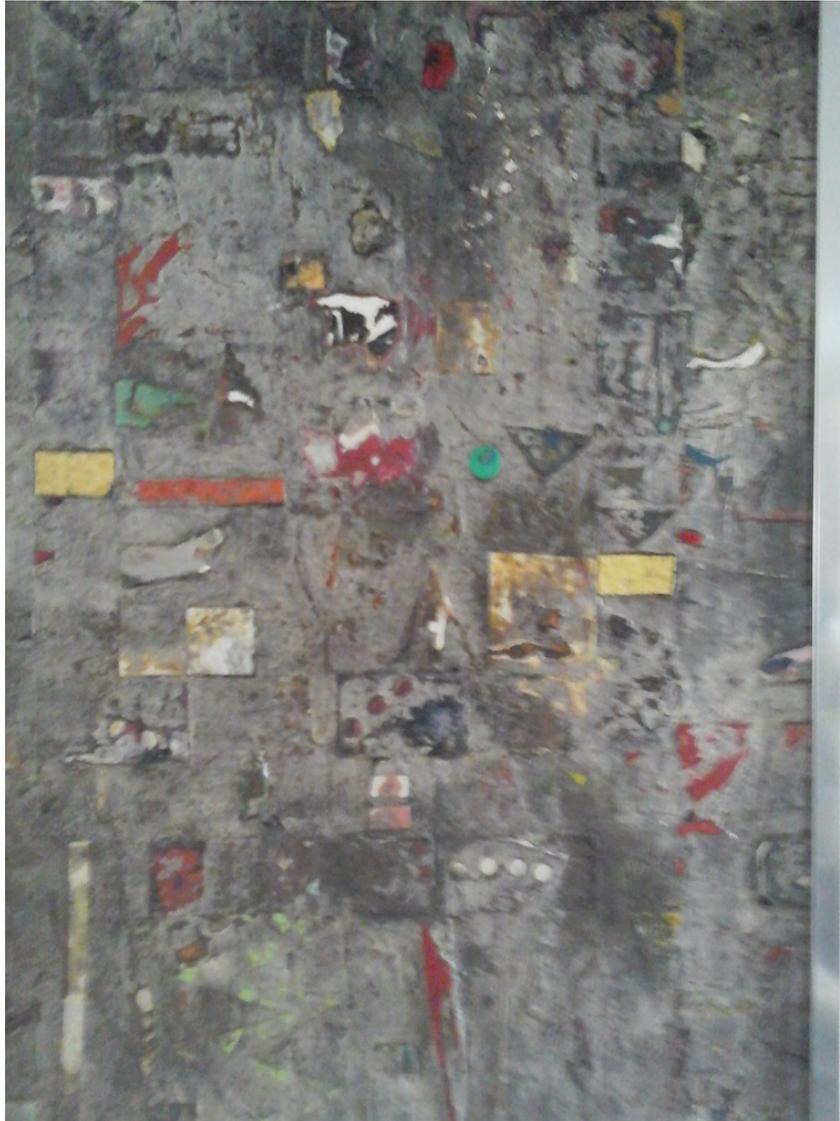


May12

## Timeout for Art: Surprise

Posted on [May 12, 2021](#) by [cindyricksgers](#)  
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Some paintings come together easily; others take a long, long time. This piece, “Home of Language,” has been “in progress” for at least five years.

It has been through several incarnations in that time. It started as a painting, then became a painting with collage elements. I’ve added coats of paint, layers of glazes, and more collage elements. I’ve scraped and sanded the surface.

In between changes, it has spent months hanging on walls, sometimes in the studio, sometimes in my living space for a different perspective. I have studied it at length. What did it need? What to do next? Was it worth saving? The answers changed, based on the day, my mood, and the quality of light. Always, it held my interest enough to keep me from giving up on it.

Now and then, I'd hide the work. Sometimes it helps to forget about a piece for a while, so that I can see it with fresh eyes again. So, with its face to the wall, it would join other primed or painted surfaces, waiting.

Last winter, I took another look at it. Hmm...it still intrigued me. Using an electric palm sander, I "excavated" selectively through layers of paint, revealing some old elements. I worked in some stains and added glazes. I studied it some more. Finally, a coat of varnish signaled a finishing point.

Still, when planning which pieces I'd prepare to send to the gallery this year, I debated about whether I was ready to send this out into the world. In a moment of wild abandon, I ordered a frame for it. Last week, I spent some time assembling frames.

Sometimes, the frame puts just enough distance between me and the efforts and doubts I have invested in the work, that I can finally see it clearly. Oh, hey...did I do this? This *is* done! It *does* work! When that happens, that's the best surprise!