

Eileen Murray – Art Notes

Henry Miller once said, “To paint is to love again.” While I wish it were so, I’m not sure. I paint in fits and starts because painting is hard for me. The canvas and I wage a bitter war against one another as I struggle with the process. Color is such a huge challenge that I frequently don’t use it. A limited palette eliminates the overwhelming choices that paralyze me. The canvas and I rage on, trying this or that, adding, then subtracting. And then, while painting, there comes a wholly unexpected point where I capitulate, and the painting takes over and becomes what it is without further resistance from me. I call it our “bliss point.” Perhaps, it is the point where we can fall in “love again.”

I’ve come full circle. After years of figurative work, both human and animal, I’ve returned to my first love, abstract painting. There is a certain joy (and absolute freedom) in taking the elements of art – line, color, shape, balance, etc. – and orchestrating them on the canvas to convey a message or an emotion outside the objective context. Abstraction might be compared to the difference between writing a song and composing a symphony. Abstraction has no words to tell you where you are going. You get there viscerally.