Bill Mayer: Artist Statement

I sit and listen for the clock to tick... There is only the sound of rain on the tin roof. A few birds chatting it up in the cedars, trying to stay dry. The coffee’s percolating a jazzy Latin beat...

First thing you should know is
You Will Die;

Knowing this I started out my last day with the fortitude of Hunter S Thompson...
Waking at 5:37, Sunrise at Calf Pasture.... Long ride up the point to the Presqu'ile Lighthouse...return to a couple pots of percolated coffee, four scrambled eggs, half pound of bacon, and a Dutch Baby; followed by a Bloody Mary, and a nice swim in the bay...
Another long trail ride up the point, through Jobe's woods, to Jobe's Lane, down the lake shore to the park store for a heaping scoop of morning ice cream... Sprint back to the cottage for another brisk swim... Repair deck chair... A little painting on the cabinet. Then a trip to the windy beach to see the Waddlings and a glass of the finest Canadian Rye... It smelled like dried grass and a horse barn... Paint cabinet, paint face, costume, Tequila, ..Calathumpian Parade!
Met our first new Neighbors in Eighty years... We all gather for dinner. Ontario corn, various casseroles all laced with Canadian cheese... Chicken smothered in Fox Brothers BBQ sauce, hot dogs, pecan pie, butter tarts, some jello thing (I have no idea)... after dinner, Bonfire. Fire hooping and spinning under the most incredible orange moon rising... I was told tonight that I don't eat like a pig, pigs chew their food.... I eat like a duck.... We gather around the fire and tell stories of Pondscoggins, Lunkerheads, and Banshees that steal children away in the night.

But before I lose you completely, I should talk about the show more directly.
The whole idea of "Momento mori," Remembering you will die, is a healthy reflection, looking back and examining your past while also looking forward toward the future.

Painting miniatures comes from several sources.

First, from "The Book of Hours" we saw in New York at the Morgan Library a few years back. Incredible little paintings and manuscripts done in medieval Europe in the early 1500's. Second; Some direct inspiration, from Lee's eggs that she paints me every year for Easter where she takes an artist she's found during the year and paints an elaborate egg using a rabbit, cleverly incorporated into them in some way... and third; it's a direct reflection of the way with view our world through social media, at 800 pixels by 72dpi.

All of the paintings are all done in gouache on watercolor paper. They’re an ongoing experiment with medium and composition and the potent nature of dreams. I think there are no deep dark hidden secrets. It’s just fun to play with the emotions art can generate. I believe color is really emotion. Color choices are made to reinforce those emotions. To me there’s a sense of poetry in the playful use of surreal elements.

The stamp drawings

I'm not really sure if there is a rational explanation behind these silly little drawings. I paste these stamps in my sketchbooks and draw over the top of them. I love the contrast of the beautiful craftsmanship and stoic nature of the stamp, and the playful, graffiti-like gesture of absurdity. They
make me smile.

**Letters to Lee**

For years I've been sending letters to Lee... always decorated with collage, lettering and drawings. It's a wonder they make it through the mail at all. I’m sure the origin of the stamp drawings came directly from these letters... a few years ago I decided to compile a bunch of the letters into an elaborate Valentine’s Day present for her, turned into, I think, an 86-foot-long accordion fold book.

Sketchbooks are a great source for exploring ideas and directions. We thought stacking some of them with our skeleton Bob would be an interesting way to display them.

You know wasn't really thinking of it as a skeleton lying in state, but more the weight of 50 years of work on top of him... Crushing him, with his bones sticking out from underneath like the wicked witch when the house landed on top of her.

"Here is fruit for the crows to pluck
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck
For the sun to rot, for the leaves to drop
Here is a strange and bitter crop"

- Abel Meeropol 1937