

Five Questions With.....Brenda Heim

Interview with Rebecca Swain, Orlando Sentinel

in reference to: Solo exhibition at the Lake Eustis Museum of Art, Sept 2002

1. Tell us more about your new show at the Lake Eustis Museum of Art--how would you describe theme (or feel) of the show?

The theme or feel for the exhibition "Calligraphic Abstract Expressionism" is the art of playfulness. Zen expressions of my inner child, if you will. This is a conceptual exhibition that includes several large scale paintings (averaging 6-7 feet) accompanied by mini-essays, playful comments and prophetic wisdom. In the center of the museum is an old time wooden seat swing with a note on the seat that reads: have fun, make peace, and be your very own most beloved God given you. The swing is a reminder to view the paintings in a moment of stillness - as if one is cloud watching - like swinging on a swing in a park. In its entirety, the exhibition encourages one to nurture the child within, make peace daily and simply embrace one's human spirit fully.

2. Your style is really interesting--it seems to combine elements of calligraphy with abstract expressionism. How did this fusion of styles come about?

The fusion of calligraphy and abstract expressionism manifested in the late 80's as a result of my yearning to find the fine artist within (without going back to college) and a quest of self-discovery. I asked my very dear friend and fellow calligraphy scribe, Sandra, to help me 'get out of the box' with my artistic endeavors. She introduced me to a Zen style of quick, gestural, abstract brush movements with a small brush and Sumi ink on the garage floor. Wow, wow, wow . . . I was nearly breathless, and needless to say, I was off and running. I embraced the introduction to Zen brush painting and immediately began enlarging calligraphic strokes with wide sweeps of gestural movements. A "painting outside of the lines" of traditional letter forms emerged.

3. When it comes to abstract pieces, some might be inclined to wonder "What am I looking at?" As an artist, what would you say is the key to enjoying abstract art?

The key to enjoying abstract art (for me) is to simply enjoy it. It is a language that allows viewers their own experience of seeing images for whatever it is that they mean for them. Everyone sees something different. For instance, different people will look at one particular painting of mine titled "The Heim Women" with vastly different responses; *oh my gosh! the artist is so free!*; *hmmmm.....the artist was so angry when she painted this!* and then another, *ah look.....the artist had a spiritual epiphany!* Abstractions are an opportunity to view the mirror of ones soul . . . as the outer world reflects the inner world.

4. Who are some of your artistic influences? (Which artists have inspired you in the past?)

Artistic Influences...hmmmm besides God? Authentic, genuine people and experiences inspire me. Children, elders and those that share life experiences inspire me. People that live their full potential and are in some way - of service - with their full potential inspire me. And of course, the large scale abstractions from Helen Frankenthaler, Franz Kline, Pollock and Monet inspire me.

5. In your opinion, what is the one biggest challenge facing artists today (either culturally, artistically, personally...)?

The biggest challenge that I see facing artists today. . .Ego. Of which can be our own worst enemy or can be a saving grace. Being conscious about positive and negative aspects of ego is essential to living fully in the present and becoming the full potential of self.

For additional Lake Eustis Museum of Art information contact:

352-357-4952

The exhibition is through Sept 30.

Additional dates and times to meet the artist are:

Thurs Sept 12, 5-8pm Business after hours

Sat & Sun Sept 21 & 22 10am-5pm, Lake Eustis Fine Arts Festival

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