a series of ideas. One is the notion of public and private space. My most recent pieces, for example, involve the use of a drone camera. The use of the drone camera itself is socially loaded, as their increasing prominence has led them to be viewed as tools of aggression used for spying and warfare. Drones have also become a symbol of our collective declining privacy. My images illustrate this by laying bare both the physical and socioeconomic elements of the neighborhood via the meticulous capture of homes, cars, swimming pools, and outdoor furniture.

Conversely, drones also represent an isolated, harmless, everyday leisure activity for both adults and children. In that sense, the details included in the drawings can also be viewed from a perspective of being commonplace and unintrusive. The houses and cars in this neighborhood could be most anywhere, and as a result do little to tell us about the families, who remain out-of-sight.

Another concept of interest to me is the desire to control our surrounding environment. My work investigates our desire to not only capture and record the minutiae of life, but to idealize and stylize each and every detail. Photography has long-enabled us to hold time still, but the ubiquity of camera phones and publishing platforms such as social media lead us more and more to obsessively stage our lives for both ourselves and others.

Just as we carefully attempt to manipulate others' perception of us, so too do I wish to curate the viewer's perception of my subject matter. There is a searching that takes place traveling above and around these spaces, sometimes drawn closer to observe plants, a swimming pool, or patio chairs, and other times pulling back to focus more on the pattern of rooftops or gridwork of yards. Details of the familiar or mundane aspects of life are given equal importance, from cars that are left abandoned on the street to individual leaves and roof shingles. Ultimately the viewer is presented with an abundance of information that is carefully organized and staged.