

Charles Sharpe, Artist

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My abstract and figurative collage work is the result of playful exploration as I frequently let the materials dictate the direction of a piece. I freely explore various mediums, styles, ideas and formats. It keeps the learning process interesting. Some of my works are traditional oils, as well as acrylic and watercolor. My job as an artist is to listen and allow the conversation to unfold between materials, ideas and technique. The meaning of the abstract work is developed as the piece is being made, and regardless of what I think that meaning is, the true significance of the piece is only realized as the viewer, who brings the sum total of their life experience to the viewing, wrests what meaning they will. A successful work of art for me doesn't necessarily spell out the artists' intentions but rather engages the viewer in a dialogue with the piece.

A successful work of art forever holds the emotion or the vibration of the artist who created it. This is one of the reasons that petroglyphs as well as cave paintings can have such a powerful impact on the viewer many thousands of years later. A piece of art that strikes one viewer and not the next is because of a sympathetic vibration or lack thereof in the viewer.

Allowing for mystery is something I strive for. My wish is to engage the viewer and to share a common experience, if only for a moment.

I have been making art on and off for about 20 years and for the last few have been able to devote much more time to it. I have studied with Stephen Quiller, Xiogang Zhu, Tom Hoffmann, Bob Burrige, Aimee Ericsson, Mitchell Albala, Aaron Coberly, Robin Weiss, Barbara De Pirro, Thomas Jefferson Kitts, Mike Hernandez, Darrell Anderson, and others. I attended life drawing sessions regularly for three or four years and consider capturing the human form to be the most beautiful and difficult of

artistic endeavors and all who attempt it should be given a medal for bravery.

Spotlight Exhibit

The paintings in Spotlight were originally painted en plein air for reference, and to capture the essence of what it was that motivated me to paint and what I thought important to convey. Those paintings were then used in the studio to assist in the finished painting.

The Sentinels is based on a place near Katherine Creek in the Columbia Gorge and was originally painted during a week long painting trip I took in Eastern Washington and Oregon. I was staying at my sisters place down by Mount Adams and would get up while it was still dark out to be in position to capture the sunrise in the Gorge. I would then try to get a couple of plein air paintings done before the heat of the day made it hard to be outside. The Gorge is an intense place, and the coolest day while I was there that summer was 101 degrees so painting early in the day was a must. I would then use the rest of the day to scout out locations for more paintings and to take reference photos.

Dads Vice was a plein air painting I did in my shop because the massive components of the vice seemed to ask for my attention. The accompanying poem came about as a result of meditating about my relationship with my father, the tools he gave to me while he was still alive, the tools I acquired after his passing, and the tools I have given to my son, and the lineage of love.

Isadora With Fish was painted in my studio from a photo I took while on a painting trip in Mexico. She and her siblings/friends had caught a fish at the mouth of the Rio Caule and they were running around trying to revive the fish and return it to the water. Her father was nearby casting a net into the surf. As I reflect on the painting, I see an allegory in the gulls coming after because she has something they want. The river was so shallow and hot that it was almost too hot to wade in. I find the mouth of rivers to be some of the most dynamic places to be in with the pounding surf and all the wildlife that is usually found there.