

cynthia byrnes  
contemporary art

Michael Brown  
Artist Statement

My painting style has an affinity with the work of the abstract expressionists of the 1940's and 50's. It has something in common with the gestural painting of Robert Motherwell, Franz Kline and the colour field paintings of Hans Hoffmann.

The more gestural paintings tend to be black and white, but I sometimes use colour especially in the more recent work. In a similar way to the traditional of abstract Expressionism, I prefer to work on large scale but, up to now have not ventured into mural painting.

When I start painting, I have no idea in mind. I am not afraid of the blank canvas. I have complete faith that the painting will develop through the process of painting, from nothing into something, and, with every mark or gesture, with each application of colour, the picture will emerge and structure itself. When there is nothing more to add, the painting is finished.

*I am looking at you* was an attempt, with its scale at creating a paradox through, without question a saturating visual field, and on the other hand, I hope to encourage the viewer, to ask questions such as, 'what am I looking at?' and 'actually' is anything there and if so, what value does it hold?'

While I am painting, I have no intention of communicating with the viewer but, when the painting is exhibited, I hope the viewer will be able to read the painting process and will gain insight from the experience.

*The painting of my brown is rich in both movement and expression. Notably, the school of abstract Expressionism has traditionally recognised an impulsive act of "flinging" colour onto the painting surface as a means significant in itself. The freshness of the paint application intends to focus our perception more on that creative moment of it's becoming instead of the finished picture.*

*In addition, pursuing explicit motives above and beyond the anaesthetics of shape or colour might simply be one way for Mike Brown to nurture a healthy scepticism, the frame of mind most important for maintaining critical reflection on artistic incentive and the immediate direction that the painting is to take as it unfolds. As we "read" his work we learn to see how brush and paint were guided throughout the course of the painting, prizing both Melody and tone as an outcome.*

*His artwork would seem to remind us that as humans we are transient, and of the fruitlessness in trying to grasp art entirely. Moreover, observing he's painting can lead one to distinguish ever more closely, beholding a work of art for the moment – in its fragility as something most precious.*

Frederick D. Bunsen  
B.S., B.A., M.A.