



Artist Moritz Kellerman shows off layering techniques in Evanston Art Center painting exhibit

Taariq Ahmed, Print Managing Editor

Rich, vibrant colors seep through the layers of paintings in artist and Oakton College Prof. Moritz Kellerman's Evanston Art Center exhibit, each piece telling its own story through the depth and tiers created by a glazing process.

The exhibit, a collection of Kellerman's recent paintings, has been on display on the second floor of the center since June 27 and will run through July 29.

While he hopes audiences enjoy the work, Kellerman said viewers don't need to have a specific interpretation of the subjective, abstract art. Instead, he hopes visitors will "spend time with" the paintings. He said the glazing process — during which oil-based mediums allow natural light to pass through translucent layers before reflecting back — reveals the works' complexity.

"By doing that, they are their own entity, and they're telling their story," Kellerman said. "It's like, 'What's your story, painting?' 'Well, this is my story.' Just like we tell our narratives, the story of our lives, I want them to say the same thing."

Kellerman said seeing the work in person, rather than online, is essential to fully appreciate the work, calling the difference "day and night."

While his work is influenced by famous Renaissance artists, particularly through his use of wood panels and glazing techniques, Kellerman said he has never tried to "duplicate" the work of his artistic heroes, because his paintings are abstract.

He said that early in his career, he was given few opportunities to teach studio classes and instead taught art history.

"Little did I know back then how much of an influence that was going to have on my life," Kellerman said. "I started there, and I've been teaching for like 40 years, so I think what happens is that the art history starts seeping into the studio."

From deep purples and reds to bright yellows, the paintings stretch down the hallway as sunlight from a large window illuminates the canvases.



Taariq Ahmed/The Daily Northwestern

Artist Moritz Kellerman's exhibit at the Evanston Art Center will run through July 29.

Kellerman said his creative process differs from that of many artists. Recalling a conversation with a friend and fellow painter, Kellerman said while they finish one painting before beginning another, he prefers to work on several simultaneously.

EAC Director of Development and Exhibitions Emma Rose Gudewicz said Kellerman's application was well received by the exhibition committee — on which she serves as a non-voting member — because of both the abstract nature of his work and his distinct techniques.

Gudewicz also emphasized the importance of experiencing art in person at museums and galleries.

"Moritz's work is really special in that because it is so different in person than how it appears in a photograph," Gudewicz said. "Once you get people in the door, they spend a lot of time here, looking at it and thinking through the layers and adding their own meaning to the work."

Highland Park resident Anne Bernard-Pattis (Weinberg doctorate '90), an artist who regularly takes classes at the center, said she often passes Kellerman's work on her way to the studio. Viewing the paintings both up close and from a distance, she said she found them "attractive."

She said the series, with each painting possessing its own personality, is visually satisfying and calming.

"In this one, it's watery, and in this one, the texture looks like it was accomplished with his fingers, so there's a lot to enjoy," Bernard-Pattis said. "You don't need any explanation. Every time I go to a museum, I play with myself, 'Which piece am I taking home?'"

Email: r.ahmed@dailynorthwestern.com

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