

Herbert Lee Murrie was born in Chicago, Illinois on September 4, 1935.

Murrie learned very early, in his pre-teens, how important it is to paint every day. How important it is to feel the tools in your hands everyday. To play with the paint and see how colors react to one another. But one of the most important things that several art schools taught him was confidence and independence in his selection of determining what was good or bad in his choices of art.

Murrie graduated from the University of Illinois in 1957 with a degree in Fine Arts. He turned down an assistant professorship when he graduated, and went back to Chicago to join an advertising agency as an assistant art director to work as a designer, forgoing his education in the fine arts at least temporarily.

After working for several years at a couple of design studios he started his own design firm creating high-end promotion pieces for a variety of manufacturers.

Over the next four years they began to work for some of the largest manufacturing firms in the country; Dow Chemical, Goodyear, Jockey Menswear, Bell & Howell, and Zenith to name a few.

Soon Package Design and Brand Identification took over the business.

The client list grew to include Quaker Oats, Nestlé, Kraft Foods, Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, Keebler Cookies, Oscar Mayer, Bristol-Myers, Lever Brothers, Lipton Tea, and SC Johnson. Some of the many product companies that they created brand identities and packaging for that they brought into the marketplace.

In 2007 Murrie sold the business to one of the leading design executives in the country. He had continued to paint over this long period since university. Murrie had never shown his work until 1998 and has never looked back.

Murrie's art school training was classic in nature. His love of painting leaned toward the French Impressionists, Monet, Cezanne, Sisley, Gauguin to name a few. Never the less, he greatly admired what was happening in the early 60's and 70's by the American abstract painters, such as Wilhem de Kooning, Arshile Gorki, Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollock.

His early landscape paintings came from his many trips to Italy in the early 70s where he eventually bought a home, spending 4 to 5 months a year painting. He entered many juried contests in the early 90's and was excepted into several shows.

In 1998 he was represented by a Chicago gallery and during the next five years did very well selling impressionistic landscapes. Over the next 10 to 12 years his painting moved slowly to the abstract.

Murrie knew he had to keep pushing forward toward a totally non-objective, purely abstract style. He never felt the same emotion or excitement that he feels in his abstract work today. Murrie does not find it easy to explain what it is he is doing with his painting.

One presupposes, of course, that words are used to convey information about the idea and the context. None of his paintings function as illustrations of an idea; ultimately, they are the idea. The shapes and forms emerge through the constant blending and manipulations of the paint. A non-hierarchical interweaving of form with space and color...interlacing forms, bows and curves that constantly intersect to produce fantastic spatial structures

that change with the light, could be altered endlessly. To cause something to change and flow, to make it relative, suits him very well. He will edit out and build upon what he feels is working. Sometimes when images come about by chance they are fresher, more organic, more inevitable. Instinct takes charge.

The composition of different forms, colors, structures, proportions, harmonies come out as an abstract system analogous to the creating of music. Letting a thing come rather than creating it is more genuine, richer, more alive. Anything is possible in his paintings; any form, added at will, changes the picture but does not make it wrong.

The fact that Murrie's paintings evolve their motifs as the work proceeds is a timely one because there is no central image of the world any longer:

He must work out everything for himself. He wants to capture the energy one finds in music. Music has that abstract energy that is difficult to put into words. You feel it, sense it to produce a specific emotional effect. In his black-and-white paintings, the elimination of color creates a simplification that carry the emotion alone on the shapes and special relationships that are formed by the intertwining swirls and blobs of paint.

Murrie believes that the computer is a great technical development that adds to the creative process. It doesn't replace the creative, it either supplements the process or creates its own domain. The same goes for the art of installation. It has created its own domain.

Artists will always search for the new idea; impressionism, Dada, Color Field, Abstract, Pop, etc. and within these fields of art who will be noted or revered; only time will determine how long a school of art lives and has value. We always look for the original,

be it a method, an execution, a talent, but only time will evaluate true value; Pablo Picasso is a great example of that.

Artists must, first and foremost, do what pleases them; critics change, collectors change, tastes change. Murrie does what he does, that which pleases his senses above all else!

“Critics have said thru the years that painting is dead, passé; painting is not dead and will always be there in some form or another”, declares Murrie.

“Chance plays an important role in my paintings, however, it is never blind chance; it's a chance that is always surprising. I'm often astonished to find out how much better chance is than planned”.

Chance has two meanings in English, it can mean accident or Hazard. In French "avoir de la chance" means to be lucky. “I have questioned for a very long time if there is a destiny for us or is it completely blind; the push pull between accident, destiny and luck. In the initial phase of my painting chance or accident plays a major role. I pour various colors onto sheets of acetate in various shapes and patterns. Shapes and forms emerge through the constant blending and manipulation of the paint; interlacing forms, bows and curves that constantly intersect to produce structures that could be altered endlessly”.

“The second phase of my process is editing; finding the forms and shapes that work for me. I cut these forms out from the acetate and begin to adhere them to the canvas or wood panels which I've prepared having a color and spatial sketch in mind before I start the painting on acetate. This is where I have more control or destiny, if you will, over where the work is headed.

In some way, my method of painting provides me with an answer to part of the question of chance or luck verses the control of destiny”.

A transition from abstract art, creating forms, marks, and color evoking a variety of emotions from the viewer began to feel inadequate compared to the chaos happening in every corner of the world; war, terrorism, child slavery, the massive influx of refugees escaping from the tragedies happening in their countries, etc.

The need to express these tragedies visually, inspired by the dimensional works of Robert Rauschenberg and Mark Bradford began the transition to New Inspirations as seen on Murrie’s website.