



Black Light

Artist: Lucette White
 Courtesy Judi Rotenburg Gallery
 130 Newbury Street, Boston

It is one of the ironies of life that when we labor we think often of leisure, and when we are at play we often become quite serious-minded, questioning our live's direction. Schooled in drawing and sculpture, Lucette White's life brought her to the shores of Cape Ann in Massachusetts where, while she often works in watercolors, her integral use of black and other nontraditional techniques gives her work a surprisingly strong emotional content. Her studio is by the sea, yet her creations arise mainly from an inner landscape, not from attempts at dispassionate mimicry.

The most powerful influence upon my artistic development was the sculptor George Demetrios whose theories of movement and balance, and of the "ensemble," provided me with the confidence to attempt to develop my own personal style, which is a neverending process. I also studied art history and printmaking with Professor John Canady, former art critic for *The New York Times*, at Newcomb College in New Orleans, and watercolor technique with Hilton Leech at the Sarasota School of Art in Florida.

Methods and Materials

Some of my work, including sculpture, is an immediate visual response to what I have seen or felt. In some cases while I am out of the studio and working on-site, the composition is still developed completely in my imagination before I actually begin. I might sketch a few guidelines, but mostly I concentrate on transferring the emotion that a particular scene has evoked in me directly to the paper.

My other "method" of painting is, perhaps, more deliberate, in that I have studied, observed and thought about a particular subject, and an idea has formed in my mind over time. From there, I paint completely from imagination. Yet in attempting to express the subject, however removed in time or distance I am from that subject, the process is similar to my on-site work.

For both approaches, there is a deliberate attempt to assert the presence of the observer in the creation and thus to create a truly unique expression.

The physical process begins with high quality watercolor paper purchased in large rolls and cut to the desired length and width. I then tack the pieces to the wall and paint directly on to the surface. I employ high grade watercolors, gouache, drawing inks and frequently use tiny touches of brilliant inks for illumination effects.

I begin with large, usually pale washes to block in the composition, allowing time between layers for some drying. At times, I use gouache for effect and I always accent with black. I try to paint with strength and concentration to reveal inner meaning and emotion in parallel with the outward image. I have been told that my use of black as a color is one of the more unique aspects of my work. I believe that a strong use of color is the most effective means that I have found for expressing the emotional content of my work.

Results

"Storm Fantasy", a 14" x 60" watercolor, reflects my love of the sea as subject matter, as well as my continuing fascination with the movement of light. The painting depicts waves crashing into each other. I have deliberately refrained from anchoring the painting with a foreground or horizon in order to convey a sense of our complete lack of control over these forces. The dominant colors are greens and blues, with touches of yellow, and black accents. I believe that this work succeeds in conveying the fear and fascination I often feel when faced with the power of the natural world.