

Blitt show features artist whose evolving works remain true to inspiration.

Indianapolis Star
October 2004
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When Rita Blitt was growing up, her grandfather designed embroidery patterns, and he used to send her letters with his drawings in the margins. She replied with drawings of her own.

From such simple exchanges, an artist was born. And what an artist Blitt has turned out to be. Her paintings and sculptures are in museums and corporate collections around the world, and she has had exhibitions throughout the country.

Her latest show is at 4 Star Gallery, 653 Massachusetts Ave. It includes abstract paintings, black-and-white drawings, and both wall and pedestal sculptures. Many have been inspired by music or nature.

"Essentially, what I do is dance and move and respond with color and motion to what I feel," said Blitt during a recent telephone conversation from her home in Kansas City.

Her current work is a refinement of what she's been doing since the 1960s when she first began selling her work. A graduate of the Kansas City Art Institute, Blitt said she was blessed with a degree of confidence in her abilities that led to early success in the art marketplace.

She also began creating sculpture for regional shopping centers—nonrepresentational pieces that proved so popular that she received commissions from hotels, commercial building projects and arts organizations.

In 1975, she said, she stood in front of one of her sculptures – an abstract piece called "Yellow Ball" – and realized that it was "More like me than anything I had ever done."

That realization was made more profound by the fact that the concept for the sculpture had come from a doodle she'd done in her sketchbook. Creating art didn't have to be an agonizing process, she had discovered. It could be intuitive.

"From that moment on," she said, "I've been letting my lines flow."

In 1977, she added another element to the process by starting to draw and paint with two hands at the same time. That allowed her to stretch out her imagery, working on pieces as wide as nine feet.

Throughout her career, Blitt has been driven by a simple, yet profound, motivator, "I have so much joy when I'm creating," she said. "In the pain of the world today, people are missing a wonderful opportunity to experience joy if they don't create things. I feel like I'm another person when I'm creating."

That's because she allows herself to be transported. For example, standing in front of a blank canvas, music playing in the background, Blitt begins to move –literally. From the movement comes the motion of her arms and hands, and from that motion comes a painting.

"I feel like I'm dancing on paper," she said. " I love that feeling."

It's a feeling she encourages more people, artists or not, to experience for themselves.

"I don't want to inspire just other artists," said Blitt. " I want to inspire everyone to let their hands dance on paper. I'm talking about just doing it."

The results of Blitt's commitment to creating things are displayed not only in the 4 Star exhibition, but also in her new book, "The Passionate Gesture" RAM Publications, Brandeis University, \$49). It traces the evolution of Blitt's artwork, using 231 images. It also includes an interview with the artist and a biographical timeline.

"I've always felt the importance of getting to the essences of things," said Blitt. "In life, there's nothing like the truth."