
Dick Evans – Santa Fe, New Mexico

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Briefly describe the work you do.

I do abstract paintings, with lots of gesture and brushstroke and color, sometimes loosely based on landscape and sometimes totally abstract. They are explorations, interpretations and expressions of the world around me and within me; which are ultimately the same.

Tell us about your background and how that has had an influence on your work and on you as an artist.

Dick Evans was born in the “Land of Enchantment,” New Mexico, USA. Having grown up in a rural farming community in the panhandle of Texas, he had no exposure at all to art until he started college. Fortunately he was required to take drawing and design courses as he started his supposed major of architecture. He soon realized architecture was not right for him, but also that he loved ART! As he progressed through an advertising art program at Texas Tech, he realized he was more interested in the Fine Arts, and transferred to a rich art program at the University of Utah, where he obtained a BFA in Drawing and Painting, and went on to obtain an MFA in Ceramics and Sculpture.

After completing college, Evans began a university teaching career. His first position was back at the university where he began as a student, Texas Tech. He taught courses in ceramics, drawing, and design. At the age of twenty-nine he was granted tenure. Uneasy about settling into one area so early in life he resigned within the month and set out on his own with wife and two children, establishing studios in Northern New Mexico in which he produced sculpture and ceramics. After a year he realized how much he missed teaching and returned to the university scene. He spent a year teaching at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Then he spent three years teaching art at the University of New Mexico. In 1975 he married for the second time. This time to sculptor Susan Stamm Evans, with whom he is still married. Also in 1975 he took a position teaching art at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Evans progressed through the professorial ranks to tenure, full professorship, and also a two-year stint as Associate Dean of the School of Fine Arts.

In 1987 the Evans’ made the decision to leave academia and devote full time to their art. In 1990 they decided to return to New Mexico. They moved to Santa Fe and built a house with two studios. Throughout Evans’ teaching career he was teaching primarily in ceramics, and thus also working in that medium as his primary form of expression (although he also produced sculpture in welded steel and cast bronze). In 1991, after several years of creating ceramic murals, he decided to return to his early love of painting. Evans’ art is found in 17 Art Museums and over a dozen Corporate collections. He has had over 30 solo shows as well as numerous group shows and invitational shows. Examples of his work are found in 7 books and many periodicals and publications.



The concept of the artist studio has a broad range of meanings in contemporary practice. Artists may spend much of their time in the actual studio, or they may spend very little time in it. Tell us about your individual studio practice and how it differs from or is the same as traditional notions of “being in the studio.”

The time I am actually painting is not unlike most traditional notions of studio time. Where my time might be different is the time I am “gathering” material for what goes into the paintings. Many artists devote time to sketching, either in or out of the actual studio. I find that nearly all my waking time involves mentally designing and composing everything I see around me. All that imagery (mental sketching) is stored someplace inside me for use when I am at the easel.

What roles do you find yourself playing that you may not have envisioned yourself in when you first started making art?

The role of curator and marketer of my own art. Documenting and marketing takes a far larger percentage of my professional time than I would ever have guessed.

When do you find is the best time to make art? Do you set aside a specific time everyday or do you have to work whenever time allows?

Life is complex! Oftentimes the needs of others supersede my own needs. I work when I can and when time allows. If the painting is simply not flowing, I stop and do menial studio work until I can try again. I actively search within the time available for my most creative times and then go full blast. I am fortunate in that I work extremely fast when I do work. I am able to focus and totally immerse myself. This is in marked contrast to the way I live a lot of the rest of my life, which is often not all that efficient.

How has your work changed in the past five years? How is it the same?

I continually try to keep my work fresh by changing sizes and palette. Landscape is the basis in my paintings, but during certain series it may lean toward more recognizable imagery (trees, mountains, lakes clouds, etc.) and other times toward totally non-objective. It's *always* abstracted to varying amounts. Purely representational imagery is not of particular interest to me unless it contains compelling mystery. I find myself re-visiting icons and images that go all the way back to when I was a small child. Hopefully greater maturity enriches the statement each time these ideas re-emerge.



How have people such as family, friends, writers, philosophers, other artists or even pop icons had an impact on the work you do?

Most important in impact on my work is simply everything around me, whether landscape, cityscape, or mundane objects around my living space like the food on my table. I'm constantly composing.

Second are artists whose work has helped me see those things in different ways than I might have without seeing their work.

P. Ryder for mystery, Peter Voulkos for the power of destructive creativity, Milton Avery for composition, Mark Rothko for spirituality and color, Anselm Keifer for psychological impact, My grand daughters, Zoe, Sasha and Sarah for freedom of expression and for focus of what is important.

Third is music. I am not able to demonstrate a clear relationship between music and the visual arts, but I do know that music in my studio is very important to the release of creative juices, and to the build up of energy necessary to pursue the painting as long as it takes.

About



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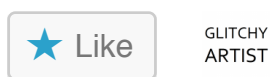
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Regardless of medium, critics and reviewers are always struck by the richness of form and color used by Evans. Reference to the mysterious, emotional and psychological is always a primary concern. Never interested in a "realist" manner of expression, he continues always to attempt to get to a deeper, more personal place. His feeling is that the more personal the statement is, the more universal it may be. By avoiding the visually expected, his art often aids the viewer to see surroundings in a different and richly rewarding manner.

dickevansart.com

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The purpose of this project is to introduce its readership to a diverse collection of art that is being produced at the national and international level. Our goal is to engage the public with information regarding a wide array of creative processes, and present the successes and failures that artists face from day to day. The collaborators hope that this project will become a source for exploring and experiencing contemporary art in all its forms.

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