



Abiding 36 x 36 acrylic on canvas 2022

Discovery is Everything

by John Seed

Painter David Michael Slonim, who considers art-making a journey of discovery, hopes that visitors to his exhibition, *Color Song*, will make discoveries of their own. By offering a suite of works that create emotional spaces for calm contemplation, he offers the opportunity to connect with the varied moods of his abstractions. Slonim is a formalist who distills as much beauty as he can out of each composition and thinks of each work as “an attempt to love a tiny corner of the universe into existence.” His art is intended as a way of showing love for others and the world that they share: each work carries the potential to serve as a unifying force.

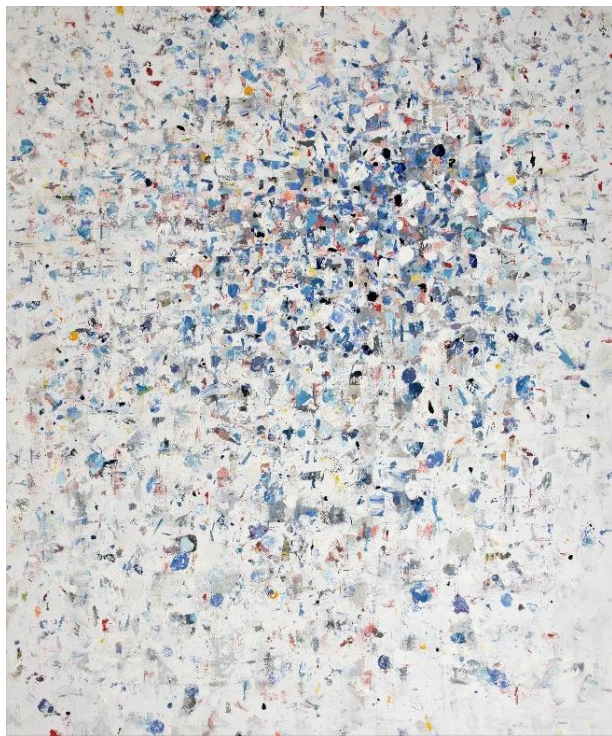
"Abiding," a composition in which a pink circle floats in a field of another very slightly tinted pink, is abstract to the point of being non-objective (without a subject). Serene and inviting, it suggests spirituality and revelation, qualities that are in some sense connected to the artist's Christian faith. Like some of the modern artists whose works are similarly reductive—including Kasimir Malevich and Agnes Martin—Slonim strips away the non-essential in a way that makes whatever remains resonate. "Abiding" radiates a joyous simplicity that is self-contained and perfect. Along with its close cousins "Remembrance" and "Benediction," it is an exercise in intuition manifested as joy.

"Blue Bang" gains its energy from a multiplicity of marks and brushstrokes that radiate from a central force field. When the artist Jackson Pollock once said "I don't paint nature. I am nature," he perfectly described a way of thinking about artistic creation that Slonim shares. Along with "Jump Start," it displays the artist's energetic attempts to let his own experiences and energies find form in a universal metaphor. Yes, the "Big Bang" creation theory comes to mind, but so does Slonim's creative vitality. Each painting is a moment made up of innumerable small moments: a diary of the sensations of being truly alive.

A sense of play animates "Chicken on the Run" and "Flying Fish," which both include squiggly, calligraphic lines. It's as if the artist wants to tell us that his idea of perfection is one that respects every quirk and irregularity as the products of free invention. Or to put it another way, what is the point of seeking perfection if you aren't having fun along the way? The linearity and geometric rigor of "Bellavia" and "Zephyr II" re-assert Slonim's willingness to say more with less. They embody a paradox that is central to his artistic (and personal) philosophy: structure is the framework that makes every form of freedom possible.

At this point in his life Slonim has given intuition free rein. Although he is aware that the occasional viewer may wonder why his work is so spare or so abstract, Slonim is not interested in changing course. What motivates him is discovery, which he wills himself to each time he enters the studio. His commitment to discovery—which takes courage—is one of the pillars of Slonim's artistic practice. This commitment itself is a kind of structure, endowing each of his paintings with a precious and highly personal form of artistic integrity.

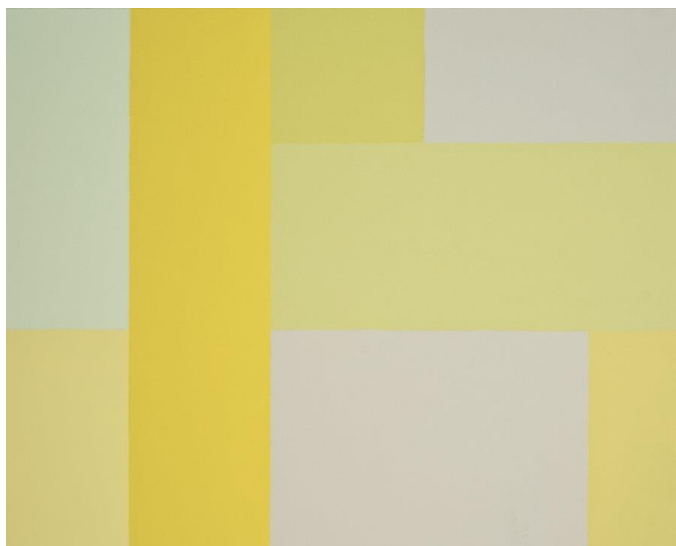
John Seed is a Professor Emeritus of Art and Art History at Mount San Jacinto College. His writings on art and artists have appeared in Arts of Asia, The Huffington Post, Hyperallergic, and numerous other publications. Seed is also the author of "My Art World: Recollections and other Writings" and "Disrupted Realism: Paintings for a Distracted World." His next book, "More Disruption: Representation in Flux" will be released in early 2023.



Blue Bang 60 x 48 oil on canvas



Chicken on the Run 36 x 36 oil on canvas



Zephyr II 48 x 60 acrylic on canvas