

In 1975, a 6 foot 4 inch black-bearded man entered the Gallery. I expected him to tell me he was Paul Bunyan, but he turned out to be George D. Green, an artist from the Pacific Northwest. He was then and has continued to be, a giant of an artist.

While my gallery was beginning to be known for the postmodern Photorealism with which I was deeply involved, I was also then becoming increasingly aware of works—essentially abstract works—in which the exploration of illusionistic three-dimensionality was a strong and provocative element. George Green became one of five painters representing what I was seeing,

something I then called Abstract Illusionism. The other painters were James Havard, Jack Lembeck, Tony King and Michael Gallagher. These artists, who came from varied backgrounds and places in the USA, had all been independently drawn to the idea of breaking the picture plane. This was exciting and compelling work. By 1980, the genre and these artists had had plenty of exposure, both in the U.S. and Europe, through gallery and museum exhibitions as well as in the media.

George Green is unique in his success of the exploration of what the 19th century French called *trompe l'oeil* (in English, “fool the eye”). He has consistently produced vital and challenging work while developing ever-new ways to advance the vocabulary of the genre, yielding not so much deception (as implied in the genre’s name) but a very real and very rich fullness of space. Green’s first explorations of illusionistic three-dimensionality alluded to loose bands of canvas that had comprised an element of his works in the mid 70’s. The lavish application of thick paint (a very real three-dimensionality) was characteristic of his work throughout



George D. Green
The Zone of the Middle Dimensions: Sunrise
1993, acrylic on wood, 91.5 x 89 inches

the '80's and into the '90's. During this same period, shapes and colors were powerfully aggressive, and the works exhibited a most compelling and dynamic sense of movement, giving a vivid immediacy—making the viewer almost tactilely aware of the moment of the image's creation. His most recognizable works from the period were wildly shaped, and boldly illusionistically three dimensional—exuberant paintings—dynamic and vigorous yet movingly and deeply contemplative.

It is interesting to note that almost with each painting—from the very beginning to the very present—there has been a clear progression leading him to his present works. Viewing two or three successive works together from 1975 to 2010, changes and developments are subtle yet apparent. In seeing two paintings from five years apart, however, one would not perceive at once their relationship—they could, at a superficial viewing, almost appear to be the work of two different artists. A more contemplative viewing though, would reveal the works to be by the same artist, and moreover, to relate to one another on levels both stylistic and philosophical. At a point about the turn of the millennium, Green began painting on wood panels, incorporating the wood's natural grain into the illusion. These have evolved to the present work, which at a superficial (and very pleasing) look, appears to be beautifully photographed images of sea and stormy sky set in elaborate, well-crafted frames. But the seascapes are beguilingly skilful photorealist renderings of images conceived by the artist who says “there are no real clouds, waves, lightening” etc., and what he paints just simulates nature. The substantial, sculptural frames are in fact painted and rival the finest trompe l'oeil ever completed. The most recent work, unveiled in the present exhibition, employs a geometrical filigree superimposed and floating in front of the entire image of each painting adding yet another invention and advance.

George D. Green has been and continues to be the most inventive and original painter I have ever seen, known or studied, from the Renaissance to the present; his work is living proof that painting is not dead!

Louis K. Meisel

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