

Emotionally Charged: Don Lisy

Following the One Shot, One Session Rule

A direct reflection of his upbringing, Don Lisy describes his work as: a revolt against the Midwest sensibilities that dominate the critical and popular mindset of those from Cleveland, Ohio. As an early adult, with feelings of inspiration turning to those of restriction, the painter realized that those living in his community and within the state's borders had little understanding of what it means to be an artist. As a result, he dedicated his time to exploring his talents and went on to attend the Cleveland Institute of Art (CIA), focusing on painting and printmaking.

He tells the story of a time just before leaving CIA that helped to shape his creative process and style. After spending weeks on a painting assignment, with a deadline one day away, Lisy was unhappy with the final product. "[I re-worked the painting in a three-hour flurry of activity and it clicked that this is how I work]". He continues to work in one session, but now on a larger scale and for a longer period of time. Based on his emotional energy and relationship to color, the artist's personalized approach requires him to embrace how he feels in order to know when to paint. At a moment-to-moment pace, he works to capture his current mood and express it through color before an internal shift takes place. "Each resulting work is more of a self-portrait of an emotional event rather than an image concerned with aesthetics," he says.

After almost two decades of back and forth to New York City for group exhibitions and band performances, Lisy decided it was time to reside there permanently. He moved from Cleveland to Brooklyn and over time formed a stronger connection to the place and its people. With his move came a change in the standard size of his canvas and physicality as an artist. Without one of the crafts most basic tools (an easel), he was forced to make do. His makeshift surface: a piece of paper taped to a drawing board, which often led to Lisy working on the ground. Revealing different (and less explored) options for composition, the transition expanded his skill set and method for visualization. Playing and painting with a variety of materials including charcoal, watercolors and oils, he first focused on gaining better control of the paint.

"My work before New York City was heavily covered. I have embraced the negative space and the bulk of my work [now] has a stark white background. I have also been deconstructing what used to be bold figurative elements and merged them with a more organic textural vibe," Lisy adds.

With a history holding both a paintbrush and a pair of drumsticks, he draws parallels between the two, "Balance and coordination mixed with fear and desire is the best way to describe it." Chaos is a common visual theme

among his painting, with color sporadically crossing the boundaries of the surface in every direction.

In winter 2016, the artist returned to Cleveland to establish a second studio. Having evolved its arts and culture scene, the city offers more galleries than ever before and fewer distractions in comparison to NYC. Considering his artistic vision strays from mainstream likes and trends, Lisy's hometown is complementary to his collection. With experience exhibiting across the United States and internationally in Germany, Italy and Spain, he has had the opportunity to share his creative spirit with a wide audience. Coming up: "Applied Force", a solo exhibition and pop up style show in Manhattan. With a date and location set, the only unfinished part of the process is the painting. Routinely presenting already completed work (sometimes months in advance), this will be the first time he shares his most recent concepts and creations.