



JRB ART AT THE ELMS

Paseo Arts District

FIRST FRIDAY

By Joy Reed Belt



Pablo Picasso, "Girl Before A Mirror," 1932, Oil on Canvas, 5 ft. 4 in. x 4 ft. 3 in.
(Museum of Modern Art, New York City)

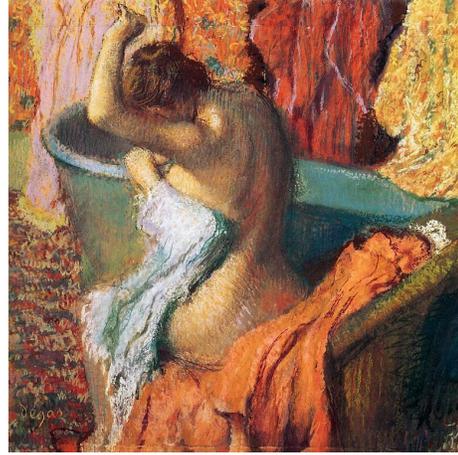


Pablo Picasso, "The Old Guitarist," 1903-1904, Oil, 4 ft. 0 in. x 2 ft. 9 in.
(the Art Institute of Chicago)

On Friday evening, October 2nd, the Gallery participated in The Paseo's Gallery walk for the first time since February. I admit to being a little anxious at how it would go. Positioned near the front desk, I watched people stand in the entry, visibly relaxing their shoulders, as they scanned the room. I watched as their breathing and their facial expressions gradually changed, most often with smiles, but occasionally, almost tearful. As I greeted people, they would thank me for being open and making art available to them. Throughout the evening as I walked around, I overheard comments like: "Isn't it great to see all this art!" "I didn't realize how much I needed this," or, "This is so wonderful." "Oh now, I'm beginning to feel almost normal." The evening was truly all about enjoying the art. I am told by friends and colleagues up and down Paseo Drive that the whole district experienced the same collective sense of relief and gratitude as we did at The Elms.



Paul Cezanne, "Still Life with Curtain," 1895, Oil on Canvas, 21.7 x 29.3 in. (Hermitage Museum)



Edward Degas, "Seated Bather Drying Herself," 1899, Oil, 20 x 20 in. (Private Collection)

Throughout history, art and emotions have been valued companions. We all know that art can be an expression of the artist's emotions. As Paul Cezanne famously said, "A work of art that did not begin in emotion is not art." Degas asserted "Art is not what you see, but what you make others see." As a Gallery owner, I am most interested in the range of emotions that a work of art solicits from the viewer. Of the ten most commonly classified emotions: Joy, Excitement, Surprise, Sadness, Anger, Disgust, Contempt and Fear, Shame and Guilt, I consider a painting successful, at least on the emotional level, if it generates two or more of those feelings. Another reason art can be so enriching and therapeutic is the ability to experience it on several levels simultaneously. When I look at a painting, I can appreciate the composition intellectually, while having a sensory experience looking at the colors and perhaps an emotional experience looking at the subject matter...all at the same time. This month the Gallery is featuring artist Denise Duong. Her narrative paintings are dense with detail, yet her themes are transmitted and received in a gestalt like fashion. One of the things that makes her work so successful is that she compels the viewer to enter her world, which in turn causes us to view our world differently. Picasso once said that, "Art washes from the soul the dust of everyday life." Well, with all that is going on in the world right now, I suspect that we all share Picasso's sense of souls covered in dust and in need of a good cleansing. Perhaps that is what made last First Friday so successful.



Denise Duong, "The Broken Silence," 2020, Mixed
Media on Canvas, 48 x 36 in., \$3,500

Denise Duong, "Once Upon A Time," 2020, Mixed
Media on Canvas, 60 x 48 in., \$6,000

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