

# Claire Thorson and Barbara Downs

## Collaborative Statement

In addition to the work we do individually, we have been working collaboratively for some years now. For a brief period, we worked alternately on pieces, as many collaborators do, but presently we work on the same piece together, at the same time, side by side.

There are no rules; decisions or marks made by one person may be immediately altered or erased by the other. In a fluid and dynamic process, we change sides, step back to look, call to each other to correct an area whose fault can only be seen from a distance, try to protect a favorite line or tonal area, then most likely let it go.

Sometimes we agree. Sometimes we struggle. We may pursue dissimilar directions, wrestle with each other through the charcoal, chalk and paint. Working together may trigger a conflict of interest—drawing is, after all, a very personal endeavor.

But in spite of or because of the intensity we share, a drawing comes together from our combined work at the easel. And the endpoint of the drawing, while often surprising, is almost always mutually understood. Our most successful drawings blend our two visions seamlessly, and though we may recognize a mark or a passage that belongs to one or the other of us, the overall piece is something neither of us would have arrived at on our own.

By working together, embracing the unpredictable outcomes, the possibilities of making an image are somehow multiplied by more than a factor of two. The collaborative process opens new vistas and directions that each of us can take to our own work, and the work we do together stands in its own right. — *Claire Thorson and Barbara Downs*