



The Randall M. Hasson Gallery

346 A South Cedros Ave. Solana Beach CA 92075 858.792.0902

www.randallmhasson.com

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L'esprit

39" X 56" Acrylic on canvas ©2000 Randall M Hasson

Fine Art is that in which the hand, the head, and the heart of man go together. John Ruskin

L'esprit is a fusion of ideas about Art from artists and authors throughout the ages. It is my study of the process of art, the thoughts and reasons the masters used in their work, and the idea of bringing a concept to completion in a visual way.

"I am anxious that the world should be inclined to look to painters for information on painting". John Constable

The texts I began with, and which all the other texts are written (or founded) upon, are the writings of the masters and teachers from the time of the renaissance up to the 20th century. These texts come to us as notes and thoughts from their notebooks, letters, and treatises on drawing and painting. Students throughout time have gone to the masters to be taught, and so even "modern" or abstract art has it's root in the foundation of the thoughts and influences of those who have gone before.

"It is not enough to believe what you see, you must also understand what you see". Leonardo DaVinci

The problem for artists throughout the centuries is to get the "magic" into a work of art. This is what makes the master stand out from their contemporaries, what makes their artwork endure.

"...in general, there is too much concern with how a picture is made, and not enough with what puts life and soul into the subject represented." Pierre Paul Prud'hon

So then, while students begin the journey with a foundation of the techniques of the masters, they must eventually strike out on their own. They must begin to create for themselves. They must find their own way of relating to their audience.

"Imitation is not inspiration, and inspiration only can give birth to a work of art". Albert Pinkham Ryder



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The idea of visually representing thoughts, quotes and advice from artists to artists was something that came to me about eight months before I was able to start the painting. The image I saw at that time was very close to the completed canvas, including the illustrations. I had to complete another painting before I could begin L'esprit, so I was very eager when the research phase began.

"One is never tired of painting because you have to set down, not what you knew already, but what you have just discovered". William Hazlitt

For me, the research is the most rewarding part of many of my paintings. How can one fail to be inspired when reading the thoughts and advice from the best artists throughout the centuries? I compiled over 50 quotes and text that would fit my concept, and encountered many others that were very inspiring but chose not to use. All in all, there are a total of 38 quotes or texts from different sources in this painting.

"The Artist does not draw what he sees, but what he must make others see". Edgar Degas

The question then becomes one of how to portray [traditional] painting and combine it with calligraphy. Renaissance painters strove to imply depth, to make their paintings appear three dimensional on a two dimensional surface. They did studies and sketches and wrote notes about the process. They concentrated on value first then color. Some painted the nude figure before placing clothes on their characters. They paid attention to composition.

My representation of this is to have these longer texts as the backdrop of the entire composition. Most of these texts are written in a hand (humanist, italic, bastarda) that was in use contemporarily with the artist. These texts are the "skin and bones" or structure of this work. Other elements (image or calligraphy) would be laid over these as a garment.

"Every picture shows a spot in which the artist himself has fallen in love". Alfred Sisley

For those who are familiar with my work, it is obvious that I love to paint pictures as much as I love to paint letters. After writing all of the background text it was time to paint. My subject is my daughter Holly, who was 14 at the time. The smaller studies include Holly in different scenes with my nieces Isabella and Sophia, (ages 4 and 3 respectively), and a small portrait of Isabella.



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All of my painting is done in monochrome first to establish value, then color comes second. The three studies or "sketches" are intended to show this process, which lead to the completed portrait of Holly. (As an aside, it is no coincidence that the above referenced Alfred Sisley quote is the only one done in the same green as Holly's dress).

"Great Art is an instant arrested in eternity". James Gibbons Huneker

The balance of the quotations (which are mostly one-liners) are placed over the background of the masters quotes and text. The intention here is to attempt to convey the passing thoughts as they were expressed through time...not all on one line, but randomly moving across the time and space of the painting. Some of these quotes are behind the images (Holly in particular), and in many there is the illusion that they are farther away in space. In many cases, these are the important thoughts of the painting, and through the use of color and contrasting lettering styles, are meant to be read separately but participate in the theme of the painting.

Art should not be a trompe l'oeil, but a trompe l'esprit" Pablo Picasso

The intent was to capture the spirit (L'esprit) of the artist. Many of these thoughts translate readily into the languages of the other Arts (writing, music, drama) so that the viewer could use the wisdom of the ages as inspiration to create in their own way.