

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Nathaniel Aric GALKA

Background:

With western European influences, undoubtedly it is the 17th-century "vanitas" or still life paintings of the Netherlands, along with French/Russian aristocratic "chinoiserie" decorative arts that show an idealized interpretation of eastern culture. The chinoiserie style is in complete contrast with its robust and sensual frivolity to the more restrained Asian essence. Nathaniel's most emotional connection to a particular time in art is a century later with the romantics of the 19th century. The period known as romanticism was characterized by its emphasis on emotion and individualism as well as the glorification of the past and nature. It was partly a reaction to the industrial revolution and the aristocratic social era. Along with the political norms of the age of enlightenment and the scientific revelation of nature—all components of modernity. As far as current history, he speaks to the language of abstract expressionists like Jackson Pollock and Helen Frankenthaler. The accumulation of styles that honor history in his paintings, one will find it is where he has found his universal language. He shows through his works that one of the ways we speak as a culture is within the aesthetic of beauty and beautiful things. Beauty as it is, speaks to greater consciousness. Art when beautiful, sustains time and allows its viewers less resistance to see what an artist like Nathaniel is aiming to convey.

His Process:

Nathaniel's works are even constructed with many historical practices. To start, he prepares his surfaces with a personally made marble plaster "gesso". This is applied to the wood panels or on linen jute-wrapped panel by using a trowel. He paints in oil (sometimes enamel) and shellac India ink with a dipped pen creates calligraphy to reference the woodblock prints. The final painting is then varnished with two coats of damar varnish and three coats of hand-polished bleached wax to finish the surface. Nathaniel's desire in the final paintings is to feel as if they are historical fragments and have a storied place through time.

His Reasoning:

As far as why he paints the subject matter of nature... it is very simple. He is trying to explain with paint what we, as a civilization, are doing to ourselves and our planet. How we are directly changing our connection to mother nature and spirit simply for "vanity". With all his artwork, Nathaniel is pointing to the need for greater connective, spiritual/nature intuitiveness, showing that we need to change our great loss to connect to our spiritual self. While also considering the romantic notion of how nature and spiritual life when approached as an art of emotions, can enhance our inner psychological health and our outer harmony in modern culture. As we continue to shape popular ideas on many issues with how we approach personal awareness, we simply need to be aware of our reality but with an optimistic notion to find beauty and inner peace. The teachings of buddha and the philosophies of the romantic movement were born into a period of great social ferment: political, cultural, and religious/spiritual upheaval; all of

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which exists today, but we can now add environmental exhaustion. Like many creatives in the past, Nathaniel is dissatisfied with the simplified cultural traditions, pro quo, in which he was raised. He is in search of a new way to understand and comfort his spiritual dissatisfaction. Nathaniel is looking inward and aiming to emphasize his inspiration, subjectivity, and the primacy of the individual self within the world's chaotic reality.

"There is a place and time for escaping reality and a time
to be brave and see what is real."

– Nathaniel Aric Galka