

## Richard Hickam Unmasked

September 14, 2017 Patron



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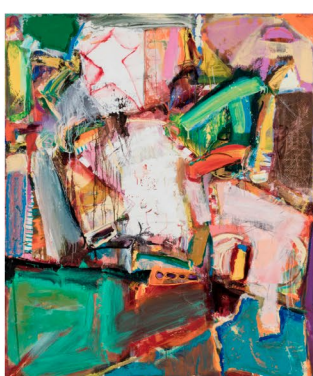


Richard Hickam  
The Reader  
oil on canvas  
63.5" x 63.5"

On Saturday, September 16th Bivins Gallery will open *Richard Hickam: Expressions of Color*, which will survey the decades of progression of Ohio-based artist's work from photorealism to large-scale abstracts to figurative abstractions. This exhibition presents a unique understanding into the evolution of an artist's practice and the world around them. Hickam will be present on opening night from 5:00-8:00 p.m. offering gallery-goers a chance to explore the exhibition with the venerated artist.



Richard Hickam Hollywood Fighter oil on canvas 67.25" x 63.5"



Richard Hickam Mulberry Forest oil on canvas 67" x 57"

Hickam was born in Los Angeles in 1944. He received his BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute in 1966 and his MFA from the University of New Mexico in 1968. He taught at Kendall College of Art and Design in Grand Rapids, MI in 1968, and the Columbus College of Art from 1969-73. We had the chance to speak with Hickam before the show to discuss his career and artistic growth.

Patron: In the 1980s, you became restless within the prescribed confines of a technical photorealistic style that led you to an open-ended approach to figuration. Can you offer some insight on how/why your work moved away from realism to a more abstract style and what you became restless with?

Richard Hickam: Growing up in a conservative atmosphere, I was taught to preserve the past and perfect those elements inside the box. Working with realism was a process of observing and recording. Preliminary sketches were rendered and meticulously followed. One could actually determine the final outcome before starting the painting. To negate this sterile approach I desired the work to have the possibility to alter and grow as the execution took place. This would result in discovery, replacing recording.



Richard Hickam Evening Coffee oil on canvas 37" x 33.5"



Richard Hickam Blue Egg oil on canvas 41.5" x 33.5"

P: You've transitioned from photorealism to large-scale abstracts to figurative abstractions. The balance between your photorealistic work and abstract work is evident in your solo show at Bivins Gallery. What brought you to add figurative elements back into your work?

RH: Elements of abstraction came into play once I realized that the paint itself had a life and additional contribution beyond just the act of description. The component of chance replaced pre-planning. Working in this manner allows both the conscious and unconscious to merge. True art may lie somewhere between science and philosophy. Therefore the artist has the opportunity to gain new insight with each experience.

P: What motivates/inspires you to push your work into new genres?

RH: Working with the figure is the most difficult proposition of all. You are competing with the masters of all ages and all schools of art. Each work, to some degree, is a self-portrait. The artist's choices unmask his own personality. He should be aware of future confrontation of the figure in the work to those observing the painting.



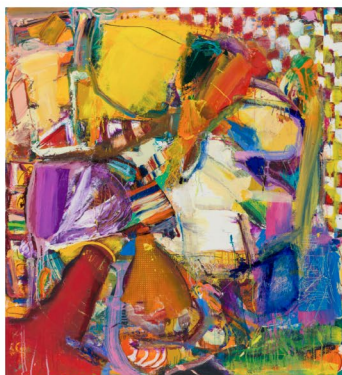
P: Can you describe your process?

RH: Each morning when I enter the studio I am excited about the quest for new answers and new insights. Yet as many before me have stated, we do not desire to find solutions. That is when it ends. You search for your God but wish to put off facing him.

P: "Hickam distinguishes himself among a coterie of painters through history willing to embrace the absurdities of their paradigm as a conduit to significance." Can you touch on the significance of the quote from your Allen Stone bio?



Richard Hickam Beached oil on canvas 44" x 31"



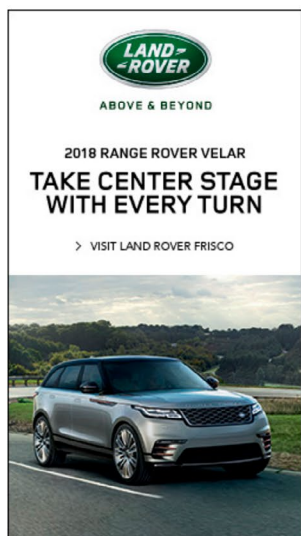
Richard Hickam French Break oil on canvas 47" x 52.5"

RH: I feel true art is timeless. What Rembrandt or any other of the masters confronted was basically what we search for. The apparel is different, our surroundings are dissimilar but the human condition, the thirst for knowledge, remains the same.

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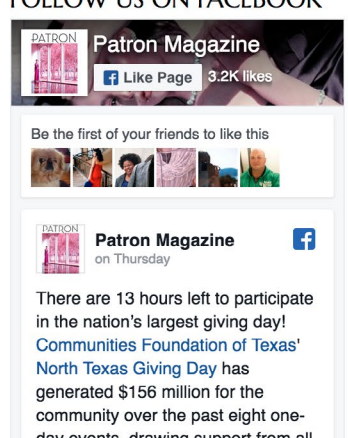
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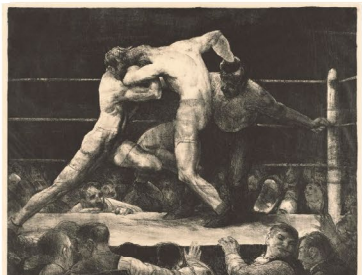
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