

Susannah Bielak
Artist Statement: Aerial Gaze
(2004 – 2006)

Watching people from above is somewhat like watching clouds. Observers can imagine who and what they see in moving forms. Looking down at the sidewalk, the vantage is close enough to observe personal relationships while far enough to allow anonymity. An aerial perspective offers a curious dichotomy: the proximity to witness people intimately and the distance to envision them as patterns—brief formations in continual motion. Watching the street shows me tenderness, indifference, speed, and stillness, and the language formed from pauses and overlaps.

For five and a half years I worked sitting next to a 15' x 20' second-story window overlooking a busy intersection. *Aerial gaze* is a series of monotypes based on the view. The medium, selected for its dichotomous qualities, relays flatness and texture, distance and presence. The prints reference the color and subject of Japanese *ukiyo-e* (“pictures of the floating world”) and the painting and prints of American and European romantics concerned with the human condition. The aerial perspective lends both a sense of surveillance and a sense of poetry to peoples' movement, a strange urban choreography illustrating patterns of alienation, hope, and intimacy.