

Paulette Melanson - Chase Gallery, November 2021

It seems that every abstract painting I create, in some way or another, is a search for meaning. I never fully understood this about myself until 2020 when I developed a series of paintings for a solo show at Argyle Fine Art in Halifax. Reflecting on the work, I realized that I had been searching for meaning most of my life. This particular group of paintings contains work from 2021, 2020 and from 2018 (reworked in 2021).

About the paintings

Three of the paintings are some of my most raw and personal expressions to date: 'On a Continuum' 36" x 48", centre top; "Passage", 30" x 40" and 'Dreamscape', 30" x 40", both far left.

'We Can Do This', 36" x 24", vertical painting; 'We Are the Solution', 18" x 24", smallest painting; 'Everything is Connected (1) & (2)', 24" x 24"; 'Let's Do This Together', 24" x 24" and; 'You Live, You Learn', 24" x 24" are all related to the current world existential crisis and doing the right thing.

Centre bottom, 'Long Awaited Trip' 36" x 48", or 'Long Awaited Hug' (if same painting is hung vertically), are my reactions to the COVID pandemic.

About my process

I begin a painting with no particular subject, theme or outcome in mind unless of course I want to do a representational painting. The best way to describe what I do is to say that I create with a blank mind - if that makes any sense. I begin layering the paint, making marks with all sorts of tools without thinking about what I want to create. The best term I have found that describes my process is automatism (definition from the Tate 'automatism refers to creating art without conscious thought, accessing material from the unconscious mind as part of the creative process'). Only when the piece is almost finished do I see some significance or personal association. If I like it, I keep it. If it feels negative, I continue working on the painting until I resolve it. Some pieces have many layers. I continue working until I find something meaningful that has a pleasing visual outcome. This may take hours, days, weeks or months of daily work.

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