

Don Haggerty, painter/sculptor

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Revelationalism

The idea of *Revelationalism*—my own one-person art movement—rose from my belief that one good thing inevitably leads to another. Forward motion is inherent in art making, implying growth, change, and the requirement to always be listening, watching, open to surprise. While defying all planning, the idea of being ever alert for the next revelation has provided me a plan for following my heart, and my art. That’s been my journey.



Figurative Painting and Oil Sketches

My art-making path began while growing up in Taiwan (1957-1970). There I watched Chinese calligraphers and painters apply their brushes, which set into motion for me a life-long love affair with the beauty and power of a finely executed brush stroke. It was after moving back to my birth town of Seattle, Washington that my own desire to lay down brush strokes found its way to canvas through the irresistible lure of figurative painting (oil on canvas)—with all its magic of gesture, pattern, asymmetry, drapery and endless possibilities of light.



“Brush ballet” became my term for the rising, descending, turning and leaping marks left by a masterly wielded brush. I’ve been frequently known to declare a canvas finished and ready-for-framing while still only an oil sketch, simply to preserve the raw beauty of its brushwork. (Note: *Revelationalism* reveals when to stop as readily as where next to move forward.)



Oil and Tempera

Any new medium brings with it new thoughts. Adding oil-and-tempera to my studio repertoire caused my colors to brighten. Line work began to highlight foreground forms. I also started outlining and patterning background shapes, bringing those areas to the fore and giving them equal weight with the positive forms of the figure. Little did I know what groundwork was being laid—what was about to be revealed.



Sculpture

In 2009, while attending a modern ballet performance, because of the stage lighting and the dynamic interactions of the dancers, I imagined myself extracting the negative spaces from my paintings and making them the positive elements of three-dimensional sculptures. And I saw the positive elements of my paintings transform into the empty negative spaces between the sculptural elements, completely reversing the roles of positive and negative. The sculptures that resulted have since often been taken to be abstract works when first viewed. But when the figures at last appear to the viewer—sometimes suddenly—from within the empty spaces, the sculptures emerge as the truly figurative works they were created to be.



Oil Bar and Aerosol Stencil Painting

Oil bar is a fat, goopy, color-rich oil-paint medium. Applied directly bar-to-panel, this challenging but rewarding medium further simplified my forms and narrowed my range of colors. And in 2012, while on a trip to Paris, repeated encounters with stencil street art inspired further experimentation with positive and negative elements when I began adapting my paintings to high-contrast aerosol stencil works—complete with their own “street signature.”



Dancer Studies

Spurred by the work I’d been doing in both sculpture and painting, in 2013 I began creating an ongoing series of dancer studies in two-dimensions—large paintings (oil on canvas) and small studies (oil bar on panel). These continue to be focused on combining and layering forms, simplification and motion, and balancing of positive and negative spaces.



Revelationalism has a certain natural outcome: A diverse body of work. Many artists find that prospect distressing. I’ve found it to be a happy thing. The truth is, revelations, when faithfully pursued are the very elements that bind diversity into an integrated body of work. They tell of the journey of an artist—of their listening, watching, and the surprises found all along the way.

Unless the wand is waved,
Can there be magic?
Unless the paint is squeezed,
And the brush is dipped,
No surprises await you.