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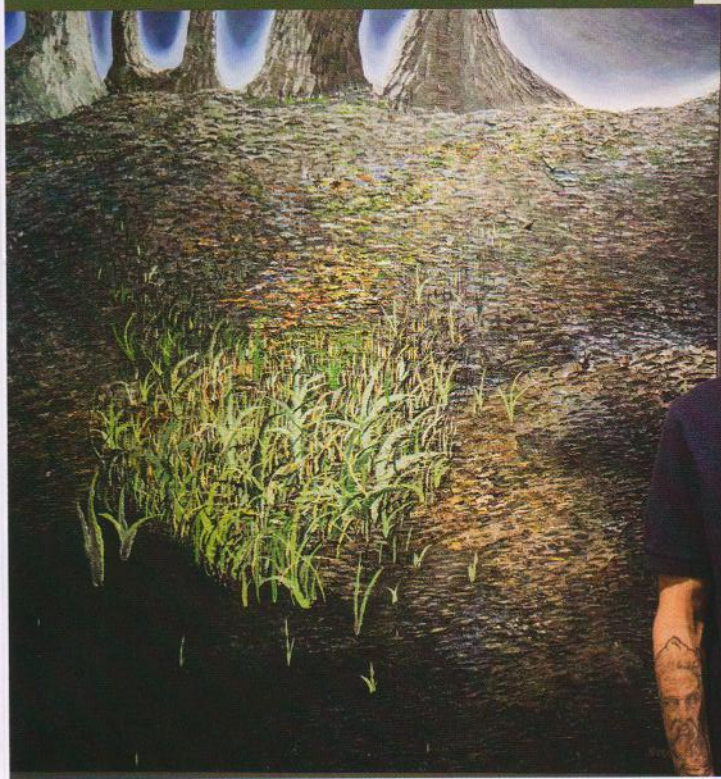


Sam Siegel and the Challenges of Making Art

Cover Photograph by Vanessa Fukuyama, Fortune Hill Photography

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Sam Siegel and the Challenges of Making Art

By Richard Forzley

Art is deliberately arranging elements in a way that appeals to the senses or emotions and can encompass a diverse range of expression, including music, literature, film, sculpture and painting. Art is generally understood as any process done by people with a communicative purpose—something that expresses an idea or, more generally, a world view.

There are always grey areas about what art 'is'. We can generally agree that any definition includes at least two factors that are indisputably found in all artworks: 'form' and 'content.' All image-based art must be derived from a variety of elements such as colour, line, dimension, perspective, contrast and balance. And, of course, the artist draws from a limitless number of

materials and mediums with which to employ those elements.

Some art digs deep into something visceral or symbolic where the message may be different from one viewer to the next. In fact, it's entirely plausible that the artist may not necessarily intend the message they have created. In all cases, though, form and content are essential factors, the bones of artistic creation.

Local artist Sam Siegel, born in West Point Grey in Vancouver in 1992, where he continues to live, showed an artistic bent and a surprising understanding of form and content early on. At Queen Mary Elementary school, his interest in drawing and colouring attracted the attention of his third grade teacher who told his parents that he had an exceptional artistic talent. From that moment on, Sam's parents nurtured his talent by taking him to local art

galleries and museums.

As a teenager, two significant things happened to Sam. He attended Lord Byng High School, known for its superb art programs, where he received even more encouragement for his burgeoning talent, and he

developed a serious interest in hiking and mountain climbing.

"I really got involved in the challenge of these outdoor activities and those experiences opened my eyes to the incredible beauty of the region," Sam says. His love of the outdoors has

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clearly been a major contributing factor to the look and feel of his painting style today. After graduating high school, he got a job at Point Grey's Jericho Tennis Club where "... some of the members became aware of my artistic ambitions and would ask me to take on commissioned pieces."

Stylistically, most of Sam's paintings can be described as abstract landscapes, largely influenced by the spectacular vistas that are such an important and pervasive aspect of living in this part of the world. Often compared to artists like Ross Penhall and Glenn Payan, much of Sam's work "... encompasses

both ocean and mountain vistas, and possess a unique and spectacular beauty that informs and inspires my art. I love to go hiking and camping, and always take pictures wherever I go. I find there is a certain peaceful spirituality in these activities, a feeling of awe in the face of the beauty and solitude. It deeply

informs my art and is a significant part of the message I hope others find in my work."

His interest in hiking and mountain climbing offers him the unique opportunity to capture images unavailable to him in the city. "The photographs I take on these adventures are often

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the inspiration for many of my artistic ideas,” Sam points out. “The photographs are often the stepping stones to my paintings. After a weekend adventure, I frequently go straight to the

drawing board invigorated by a wealth of new ideas. “I usually begin my paintings with pencil drawings, playing with numerous organic shapes and perspectives that I see in the photos I take.

Eventually the painting’s subject emerges, almost finding itself in these early drawings.

Sam’s medium of choice is either

acrylics or oils. “Acrylics dry fairly quickly, and require a faster pace, resulting in the treatment of texture and colour manipulation that’s quite different from oil paint. At first, I worked only

with acrylics but later discovered the subtlety of colour and shading that only oil paint can offer.

“After working in both oil and acrylic, I’ve come to realize that each offers its own unique advantages. Depending on my particular goal at the time and the idea

for the work itself, I continue to explore both mediums.”

Looking at his work, it’s easy to

see that one of the remarkable features of Sam’s work is his extraordinary sense of colour. “People who buy my paintings often remark on my colour palette as one of the things that attracted them to my art.” His earlier work, ominously using dark tones and thick textures, have a kind of fairy-tale, other-worldly feel. On the other hand, his more recent work explores a more geometric approach with the use of warped perspectives and simple geometric forms.

Every artist, of course, paints for the pure enjoyment of creating something original, something that explores their unique personal take on the world. That was certainly true for Sam when he started painting. But he says, “I wanted to make my art accessible to the public at large. I was always surprised by the high prices of artworks and I thought there must be a way to make it more affordable.

“With my dad and my uncle, I opened up an art gallery in the Granville Island district called SamsOriginalArt where we sell original paintings at competitive prices. We are a small, family-run gallery catering to clients who care about quality.” The gallery sells Sam’s original work as well as Giclée prints on canvas. Each print is signed and produced in limited editions of thirty to ensure perfection. By using advanced digital scanning techniques, they offer their customers affordable reproductions, that are virtually indistinguishable from Sam’s original work.

Ultimately art is an expression of our thoughts, emotions, intuitions and desires. It is often even more personal than that: it’s about sharing the way we experience the world, and eliciting a personal and subjective reaction from each viewer.

“British Columbia is full of amazing hiking trails and spectacular vistas, which inspires me to recreate this amazing, natural beauty through the medium of oil and acrylic painting. I hope my art will inspire you with that same sense of spectacular beauty that is all around us.”


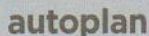
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