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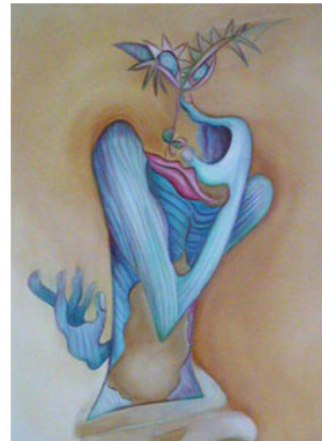
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**Thinker  
Metaphysical**

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Thinker  
1975



Thinker Metaphysical  
1989

**Dan Landrum**

Eyes wide open, I grew up in the bright sunshine of southern Florida. I loved to look, to observe. In the broad strokes of getting acquainted with my world, I was mesmerized by the immense horizontal banding of sky, ocean, beach strip and flat land. My favorite view was flat on my back watching the ever-flowing skylscapes of puffy, wispy clouds being propelled by tropical winds.

Then there were the multitudes of sensory details.... Often I was dazzled by the sparkling rainbowed droplets misting from the garden hose. It soothed my mostly naked, half-baked raw skin. My child senses were super alive. There was so much to see, so much to feel.

With so much to see, feel and experience, why would I be compelled to make pictures? My drawings, and later my paintings, grew out of an inner necessity. I was the sensitive middle kid of 7 in a very active household. Everything was handed down and shared. I shared a bedroom with two brothers or slept on the couch in the TV room. I did have a desk of my own. This quiet space was important to me. Here I made pictures, doodled, composed poetry, for my eyes only. This was my private sanctuary, something uniquely my own.

In the course of getting my BA in Fine Arts Painting, Photography and Print Making, I did have to open my sanctuary to criticism. I did so in small doses. I found most critiques, both from within myself and from others, unsatisfying. It seemed that much of it was based in analysis, association, comparison or from a nebulous set of likes and dislikes. I eventually realized a more useful way to assess art, both my own and others. The method: simply stay with description and feeling; describe what I actually see, feel what I am feeling and describe those feelings. This method provides a useful engagement and allows me to stay connected to the work before me.

I spent the 70's wandering the world, mostly North America, but also a year in Europe and a year in Asia. I visited many galleries and museums wherever I went. I saw a lot of art. I wasn't so interested in who was who, or the politics of art, as I was in the immediate impact of the art itself.

Later, in my art training, I would learn the skills and perceptual tricks used to make the illusion of the likeness of an object. Still more important to me was the spirit of the subject. For me, picture-making became the art of riding the edge between inner and outer perception; drawing on what comes from within, as well as coordinating my hand to what my eye sees and noticing how one affects the other. The effort, for me, has become not so much trying to duplicate a likeness of a thing out there, as it is on the primacy of being present, clear on what my intention is and staying connected to the spirit of what is being created.

A number of years ago I began to teach drawing. I was aware, from talking to friends, how deep and prevalent the "I can't draw, I'm not creative" myth is. My first few sessions in the drawing course are designed to address the trauma behind this myth. Somehow we've forgotten how innately wonderful our preschool child was at composing, inventing and storytelling through drawing. For many of us, art had early on been put into the service of obedience to authority, ("Color between the lines"), and peer pressure conformity, ("Can you make a cool car like Bobby's?"). We've lost touch with our inner wellspring of creative potentials.

### **Fine Art Painting: Acrylic on Canvas, Acrylic on Paper, CyberArt**



*In your light I learn how to love.  
In your beauty, how to make paintings.  
You dance inside my chest,  
where no one sees you,  
but sometimes I do,  
and that sight becomes this art.*

-- Rumi

### **Acrylic on Canvas**

It's ironic for me to offer you these images of my paintings through this cyber medium. In making the images you see in your browser, I of course had to sacrifice quality for speed of downloading. The images become merely a reference. What you see in your monitor are symbols of the actual pieces here in my studio.

The original work intentionally doesn't supply a quick handle, easy to grasp and categorize, like symbols do. Just the opposite of identifying, clicking and moving on, the end result of the actual paintings aim at slowing down the mind and 'being with'; mending the separation between the observer and the observed.



## **NON-OBJECTIVE**

My work is non-objective, non-representational, non-symbolic, non-abstract, but don't say it's nonsensical; it is an open invitation for the senses to see and feel. Abstract essentially means 'to select from'. Virtually all of representational art, including what we call 'realism', is abstract. It's a partial selection that alludes to a particular reality. My work is not abstract. It doesn't allude to any other thing; it is what it intrinsically is. Stepping out of the associative mind, these pictures offer an experience of pure perceiving and feeling in the present moment. The direct experience of the seer with the seen is itself the intention.

Unlike the 'Renaissance Window' of representational art, my work does not impose a 'light logic' or force a perspective on the viewer. You are free to 'construct' your own experience of the painting. Not having a fixed, labeled object to identify, the painting stays fresh and new with every viewing. Responsive and alive in the seasonal changes of light, the significance of this pictorial space transforms with the mind of the viewer.

## **SCRIBBLING & COLOR**

The primary engines driving my picture-making are scribbling and color. In scribbling, (and her close cousins: doodling, gesture & groping lines), I find the raw dynamics of uninhibited movement, free from the constraints of an ulterior motive. This most elemental mark-making builds delightful complexities, layer upon layer, in its unencumbered dance.

Color is sheer energetics. The vibrational frequency of colors lift our spirits, play with our emotions and are quite literally constantly changing our minds. Isolating color from its association to a thing allows us to more clearly sense its psychological and spiritual impact and probe its powerful mystery.

## **Acrylic on Paper**

These works on paper, done in 1998-99, are the structural studies for the evolving acrylic on canvas works also shown here.



## **INFLUENCES**

I've heard it said, "All artists are self-taught, but no art is original; we all borrow from one another". Art is a cultural conversation. Certainly in my work the list of influences, just from other painters, would be staggeringly long. Even a listing of 'ists' that have shaped me....expressionists, impressionist, fauvists, dadaists, cubists, minimalists, post-modernists, deconstructionists..... would be partial.

Yes, many others' influences find their way into my paintings, such as Miro, Stout, Klee and my neighbor's tree. But perhaps, having just experienced the most mind-boggling century in history, a touch of retrospective synthesizing can be a little good thing.

## **WAY OF WORKING**

The difference between me as a house painter and me as a fine arts painter is 'idea'; not merely as concept, but rather as an intentional way of being. The 'idea' that centrally informs my picture-making derives from my daily sitting practice, Vipassana meditation.

In Vipassana my intent is to patiently, persistently, gently but firmly bring my attention to a narrow point of focus, say the physical sensation at the tip of my nose. The aim of the practice is to quiet the mind, observe the content, notice it and let it go.

This is the same model I use to construct a painting. I narrow my point of focus, such as simply observing the paint flowing from the tip of my brush. Available for the unexpected, I watch the ebb and flow of thoughts and feelings and again return my attention to the paint freshly being drawn from the brush. This structure, this way of working, is itself the seed from which the painting blossoms.

## **CyberArt**

I found it odd to be making photographs of my paintings to be scanned into this web-accessible format. Something gets lost in the translation of the translation. I don't just mean all the bytes I had to toss out to make these images come up faster for you; there is something in the intent of the paintings that want to remain paintings and not a document of a painting. There is something in the photographs that want to hold their place in the hand-held album.

So, too, in the cyber domain. Cyber art is in its infancy, it's character not yet determined. The tools in this medium are powerful in a way as yet unseen. I feel compelled to create images in, by and for cyber space. For what ends, I don't know.

Let's see.....



## Sunflowers

When Carol & I first moved into our present home, I double dug what had been a dog-run to make way for an herb garden. For the inaugural season I planted the back row with "Sunshine" & "Evening Sun" sunflowers.

I photo-documented the sunflowers from beginning to end. They sprouted quickly, some rising higher than the 13 foot high river-rock wall behind them. Majestic and elegant, they sprang headlong into life, burst into one dazzling display after another and just as abruptly, lay down their heads and died.

I hope you find here a taste of these sunflowers' inspiring dance with sunlight, their magnificent crescendo of robust flowering.



## Umbrellas

For the 24 hours of the full-moon day in October, 1991, I roamed up and down the Tejon Pass. My mission was to photojournal Jeanne-Claude and Christo Javacheff's "The Umbrellas, Joint Project for Japan and USA". It was my 40th birthday present to myself.

Christo's Umbrellas were up for 18 days, to be seen and enjoyed by the public. There were 1760 yellow umbrellas whimsically placed along I-5 between Gorman and Grapevine, California, 60 miles north of Los Angeles. Simultaneously, there were 1340 blue umbrellas erected in Japan.

I had good luck with the balmy weather and a wonderfully clear sky. Many of these pictures were made by the full moon's light.

The scale of Christo's work was striking; from a distance so many little identical shelters only spotted the great expanse of this golden-blonde California hillside. Up close, these 20 foot high giants nestled me beneath their billowing arms.

Some years later I met Keiichi Nakamura through International MailArt. You'll find here a few pictures he made of Christo's event along the Sato River, 75 miles north of his home in Tokyo, Japan.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude's umbrellas were some 7 years in the planning, of which I captured but a part of one full day. It was a brief encounter, one that has forever changed the way I see this stretch of highway.



## **Scribbles, Doodles**

Doodling and Scribbling have gotten a bad rap. They've become associated with idle and trifling play, something we mindlessly do when put on hold on the telephone. I feel that there is something more to it, possibly a freeing, non-threatening way into feeling.

I've always scribbled and doodled. As a kid, when not paying attention to the teacher, I intently doodled in the margins. Being dyslexic, it was my solace from the confusing words and numbers being thrown at me. Scribbling has been a constant companion, helping me fathom what is churning in the deeper recesses of my psyche.

From within their own world, doodles and scribbles speak volumes to me. Sometimes I do put them in the service of whimsical play, or even cartooning. I can also use them to draw out an unarticulated mystery; just doodling around until something comes of it and seeing what it says. Scribbling energetically until a felt-space perspective begins to articulate itself or an imaginary image emerges.

Mindful, free scribbling and doodling, just being present and letting it be whatever it is, for me is more to the point than any other form of drawing. It is the most immediate confluence of the inner & outer realms - drawing in, drawing on and drawing feeling, form and the matter that matters most to me. It's most simply seeing and feeling. Some of the doodles offered here began in the tried & true hand-driven pen and/or pencil convention. They then were 'colorized' in a cyber picture editor. Others are the likeness of the raw gush of the unique moment capture here for your visual delight.



**LAST PAINTINGS:** *Speaking Water, Silent Structure*

These are the LAST PAINTINGS that I have done. They are not the last paintings that I will ever do. I have stopped painting, I haven't quit. I have stopped to focus my attention on other life matters. When the time is right I will paint again.

Never again like this.



For more on the premises behind these paintings please see: "*Conversations on Silent Paintings*".