

Barbara Kemp Cowlin Statement—[barbara@barbaracowlin.com](mailto:barbara@barbaracowlin.com)

In my Askew paintings I address the dichotomy between reality and fantasy.

The paintings teeter between happiness and anxiety, investigating my longing for stability. Walls imply solidity. Corners suggest the uncertainty of the future. Opposites coexist: solidly colored shapes vs textured; hard edges vs ragged. Angles contrast accurate perspective with skewed perspective, highlighting inconsistencies that mirror the uncertainties of life and the relativity of time.

I observe the solid structures of the built environment. When the timing is just right, light hits solid surfaces, liquefying them and causing shadows to become luminous. These visual contradictions challenge reality.

All the while, the slipperiness of memory occupies my thoughts. A familiar street yields empty lots with no memory of what once was. I turn a corner and see an unfamiliar tall building. When did it appear? Disorientation makes me yearn for the familiar.

Indicating the flow of time as it warps, flips, and steadies, the paintings balance memory, time and contradictions. Yet in all, bright colors and fanciful patterns, the work shows that a sense of humor helps counteract the unpredictable nature of life.