

way of integrating color and pattern on a fabric support, like oil on canvas. Distanced from the Romantic tradition of the authorial hand, batik's heritage is not only non-Western but kitschy and touristic (like the California "stoner" tradition in which Morley first encountered it).<sup>1</sup> Likewise, the artist has embraced painting on glass; first intrigued by its use as a cheap substitute for stained glass, Morley later appreciated its references to sign painting and tourist artifacts. (Ghanaian glass paintings made for the tourist trade first exposed him to this possibility.) In order to paint on glass, one must compose in reverse on the backside—painting in foreground first, then middle ground, then background—offering the perfect challenge for Morley's considerable skills and training. He has also used machine-stitched embroidery in place of the primary hand to provide a tangible record of time (one can literally count the threads to get a sense of how long a particular passage took to make). The tactility, level of sheen, saturation and range of color, and reaction with light of each of these techniques are chief considerations for how and when they are used.

One of the results (and aims) of Morley's method is to try to make objects that appear to be "souvenirs of a fictional as well as an actual place."<sup>2</sup> He strives for an "artifact quality" so that the works appear as if they have fallen out of time or indeed out of one of his chosen narratives.<sup>3</sup> His resistance to working in a dominant style contributes to this quality and allows the viewer to consider contexts and conditions outside the frame, including the work's informing narrative and the ingrained associations of the viewer, as well as the relationships between individual paintings. Morley has said that he is interested in tackling methods and subjects with a lot of "baggage" so that multiple associations and diverse histories are activated in the mind of the beholder.<sup>4</sup> Thus his use of California frontier-era imagery brings up rafts of preconceptions, just as painting on glass does. Certain motifs, such as the florets in *Tehachepi (sic)*, morph and migrate from piece to piece and from narrative to narrative, problematizing the issue of meaning and drawing attention to the power of context.

1. Press release, Patrick Painter, Inc., Santa Monica, California, February 2003.

2. Press release, Essor Gallery, London, September 2002.

3. Ivan Morley, in conversation with the author, Los Angeles, 4 February 2005.

4. Ibid.