



PANDEMIC PAINTINGS

Art has come out of some of the darkest times in human history, acting as a beacon of hope. The 2020 pandemic is no different.

The Great American Paint In is now documenting the works of hope America's greatest artists have produced during their COVID-19 isolation and as the country begins to reopen. The juried collection, which continues to grow by the day, is available for viewing at thegreatpaint-in.com. The event aims to capture this unique moment in history through art. Pieces can be any form, medium or size but must convey the emotions and viewpoints of the artists from their corners of the world during this experience.



The project currently has pieces from artists in Florida, New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and beyond. Participants include Eleinne Basa, Garin J Baker, Hillary Scott and more. There are three artists from the Philadelphia area (Joseph Daily, Gelena Pavlenko and Megan Lawlor). Collectors can purchase works from the website. The organizers will collect the works in a tabletop art history book when the project is complete. The Great American Paint In is the project of Bill and Mary Weinaug, art collectors and owners of Gallery CERO, an art gallery under development at their riverside property north of Orlando, Florida.

"We have always been huge supporters of the arts," Bill Weinaug said. "Seeing the pieces these artists are producing during this time of isolation is incredible. Each piece we add to the collection is a new facet in the story of this pandemic. That's what we hope to document."

PW recently caught up with Daily to talk about the event and his work.

How have the pandemic and all of the ensuing closures impacted your painting and the artist community as a whole? Did you lose commissioned works and ways to get your paintings to the public?

The effect of the pandemic has been strangely paradoxical for me. On one hand, my day-to-day life is tailor-made for “social distancing,” since I spend long hours painting alone in my studio, and I can routinely go a couple of weeks without ever leaving the property. On the other hand, I do need to travel to conduct photo and sketching sessions for portrait commissions, and all the commissions I had lined up for spring needed to be postponed. I also had to postpone a couple of painting workshops, but luckily I only teach a few of these per year. Some artists rely on teaching workshops and classes for a significant portion of their income, and the pandemic hit this field hard. But I have seen many artists find new ways forward using online streaming platforms, and I expect that this trend will continue even after the pandemic has passed.

Why did you choose to get involved with The Great American Paint In? Why was it important to have this event during these times?

I heard about The Great American Paint In online, from fellow artist Mikel Wintermantel. The timing was perfect for me since the lockdown had just set in and I was suddenly faced with a calendar cleared of all commissions, workshops, and events. I was grateful to see this initiative help fill the void left by the pandemic, and I was happy to participate.

The Great American Paint In documents the works of hope America’s greatest artists have produced during their COVID-19 isolation. The piece I saw on the site from you was “Called Away,” a still life tribute to Schnappi... did you settle on Schnappi as the focus of your painting?

Schnappi was a beloved pet duck, and when I heard about the Paint-In, she had only recently disappeared (we assume she was snatched up by a coyote or fox). Because her loss was still fresh, the Paint-In gave me a welcome opportunity to process it through painting. I designed the composition around several of her feathers that my wife saved from when Schnappi molted. Finding personal significance in a still life – as opposed to just setting up random objects to paint – can be a real challenge for me, and so I was grateful to have something meaningful to capture in this painting.

Will you be adding more pieces to the Paint-In?

I may not have time to create more pieces for the Paint-In, but we’ll see. I am currently putting all my energy into preparing for a solo exhibition, which opens this August at Anthony Brunelli Fine Arts in Binghamton, New York.

It looks like life is starting to return – a little – to what it was like before the pandemic. What are your plans for the remainder of 2020 and the future?

In addition to preparing for my upcoming gallery exhibition, I have started lining up portrait commissions again and fielding new inquiries. I am cautiously optimistic about having weathered the storm financially, but I will be very interested to see what the long-term effect on the art market is, given the pandemic’s economic impact.

To view the article, click [here](#).