

## COLLEEN LEOF: ARTIST STATEMENT

*Anything can happen on the canvas. You can't foresee it.  
Why paint something thought out beforehand.*



I begin a picture by painting washes at random, using brushes, my hands. Layer after layer. The paint gets thicker. I scrape. I glaze. I paint some more until the surface of the canvas is a mass of shifting textures, lumps, scrubbings of pigment. The paint drips. There's a face. In a window. A figure. A breast. A house. I talk to myself. I paint and scrape some more. It's an excavation. An uncovering, when I am the least self-conscious, of what is both unforeseen and true. A digging up and giving form, texture and color to my desires and fears.

## COLLEEN LEOF: REFLECTIONS

*When I was a little girl, we loved to spend weekends at my grandmother's, my sister and I. Up late at night. Butter on our toast. Afternoon tea tipped into the saucer to cool. No parents. No rules. The magical land of yes.*



My grandmother had a dazzling dressing table and I can remember when I first saw it. It took my breath away. Bottles and bottles of perfume. Pots of powder. Lipstick. Nail polish. Brushes. Mirrors. Yes, we could play with everything. My sister and I could not believe our good fortune. We were thrilled. We would powder our faces, concoct every imaginable combination of perfumes and daub every inch of our arms with our different creations, paint and repaint our lips, our fingers, our toes. We were in paradise.

When I walk into my studio all these years later, that feeling rushes back to me. I see my table covered with pots of paints, tubes of color, and I can't believe my good fortune. I'm thrilled. I'm back at my grandmother's table mixing up concoctions with the swirling, oozing paint, daubing the canvas instead of my arms, surrendering to the alchemy of the paint. I'm in paradise. I'm in the magical land of yes.