

Profiles in Art: Michael Rose

The bright colors of Michael Rose's abstract artwork cannot be successfully characterized in print. "People favor life-like artwork more (than abstract) because they can automatically associate with it. Abstract artwork is what the individual artist feels and truly wants to convey," he says about having sold more of his realistic paintings than any others.

Mike graduated from the Concord School of Art in West Virginia. He regrets the fact that while he was in college he just gave away many of his paintings. "The hardest lesson I had to learn was that my paintings had value above and beyond the cost of the materials." Unfortunately, for him, he still has a difficult time not just giving his work away to his friends.

Having spent many years moving around the country and seemingly constantly needing to reestablish himself, two years ago he decided that the Manitou Springs and Old Colorado City area was where he wanted to stay. While it is evident that he comes from one of the most beautiful parts of the nation, as expressed in some of his representations of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Mike explains "It's really the intelligence of the people here that continually inspires me. The more I'm around people who I talk to about my art, the more I want to spend my time and my life doing my paintings."

This is some times difficult as he is also a very good musician and song writer, both of which are also reflected in the subjects of some of his paintings. "Dividing my time between my music and my painting, as well as a full-time job, is certainly a challenge." Someday he hopes to make enough money from his arts to be able to dedicate his time to nothing but them.

Mike spent several years teaching art to disadvantaged children before settling in Old Colorado City. He was asked to teach everything from photography to oil painting to pencil drawings. "Many of these children were very talented and just needed someone to take the time to teach them and encourage them." When assigned to teach a realism class, he had to reconcile the belief that "if you want realism, then take a photograph," with wanting some way of teaching his students how to paint realistic work.

With much tribulation, trial, and error he finally developed a way of printing black and white photos onto a fiber paper. This gave him, and his students, a way to start with a realistic piece. They would then take watercolor pencils and paint over the picture, adding color and depth, and most importantly individualism. The watercolor pencils blended into the fiber paper giving it an opaque quality without adding water and dulling or making the images fuzzy. The result? A painting with a realism of a picture; one so vivid you can almost hear the bubbling of the river and the chirping of the birds.

His latest work, to be exhibited (and possibly sold) at the Manitou Springs Celebration of the Arts Festival, is an abstract science fiction painting. The background is done in vivid red and green oils with a very detailed black and white, pen and ink

foreground of aliens and computers, and is indicative of his current style and energy. Many of his other works, including his pen and ink of Jimmie Hendrix (his music idol) carry the same abstract characteristics and yet demonstrate great attention to realistic detail.

Mike hopes to do more shows here in Manitou Springs and to be able to show all his work to everyone. He emphatically feels that there is something in his art for everyone "from 8 to 80 and beyond" to appreciate.

“The key is getting more people to see my art work. If you’re an artist, you need to find people who can enjoy and appreciate your creativity - like the people of Manitou Springs. Otherwise it’s like a tree falling in the forest - if there is no one to hear it or see it, what does it matter?”

Michael Rose currently lives in Old Colorado City. When not involved in his paintings and mundane job, he is an avid guitarist, mandolin player and song writer. He regularly plays lead in the heavy metal band "Jesus Murphy", which can also be heard around town.