

Cicely Cottingham

16 PAINTINGS FOR MARJORIE

16 Paintings For Marjorie (2000–2003) are acrylic on wood panels. They extend my process, which engaged me for fifteen years, of producing works composed of multiples of four. They are a response to the environment in and around Newark, New Jersey, which I now call home. While working on these paintings, pondering what was still a major change in my visual environment (country to urban), I found myself surrounded by a pool of memory of my mother Marjorie, who had died in 1999 at the age of 85. Titles for the paintings arose from these memories: the title *At Mr. Fiore's* conjures afternoons of fittings at the tailor where Marjorie allowed flirtation while improving her own skills as a seamstress; *Perky Omen* was the name of the parakeet that flew free for a time in our New Jersey farmhouse. Giving titles to works that are not aides for a literal interpretation but that expand my expression beyond the confines of the object, is a practice that has been meaningful to me in much of my work. So these works are formal expressions of my experience of a new environment, but they are also a celebration of a life lived and of the creativity which Marjorie fostered in me.