

Gary Chapman
Artist Statement

With good intentions, my subjects are passionately searching. They are engaged in the proverbial, if not cliché, pursuit of meaning, knowledge, experience, or truth. They are on the quest of 'finding themselves,' looking externally and through the eyes and experiences of others. The children in these paintings, are still pure in this search, determined and armed with a clear vision; naïve. The adults however, begin their search for the elusive, already encumbered by all that they bring to the search; that which they know, have experienced and have come to believe. While equally pure in their intentions, they have lost their innocence.

I see my work as a natural blend of the macabre and the beautiful. My paintings contain a balance of euphoria and horror, and often center on the relationship and the fusion of such opposites. I see the relationship of abstraction and realism, objective and non-objective painting, as a metaphor for the complexities of our individual realities. Life is not a still life nor is it a splash of red paint; but rather a multi-layered perception of the observed and the created.

I prefer to see my work as a fusion of:

the physical and the spiritual,

the humorous and the solemn,

the intellectual and the passionate,

the perceived and the imagined,

the wonderful and the horrific,

the beautiful and the macabre.

Chiaroscuro has had a significant influence on my work, but certainly no more so than the teachings of Kandinsky on the spirit of abstraction. In my work, chiaroscuro is a device which joins and contrasts contemporary and personal content with historic religious painting and acts like a lure in which to seduce the viewer. Though technique is an important issue in my art, it is secondary and simply a complement to the concept of the work. Painting is exciting today because there is no dogmatic style; each artist must choose and develop his or her style as a complement to his or her ideas, not because it is fashionable.

It is a wonderful time to be painting, as once again we have come to the realization that the most important quality in art is not how the medium is manipulated but that passion be the driving force behind it.