



JEFFRY MITCHELL

Artist Statement

Alligators, Elephants, & Alphabets

Imagine a parent reading a picture book to their young child.

There is a lot going on:

A book with a hardcover, a certain size, the smell and feel of the paper...

Imagine the room:

A chair or a bed, patterned upholstery, charming decor

Blankets with satin edges, Grandma's Afghans

The fragrance of soap, fresh from the bath, damp hair

The odors of adults: sweat, perfume, booze

The anticipation and excitement

The reluctant recitation of the text, for the 100th time

Sometimes rushed

Sometimes really savored

The child is drifting in and out of the imaginary world of the book. The mind of the adult; ruminating, worrying, loving.

Do you remember when you learned to read? I don't but I remember how much I liked the feeling of looking and figuring out. How much I liked the scene: the library, the classroom, the kitchen table piled with books. Pencils, sharpeners, erasers, and blue lined paper. A sheet of text gives me a thrill; not the content but the space of the printed page.

I asked my teacher, Stanley Whitney, "What is subject matter?" He told me, "Subject matter is whatever makes it possible for you to make your work". My subjects come from the school classroom and the home: picture books and domestic decoration.

I hope that my work affects a field of joy, complicated with an air of loss.

Springtime exuberance mixed with that late summer sadness.
That feeling in Autumn when we are energized with anticipation; hopes, and dreams dragged down
by memories.

Waves of delight laced with subtle pangs of regret and grief.

Thinking back and thinking way ahead....