

Analyzing “Enchanted”

Alex Hayes Schmoyer

Art 111

12/09/2019

Rather than searching for a final paper topic, the topic came to me. I was fortunate enough to meet Mr. Jay Zinn at my work when he was grocery shopping. While speaking with one of his friends about his work, I overheard the talk of art, and figured I should ask about it. Jay is a local artist who resides in Davidson and is well known and respected due to his creativity and skill. After conversing for a while, Jay encouraged me to go and check his work out at *Ava Gallery* located in downtown Davidson.

On December 5th around 6:30 PM, I was able to go view and observe this beautiful gallery full of art. Due to Christmas in Davidson taking place while I attended the gallery, the ambience was much more active than normal. Many people walked throughout, admiring all pieces of the artists' work. Almost immediately after walking in the gallery, I was greeted by fellow artist and friend of Jay, Anne Harkness. Because of their friendship, Anne was able to give me as good of descriptions possible, without being Jay himself. While walking through this building, some paintings were on long and flat walls, others above doors and some between walls which protruded out. There were many different styles of paintings occupying these walls in a highly organized manner. I was accompanied by a majority of older observers with an occasional younger person. For the most part, this is what I had expected of the art gallery.

While walking through the gallery I was shocked at the different styles of paintings I saw. Ms. Anne showed me some of her oil-based pieces, which were full of texture and life. After this, she guided me to four abstract paintings, all of which were performed on steel platforms. These pieces were those of the “abstract naturalist,” Jay Zinn. These paintings contained nature characteristics, surrounded by warm free flowing colors. Although all were unique in their own way, one specific piece caught my eye. This 44 x 68-inch steel canvas contained a massive elephant-ear leaf and goes by the name “Enchanted.”

Jay creates his art by spritzing, splashing, spraying, and rolling acrylic paints onto steel platforms. He is an abstract artist who also allows nature to take part in his work. After he has done his part in his work, he almost always leaves his paintings out for the moisture to form rust on the steel. “The element of serendipity, this what I love in my art.” is how Jay described the oxidation process after he has completed a piece. Serendipity is the concept of surprise, meaning Jay does not know the exact outcome that will occur.

The concept of imprinting is another signature that Jay uses. The designs seen in many of his paintings are from leaves and other objects being laid in the paint while wet. Depicted in “Enchanted” is an elephant ear leaf which Jay had found in his neighbor's yard. He used this leaf to imprint the point of reference into painting. Jay was able to accomplish such a detailed imprint of the leaf, by pressing it very tightly on the metal surface, exposing all veins and stems.

There are many unique characteristics which can be pointed out in “Enchanted.” When talking about the visual elements, Jay first pointed out the importance of color. He values the organic aspect of art, which are the natural rustic colors that have formed on the painting. The leaf is constructed of warm, rustic colors; they also surround it and continue to the outskirts of the surface. Splashes of a cooler teal color are spread throughout the piece. Jay did this out of spontaneous inspiration, as well as contrast. Another main point for this work is the texture. After Jay deems the natural process of his work is done, he finishes his pieces with a clear coat and hardener (similar to a vehicle's paint), to stop the oxidation process. This enables his work to be

touched, which Jay often encourages observers to do. This painting is full of many different textures in which the rust has formed in the leaf's place. "By nature, humans often desire to touch what pleases their eyes" Zinn said, and he finished this topic with the quote "Art you can touch, art that touches you."

Being an abstract artist, Jay is able to balance and contrast work to his liking. These principles are full of meaning and each piece he creates has prime examples of them. The rustic colors construct almost all of "Enchanted." The teal splotches around and on the leaf are able to balance the large amount of warm that is present in the painting. The contrast present is what enables a nice balance, therefore placing these principles in the same category. The meaning of this painting can be emphasized in many different ways. To Jay, the emphasis is what the observer makes it in his abstract work. "I am still amazed when people approach me, seeing something I never have in my own work," Jay said. His work is an abstract that no one is able to copy or compare to. Due to this fact, I have had trouble finding any other art I can relate to his unique, organic style.



"Enchanted"

Jay was born in Dayton, Ohio during the year 1951. At only five years of age, he was demonstrating skills in his art. Jay's parents recognized this and encouraged him to continue drawing and such. Dayton Art Institute is where Jay began taking summer courses and he eventually attended the Central Academy of Commercial Art in Cincinnati, and also attended art courses at the University of Cincinnati. He has many art styles under his belt, from illustration to decorative art, and now abstract. When I asked him how long it took to create "Enchanted," he gave me the answer, "Forty-plus years." This is how long he has been at creating art, building up to who he is today. Jay also has a background of being an author as well as a pastor. All of these things come together to make him more passionate which is displayed in his art.

When looking at all of the pieces in *Ava Gallery*, they were all beautiful. I turned the corner and saw "Enchanted" on the wall and immediately knew I wanted to do my paper on it. The way all of the colors came together and complement each other was unbelievable. The lights which reigned down from the ceiling made this piece glow and show immaculate texture. This was a piece which truly grabbed my eye and attention.

In the bigger picture, what truly drew me to this painting, was Jay himself. From the first question I asked him in the grocery store, he had such a great attitude in which he wanted to help me. His piece "Enchanted" is the first real art I have analyzed in person. I am excited that I was able to get to know Jay and hope to see him in the future!