

Biography

George Middleton Art Studio
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Born: 1957

I live and work in Carlisle, Massachusetts. From 1980 to 2008, I worked as a freelance scenic artist painting murals, decorative finishes, and backdrops for private residences, public spaces, film, theater, and advertising. From 1989 to the present, I have worked as a freelance illustrator specializing in floral and food illustration for product packaging. During that time, I have exhibited my personal work regularly in local juried shows, and various non-curated venues.

Exhibits

1980 Concord Public Library, Concord, Mass., one-person show
1988 Acton Arts League, Acton, Mass., annual juried group show
1992 Concord Art Association, Concord, Mass., annual juried group show
1996 Concord Art Association, Concord, Mass., annual juried group show
1999 Concord Art Association, Concord, Mass., annual juried group show
2005 Gleason Public Library, Carlisle, Mass., group show
2008 Trinity Episcopal Church, Concord, Mass., group show
2011 Gleason Public Library, Carlisle, Mass., "Essence" group show

Bibliography

Hillary Levin, "Energy Abounds in Person and on Canvas", Littleton Independent, March 10, 1988

Demonstrations

1988 WCVB-TV Channel 5's Good Day Show, Boston, Mass., demonstration of faux finishes and wall-texturing techniques
1990 Chelmsford Art Association, Chelmsford, Mass., demonstration of airbrush techniques

1993 Massachusetts Horticultural Society, Boston, Mass., ANNUAL SPRING FLOWER SHOW, demonstration of wildlife painting techniques

TV & Video

"Rock Strata of Pittsburgh"; carved and painted panels depicting rocks and fossils found in the Pittsburgh area- created for a video production for an exhibit in the Carnegie Museum of Natural History.

"Ancient Drawing"; carved and painted panels depicting Indian cave drawings. Created for a talk show on animal rights produced by a local cable channel.

Selected Commissions

1984 "Wicked Two"; images of guitars on large yellow van built for Boston's WBCN-FM rock radio station and used to broadcast live performances.

1985 "Pixelations", MIT Coop food plaza, Cambridge, Mass.; 12'x60' mural of computer-generated imagery.

1985 "Star Room" , private residence in Dover, Mass. Turret ceiling of guest house painted to look like a night sky with a decorative floral border.

1986 "Ethereal Mountains", private residence in Brookline, Mass. 8' x 12' mural depicting magical mountain scene in a child's bedroom.

1988 "Wonders of Italy", Florence Restaurant, Boston, Mass.; 5'x52' mural of famous Italian vistas.

1990 "Runners", Sheraton Foxboro health club, Foxboro, Mass.; 2 life-size figures jogging.

1990 "Plantmobile", Massachusetts Horticultural Society, Boston, Mass.; two 8'x14' nature murals on the Society's mobile ecology classroom

1998 "Copper Verdigris", private residence, Sherborn, Mass.; 1500 square feet of exterior copper panels textured with green patina, and eleven 14"x 52" interior panels textured to match marble countertop.

1990-2001 "Sarah Michaels " bath and beauty products, Stoughton, Mass. and Tucson, Arizona; thirty still life paintings of flowers, fruit, and herbs used as packaging art on this nationally distributed product line.

2007 "Kissel's Spiced Jam" food products, Chicago, Illinois; a series of 6 still life paintings of fruits and herbs used as packaging art on this nationally distributed product line.

2009-2015 "Oldways Diet Pyramids" a series of richly detailed illustrations of many food items found in traditional diets; for Oldways.org and licensed to food manufacturers and distributors worldwide.

Artist's Statement

Perhaps the central underlying theme of my work reflects a paradox of modern experience: the earth as a complex and powerfully intelligent organization apart from the human, at once overwhelming and terrifying in its dispassionate control over our lives, and yet- strangely and inexplicably submissive and fragile to the designs of our willful and directed energies.

In a long-standing pre-occupation with this mystery, I've gravitated naturally to a "visionary" interpretation of the landscape: one that is motivated by the sense of a hidden world of energy- timeless, fluid, and vibrant- and lurking just behind the casual "normal" appearance of things. There is nothing particularly special about this; history tells us this is a common human experience through the ages. Yet, it would appear it cannot be accessed solely through the cold heart of science, "realism", and logic but inevitably requires the ritualized and focused application of imagination.

This harkens to the old ways, the ancient world of the drum and dance, the song of the wind- a world where the restorative and transformative power in nature brings new insight, energy, and hope. This is the essential subject and motive of my work: to experience this perception through the "ritual" of painting, hopefully to exact a visual description of this experience, to capture a communication of some kind with this elemental, perhaps unknowable force.

The tension in this work, my struggle as an artist, is a movement away from the presentation of this theme as fanciful illustration of the results of this questing, to a more honest and humble approach devoid of elaborate visual props. A true immersion in deep-water risk instead: a forgetting of one's self, a release of control during the process of painting- the artist as portal. The result must surely come from that silent place within, and cannot be bought, pre-determined, controlled, or otherwise devised by the mind ahead of time. This is the method where "what" is painted is secondary to the quality of the channeling, the degree of magic which has occurred during the act of creating.

Certainly, my own stylistic development as an artist initially schooled in imaginative fantasy and depictions of dreams and visions, has now given way to a more personally challenging aspiration born of the inevitable frustration with the limitations of my own skill: mainly to imbue a painting with something truly vital and energizing and perhaps ultimately more "realistic". If I could but dissolve simply and completely into the landscape which I paint, and capture the fleeting beautiful never-to-be-repeated crystallization of this magical place, without the intervention of thought... this is the worthy goal. In a way, my own artistic path seems a mirror of- and expresses the challenge of- the "subject" which has inspired me.

-George Middleton, July 2015