

Artist's Statement

James Switzer, Wednesday May 5th, 2010

Painting is the controlled application of different colored pigments to a flat surface. By using suitable styles and patterns of paint, one can create the illusion of a three-dimensional space, represent an object from reality, or create a variety of abstract forms. Painting involves the creation of contrasts, localized points of interest in space that arise at the boundary between two more-uniform areas. It is the collection of these points of interest to the visual eye that make up a painting. Painting is distinct from other forms of more constrained art such as sculpture or 3D modeling by the more abstractness and the flatness of the objects and worlds that can be represented. It is far easier to paint the implication of a floating series of planes than it is to sculpt them. Beyond working as an agent of contrast, color can be a point of interest of its own, providing content by its complexity and the feelings that it can evoke.

In this painting, I set out to prove that multiple realities and perspectives could be represented side by side without violating the artistic unity of a piece. I wanted to determine whether or not isometric and flat elements could exist within a coherent linear perspective, next to more representational objects and spaces that fall back within the image. I further felt the desire to have regions of similar kinds of representations – worlds of a sort - and to have this contrast be between these spaces of similarity. I also had certain thematic elements that I felt the urge to integrate, such as chasms, tentacles, and the transition from water to sky. I also wanted to show massive, monumental objects or slabs floating in space, supported by nothing. This theme of monumentality was very important throughout the conception of this piece, even informing the choosing of the

large canvas size for its imposing effect.

I feel that I have accomplished the creation of an abstract three-dimensional scene showing multiple interior spaces as well as using the flat space between the viewer and the picture. I settled upon the overall framework for the piece after rotating a set of boxes that I had drawn in two-point perspective. This rotated pattern, which becomes a scaled collection of planes that display a one-point perspective, became the central subject matter of the piece. I chose a restricted color palette, which helped prevent the colors in the painting from becoming too muddled and divergent. This restriction also had the effect of making the same color exist at different points in the painting, aiding in unification.

Improvements on this vision could involve incorporating additional elements of classical optical illusion such as tessellations into the painting. I am also not entirely satisfied with the variety of perspective distortions that are currently present. Adding additional structures on the planes would thus be a logical next step.

I am confident that a medium with vibrant color was necessary for what I wanted to accomplish. Color is needed to establish the difference between the planes in my painting, as well as serving as a source of visual interest. Oil painting provides an immense amount of color support, enabling a wide variety of colors as well as both physical mixing and optical mixing using transparency. There are other media, however, that also provide this support, especially digital art media (such as photoshop). Though I feel that these could have been used to create my work from a thematic perspective, I imagine color unification and mixing might have been problematic, making working with a restricted palette difficult and thus possibly leading to a divergence of color in the piece.