

Artist Statement Painting Nina Di Giovanni April 2017

I paint to create a landscape (mental, emotional, spiritual) which I can not express in wordsif it existed before I painted it, as I paint, it feels comforting or familiar like listening to a song which I have been humming in parts but not sure of the whole tune. I am enthralled when the landscape changes and the path is not clear..a new song! Perhaps I have not known this thing yet but it is coming or maybe it may never come to me but I shall see it only as a passerby, like a novel I have read. The inspiration beckons the exploration of an idea, a relationship, a " je ne sais quoi", an angst, something I want to eat, to live, to breathe, to love, to stumble upon, to be arrested by.....

My canvas converses with me as I react viscerally to colour and line and form, the ongoing dialogue between the brushstroke, the line, my emotional state and the craving to find a satisfactory answer to an unknowable vision ... The process of discovery is when the trance begins for me and my mind opens to higher meditative and cognitive states ..it feels like free jazz or contemporary new music... unexpectedness...and free flow.

For me, when the switch flips, it is then that I am connecting with my core being and that energizes and affirms me on some unconscious level. ...That is my "fix"...

I am not an intellectual painter..rather my work is dominated by an emotional thrust ..a Dionysian actor in a fury of mark making.. self expression...when the storm has past the rational and pragmatic Apollonian appears... to reel in the chaos and create harmony and clarity.

But the storm comes first. The outburst. The emotion. The colour. The dance with the canvassome days wistfulness, other days....aggression...impatience ... or jubilation or exuberance or playfulness or liberation or joy...or regret ... or unrequited love, or familial love, self loathing, self acceptance... unknowingness... inquiry...optimism...

The process parallels for me the striving of making sense of our lives as an individual with our unique characteristics and expressions and then taming and cauterizing them...reeling them in ..in order to fit in ... the Dionysian Apollonian struggle..does the abstract canvas mirror the state of conscious aggression or acceptance of the defiant or repressed social anarchist that I identify with but have not matured into?The large red brush mark though passionate and exhilarating will only become a source of irritation if she is not quieted down with a burnt umber and anchored by a cool Prussian blue .. the radical anarchist shout is confronted by the reality of the law and perhaps my own cowardice. As nature has laws of harmony, and society has laws to promote harmony, so too colour, line, shape.....

So.. with each painting the exploration of pushing the edge of expression to reveal some new "truth" is the fire that flames my work. How does the feeling look ..where am I ..where is the balance ? and is this art? or is it a narcissistic obsession with self ...or is it art therapy!?

I believe my works falls into the greater catchall of "abstract expressionism" ...and if the viewer senses and connects with the image and can feel the experience too then we have created art together.. as Tolstoy said:

"A real work of art destroys, in the consciousness of the receiver, the separation between himself and the artist — not that alone, but also between himself and all whose minds receive this work of art. In this freeing of our personality from its separation and isolation, in this uniting of it with others, lies the chief characteristic and the great attractive force of art."