



JRB ART
AT THE ELMS

Paseo Arts District

PAINTING WITH ABANDON

By Joy Reed Belt

Are we not all reeling from current events? Personally, I am reeling from what I call America's 2020 Triple Threat: the global pandemic; the resultant economic crisis; and the resurgence of violence due to systemic racial and social injustice. This Triple Threat is not going to just disappear. We will have to collectively work through it. This is a time when we all need to go beyond ourselves in the search for "the better angels of our nature." As always, I find truth, understanding and hope, my better angels, in art. My goal as the owner of an art gallery has always been to make art in all its forms easily available to a growing audience. To maintain our goals in a time of turbulent change requires the resilience and creativity to make changes in how we reach our goals.

After almost twenty years of rotating out exhibits in the entire Gallery each and every month, in January, we decided to leave our exhibits up for two months. I am relieved, our clients are relieved, because this gives them time to make additional visits to an exhibition that they particularly admire, and our artists are thrilled with the additional exposure. In response to the risks associated with Covid 19, we had to close the Gallery. We decided to exhibit our art virtually and to begin this blog, introducing new aspects of art to a growing audience. While we will continue to have virtual exhibits, last week, we also began to offer "By Appointment" showings. Beth Hammack's virtual exhibit, will be available online and through the month of June as well as "By Appointment." Also, in June we will host an exhibit of Paul Moore's bronze sculptures.



Paul Moore, "Fly Season," 2012, Bronze – ED. 15,
16 ½ x 11 x 8 ¾ in., \$4,500



Paul Moore, "Before The Dance," 2007, Bronze –
ED. 25, 23 x 19 x 14 in., \$10,000

You will remember that in a previous Blog I wrote about Paul's amazing career as a sculptor and shared his answer to the question, "What Makes a Work of Art Great?" This week I want to share the second half of an interview I had a few weeks ago with Beth and her answer to "What Makes a Work of Art Great."



Beth Hammack, "Matisse Revisited," 2020, Acrylic on Canvas, 48 x 60 in., \$3,200

JRB: Beth, several times over the years, I have “taken up painting.” Although thoroughly enjoyed drawing and painting, I never became an artist. However, I do have an enviable collection of art supplies. During the time when I was painting it never occurred to me to create an abstract painting. I always tried to draw or paint realistically. You are an abstract painter. How did that happen?

BETH: As my teacher once said, “Abstract painters are just born that way.” I’ve seen all kinds of artists attempt to paint abstractly, but they struggle with ‘what do I do next?’ If and when that happens, you are not an abstract artist. I think it’s best to stick with what makes you comfortable. I’ve always had a good eye for design and was a “drawer” before I was a painter. The abstract doesn’t have to preclude or eliminate realism. The mix is exciting to me. I do try to share some of my realistic art occasionally just so people know I can do both. I think you will continue to see more realism from me in the coming years – mixed of course with the abstract elements I love.

JRB: Do you have a muse. If so, who or what is it?

BETH: Good question! A lot of people may be surprised that I had a hard time in college deciding between majoring in mathematics or philosophy. I think philosophy is my inner muse. It’s about the proverbial *why?* My Christian faith also influences my personal philosophy. I think about infinity, heaven, why the sun? and why the moon? All these unanswered questions fill me with wonder and a respect for life and talents given. I feel it’s important to use whatever talents I may have been given.

JRB: How has your work evolved over the years?

BETH: I think I paint more and more with abandon. I like that about myself. As you grow professionally it becomes much easier to paint what you really *really* want to paint. All artists get tempted to paint “what sells.” I tend to want to paint what I admire about earlier artists (like Van Gogh, Matisse, Manet) in my own style. I enjoy using the lessons I learned from them. All art is an accumulation of the artists who went before and yet I am challenged to have and maintain what some clients call the “Beth Hammack look.” That’s still important to me. I really don’t want to look like any other artist.



Beth Hammack, "OK Wheat Fields," 2019, Acrylic on Canvas, 48 x 60 in., \$3,200

JRB: I want to ask you a question I have been asking several people. What Makes a Work of Art Great?

BETH: Simply put great art lasts over time. It lasts in the memory of the viewer over days and centuries. The *Mona Lisa*, by *Leonardo Da Vinci* and the *Statue of David*, *Michelangelo*, still haunts viewers and has for centuries. Great art lives on through time and carries a mystic about it that's not easy to forget. It really is somewhat mysterious.

JRB: How would you like to be remembered as an artist?

BETH: Oh, given the times, this is an important question. Thanks for asking. First, one beautiful thing about artists including painters, singers, dancers, sculptresses, etc., we know as we create, we leave part of ourselves in our paintings or works. Who knows where my paintings will end up in a hundred years? I would like to be remembered as an artist whose art works lasted. I would hope I will also be remembered for being passionate, compassionate, and kind in the process.

JRB: Thanks Beth for your candor in answering my questions and for your art.

This month, June of 2020, JRB Art at The Elms is presenting the work of two very different artists who create in different mediums. Please call us and make an appointment to see their work. Stay tuned and stay safe.

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