

Not Just a Number: COVID portrait series

Artist Statement

As a portrait artist, I aim to capture more than just a likeness with my work and I attempt to convey each subject's personality with each portrait I make. I am also trying to make art that reflects my values and is straightforward and accessible. I want to make my point and do it in a way that does not exclude those who are not well versed in art or even interested in the art. This body of work is a response to collective grief caused by the Covid pandemic. Each portrait is of someone who lost their life to covid, and each is drawn with text describing that person. Families who lost loved ones provided text that described who they lost; their likes, dislikes, quirks, and more. The aim is to illustrate the humanity behind the number of covid deaths, while offering grieving families a measure of peace and support through art. Since 2020, we have been inundated with news of the Covid death toll. The numbers are so staggering that they sort of become like a white noise of tragedy. We can't process the true scale of what those numbers mean. We don't see the real impact of those deaths because for most of us, we don't know those people. We know it's sad, but what we don't know is the depth and importance of each person who was lost, and the scale of each family's grief. By drawing each person in this series with text provided by their families, anyone who views the portraits will get a glimpse of who these people were, how loved they were, how missed they are, and how much they meant to their families.