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## The Sublime & the Picturesque in Art

James M. Chleboun

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# **The Sublime & the Picturesque in Art**

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts degree  
at Lindenwood University

by

James M. Chleboun

Monday, April 28, 2014

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*Directed Thesis*  
ART 56999

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY

## Signature of approval

This thesis has been approved  
as partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts at Lindenwood University  
by the School of Fine & Performing Arts.

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## Abstract

Is it possible to create “classical” landscape pictures of today? The genre of drawing and painting landscapes is the subject for this thesis. For comparing for relevancy, the binary topic is two aesthetic terms, the *Sublime* and the *Picturesque*. I will show what the art critics and artists say about those terms with several historical and contemporary artists as examples. I will explain what I did with some of my drawings and paintings in relation to the terms within the “classical” composition format.

The challenge for my work is to compose the contemporary landscape using the classical composing principles used by Old Masters. A contemporary German artist has succeeded very well in composing the “classical” landscapes of today with modern cultural attributes, but they are fictional digital composites. Her approach to classical composing today’s landscape is innovative. It is a “rehash” concept—that is, re-use of an old idea yet new. It is like re-contextualizing.

By applying my mental “template” of one of the classical compositions to drawing and painting, I compose an actual landscape with minor modifications because I want to see how different the picture of today is from the ones of the “classical” period from the seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century which did not have modern trappings, such as telephone poles, cars, highways.

I seek for either the *Sublime* or the *Picturesque* or both—more or less—in the actual landscape. I will continue composing the landscapes classically. Mastering a repertoire of pictorial techniques is my constant objective.

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## In Memory

My late cousin who taught me  
how to fly a glider many, many years ago.

*Like everything else, Fletcher. Practice.*

— Richard Bach,  
*Jonathan Livingston Seagull*

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## Prologue

When I was working in the library at a private high school in the spring six years ago, one librarian was weeding out the old issues of serials dating back to the 1980s. I walked by and noticed an extinct periodical on top of the stack ready to be shipped out.<sup>1</sup> I picked it up and looked at the Table of Contents. The first story was about a Californian artist, Wayne Thiebaud. I skimmed the article and took it home to read it closely. His views on the importance of continual practice of drawing for life impressed me. In his mid-nineties today he keeps practicing drawing constantly. Still painting “nearly every day, holidays too,” Thiebaud says, “All along, you just keep hacking away at it..., and that’s what I’ve pretty much done.”<sup>2</sup> His tenacity to keep going is what made me decide that it was time for me to go out and draw again.

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<sup>1</sup> Barnaby III Conrad. “Wayne Thiebaud,” *Horizon* (January/February 1986), 6-16.

<sup>2</sup> Richards, Eugene. “Legends at Work”, *Time* (September 23, 2013), 52-59.

## Introduction

My thesis has to do with the aesthetics of drawing and painting because until the middle of this semester I never thought about this kind of theoretical study on art because hardly anybody discussed it with me or informed me to pursue it to prepare for the “final exam”. My thesis thought is this: Is it possible for me to create “classical” landscape pictures of today? The thesis subject is the landscape art genre. For comparing for relevancy, I will use the binary approach to the subject. For this thesis, I chose two aesthetic terms as the binary topic: the *Sublime* and the *Picturesque*. David Hume writes, “It is impossible to continue in the practice of contemplating any order of beauty, without being frequently obliged to form comparisons between the several species and degrees of excellence, and estimating their proportion to each other.”<sup>3</sup> The central idea to the binary topic is the use of classical compositional principles. The thesis will have some examples of the artworks on display in the thesis exhibition to explain what and why I did them.

After he saw the paintings and drawings in my thesis exhibition recently at Lindenwood University, Doctor James L. Hutson, the art history professor, recommended that I read Edmund Burke’s treatise about the idea of the sublime.<sup>4</sup> I had a very faint notion of what the word was. I thought it meant spiritual—something like entranced. I skimmed it and realized how different the word is from my very faint notion.

Besides the idea of the *Sublime*, the idea of the *Picturesque* is equally important. The *Literature Review* will show what I gleaned from research materials about them. The

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<sup>3</sup> David Hume. “Of the Standard of Taste”, *The Philosophy of Art: Readings ancient and Modern*. Neill Alex and Aaron Ridley, eds. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1995, 262.

<sup>4</sup> J.T. Boulton, ed. *Edmund Burke: Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 1958.

aesthetic terms are defined first. Along with my comments, the thesis will present what the historical writers said about the *Sublime* and the *Picturesque*. It will show how useful classical composing the picture is today. It will show how several landscape artists used them to convey what they saw in real life or in imagined life to paint the scenes.

The *Methodology* will explain how I draw and paint the landscape scenes from the environment around me—outdoor, interior, or both at the same time and how I use the aesthetic concepts for desired visual effects. Topics such as media, supports, supplies, painting techniques, studio environment, drawing, composing, and chiaroscuro, are covered briefly. The power of suggestion in rendering architectural structure to convey the sense of monumentality is discussed. At the end is the issue of spoken language.

For the *Production and Analysis* part, some of my drawings and paintings selected from the thesis exhibition will show connections to the aesthetic terms and classical composing. I will describe, analyze, and explain what made me to produce the pictures in relation to the *Sublime* and the *Picturesque*—one or the other or both.

With the literature survey gleaned, the methodology explained, and the production analyzed, I will tell you what the *conclusions* are and what I will to do in the near future in terms of tasks to do in meeting objectives (qualitative) and achieving the goals (quantitative). My all-around goal is that my finished works will become an expression of my thinking about what I see out there. My research and practice are on-going.

## Context / Literature Review

Let's start with etymology. In the seventeenth-century in the Netherlands, the artistic painters first introduced the word, *landschap*. Its first known use was in 1598.<sup>5</sup> As a painter's term, it means "painting representing natural scenery."<sup>6</sup> It came from Middle Dutch word, *landschap* (region). The English word is *landscape*.

The official definition of the word, *landscape*, is from the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online*.<sup>7</sup> First, it defines as "a picture that shows a natural scene of land or the countryside". The second is "an area of land that has a particular quality or appearance". The third is "a particular area of activity". *Landscape art* is an aesthetic term which has the same definition as *landscape*.

Landscape art involves drawing and painting the natural scenery such as hills, mountains, prairies, deserts, trees, rivers, valleys, neighborhoods, suburbs, villages, cityscapes, streets, beaches. Various ways of seeing and composing the natural scene are wide view, close-up view, bird's eye view, worm-level view, and normal eye-level view. However, the artist may view the scene differently according to his perceptual taste, notion, or preference or knowledge, such as realistic, ideal, heroic, abstract, spiritual, narrative, and allegorical. The artist may include figures as a placement element for significance—small or large and individual or group, depending on how the landscape picture is composed—he may place them in the background, in the middle ground, or in the foreground, or everywhere. The element of the sky—day or night—is always an

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/landscape>

<sup>6</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Landscape>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/landscape>

integral part of the landscape view. Weather is an important tell-tale element of the composition that signifies the type of mood or ambience. All these elements are visually arranged into a logical and well-organized or purposely distorted composition for the viewer.

Historically, in the Greek-Roman ancient times, Pliny the Elder and Vitruvius wrote a few words about landscape. The Renaissance artists and writers revived the Classical tradition and made comments on landscape frescos yet it was considered inferior to historical paintings and portraits. It was not appreciated until between sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when art writers began to classify the landscape paintings into types, such as heroic, ideal, pastoral, or rustic. During the eighteenth century, landscape art had become “enriched” with new theoretical concepts in aesthetics of art. In 1757, Edmund Burke wrote a seminal treatise on the Idea of the Sublime. In 1794, Uvedale Price, added a new dimension to landscape art and gave it a new aesthetic category, the *Picturesque*, which he placed between the *Sublime* and the *Beautiful*. Such writers were instrumental in making the landscape as an important genre. There are many more writers from that century to the twentieth century wrote about landscape art, but they are beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>8</sup>

On the side, I would like to mention a term before I go on to those aesthetic terms. It is *monumental*, which generally connotes massiveness and permanence.<sup>9</sup> But it has another definition: enduring significant or important in effect or meaning, which is what I

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T049026?q=landscape&search=quick&pos=4&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T049026?q=landscape&search=quick&pos=4&_start=1#firsthit)

<sup>9</sup> Shearer West. *The Bulfinch Guide to Art History: A Comprehensive Survey and Dictionary of Western Art and Architecture*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1996, 641.

convey in some of my work.<sup>10</sup> Sir Joshua Reynolds emphasized the “monumental” look “rather the detailed effect”.<sup>11</sup> A rural landscape in connection to some known history can look monumental to me. For instance, seeing it evokes some reading memories about what the people described more than a hundred years ago.

The term, *picturesque*, as an adjective, means “visually charming or quaint, as if resembling or suitable for a painting”.<sup>12</sup> For instance, a painting of a picturesque fishing village in Gloucester, Massachusetts, is generally pleasing. In the early eighteenth century, the word, *Picturesque*, described “vivid” or “graphic” when it was applied to literary style.<sup>13</sup> By the second half of the eighteenth-century, when it was applied to painting, it “meant eminently suitable for pictorial representation, as affording a well-composed picture, with suitably varied and harmonized forms, colors, and lights” as the eighteenth-century Scottish theorist, Hugh Blair, calls it a “poetical painting”.<sup>14</sup> A typical picturesque landscape painting is usually “characterized by an emphasis on the interesting and unusual in a scene.”<sup>15</sup> Claude Lorraine’s 1672 landscape painting, *Landscape with Aeneas at Delos*. It is serene and contemplative--nothing so dramatic. It is a very nice-looking picture and educational. It has distant horizon and has Greek Classical architecture which makes the viewer to appreciate its fine aspects. It is a visual

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/monumental>

<sup>11</sup> Robert Neuman. *Baroque and Rococo Art and Architecture*. Boston: Pearson, 2013, 394.

<sup>12</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/picturesque>

<sup>13</sup> Walter John Hipple, Jr. *The Beautiful, The Sublime, & The Picturesque In Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1957, 186.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>15</sup> Ralph Mayer. *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Art Terms and Techniques*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. NY: HarperPerennial, 1991, 312.

story to inform. His work “could be described as classical picturesque.”<sup>16</sup> It has the refined look. Its composition is arranged “in a pleasing irregular way.”<sup>17</sup> It entices the viewer to come closer because there are so many things in the picture to be discerned for study. See Figure A: *Landscape with Aeneas at Delos* by Claude Lorrain.

Emphasizing the importance of the natural and harmonious look, the eighteenth-century British landscape designer and art critic, Uvedale Price, writes, “The picturesque requires greater variety.”<sup>18</sup> For instance, the sixteenth-century Florentine artist Raphael painted a huge fresco, *School of Athens*. It shows great variety of objects to see—so many figures, architectural aspects, things the figures do and use for significance. Seeing it, the eighteenth-century Irish Shakespearean scholar, Edmond Malone, remarks, “It was a kind of picturesque travesty.”<sup>19</sup> In other words, it looked unreal in a way.

Depending on the context, a picturesque landscape painting can evoke nostalgia. For instance, when the factories of the Industrial Revolution overwhelmed the agricultural landscape, people become nostalgic for the old rural and cottage days. They wanted the picturesque paintings of what they remembered what it was before. The artist composed a picturesque scene of what they wanted to see.

In spite of the “classical” look on Lorrain’s and Raphael’s, its picturesque aspects are irregularity, roughness, and variety. Uvedale Price writes, “I think, however, we may conclude, that where an object, or a set of objects, is without smoothness or grandeur, but

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<sup>16</sup> West, *The Bulfinch Guide to Art History: A Comprehensive Survey and Dictionary of Western Art and Architecture*, 703.

<sup>17</sup> Mayer, *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Art Terms and Techniques*, 167.

<sup>18</sup> Uvedale Price. “An Essay on the picturesque, as compared with the sublime and beautiful.” (1794); <http://www.earthworks.org/sublime/Price/index.html> [no pagination]

<sup>19</sup> Hipple, Jr. *The Beautiful, The Sublime, & The Picturesque In Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory*, 187.

from its intricacy, its sudden and irregular deviations, its variety of forms, tints, and lights and shadows, is interesting to a cultivated eye, it is simply picturesque.”<sup>20</sup> The *Picturesque* represents “the pleasurable sensations felt before art and nature that were not powerful enough to be either beautiful or sublime, but which were nevertheless considered to be worthy of interest.”<sup>21</sup> “It was revolutionary in claiming that much great art and all of nature were to be fully appreciated not according to academic precepts by means of direct observation, enhanced by study of the principles and technique of great ‘modern’ painting.”<sup>22</sup> In late eighteenth century, the art critic Francesco Milizia defined the *Picturesque* in painting: “For picturesque, we mean something unusual which immediately catches the eye and is pleasing.”<sup>23</sup>

Living in a small town northwest of Minneapolis, Ken Zylla is a self-taught artist who specializes in creating Americana scenes such as small-town streets, cars, trucks, motels, and restaurants in the 1950s. Zylla’s paintings shows how attentive he is to detail that bring such things to life. “His blending of the elements, such as weather, sunlight, time of day, the seasons, along with his choice of subjects, brings each painting to a precise place in time and often tells a story.”<sup>24</sup> His *Crossroads Motorcycle* painting is a very clear example of evoking a simpler time, causing the viewer to go back on the

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<sup>20</sup> Price, “An Essay on the picturesque, as compared with the sublime and beautiful (1794)”, [no pagination]; <http://www.earthworks.org/sublime/Price/index.html>

<sup>21</sup> Lawrence Gowing, ed. “Romanticism”, *Facts On File Encyclopedia of Art*. Vol. 4. NY: FactsOnFile, 2005, 750.

<sup>22</sup> “Picturesque, The”, *Encyclopedia of Art*. Vol. XI. NY: McGraw-Hill, 1976, 339.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* 342.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.art-licensing.com/artists/Ken-Zylla-Classic-and-Nostalgic-Americana/biography.html>

memory lane. See Figure B.<sup>25</sup> The painting is a *nostalgic picturesque* picture, which makes the viewer to look at the multiple objects in the picture with enjoyment. Uvedale Price writes, “I felt that there were numberless objects which give great delight to the eye, and yet differ as widely from the beautiful as from the sublime.”<sup>26</sup> The *Picturesque* style renders the Zylla painting more alluring and captivating. But it is not my style; it’s too garish, however, I like it for itself only.

Lastly, the word, *sublime*, is an old art term dating back to the ancient times when Longinus, a Greek-Roman teacher of rhetoric, wrote *περι ύψους*<sup>27</sup> between the first and third century AD.<sup>28</sup> It is a literary treatise on aesthetics of writing, informing how to compose in a way that would inspire the reader into a state of ecstasy, “which is very definitely a book on ‘how to write’.”<sup>29</sup> Talking about Longinus’ treatise, the author mentions a Greek word, *ύψος* (*hypsios*), which means ‘height’ as he calls it “a specific quality in writing”.<sup>30</sup> Out of curiosity, I checked one translation dictionary. On the English side, the Greek word has eight words that describe the concept. One of them is ‘sublime’.<sup>31</sup> “For *ύψος* does not persuade, it carries us away irresistibly, and there is no question of our choosing whether to let it affect us or not.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=ken+zylla>

<sup>26</sup> Price, “An Essay on the picturesque, as compared with the sublime and beautiful (1794)”, [no pagination].

<sup>27</sup> Translation: concerning height; <http://translation.babylon.com/greek/to-english/>

<sup>28</sup> D.A. Russell. *‘Longinus’: On the Sublime*. London: Oxford University Press, 1964, ix.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

<sup>31</sup> <http://translation.babylon.com/greek/to-english/>

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, x-xi.

It stands the test of repeated reading and reflection by experienced critics. It is irresistible and memorable. It pleases all conditions of men.<sup>33</sup>

Longinus presents the five principal sources of the Sublime: (i) the power of coming up with great thoughts; (ii) strong emotions; (iii) certain figures of thought and speech; (iv) “nobility of diction”; and (v) composition, or “dignified word arrangement.”<sup>34</sup> Vincent B. Leitch writes, “The first two of these sources depend on nature, the rest involve art.”<sup>35</sup> Longinus considers the first source of the Sublime the most powerful of all—“the command of full-blooded ideas”.<sup>36</sup> The author defines it very well in a book on Xenophon and his *Anabasis*.<sup>37</sup> “The second is the inspiration of vehement emotion” and the last three sources involves “the proper construction.”<sup>38</sup>

In essence, Longinus defined the Sublime as differing from beauty and evolving more intense emotions by vastness, a quality that inspires awe. Whereas beauty may be found in the small, the smooth, the light and the everyday, the Sublime is vast, irregular, obscure, and superhuman.<sup>39</sup>

Longinus views the *Sublime* as “an expression of grand and noble passions... that bring into play the emotional involvement of both the creator and the perceiver of the work of art.”<sup>40</sup> What a thought it is! He also views it as “an effect of art.”<sup>41</sup> Sublime casts a spell upon the viewer memorably.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., xii-xiii; & Vincent B. Leitch, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. NY: W.W.Norton, 2001, 134-154; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longinus\\_\(literature\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longinus_(literature))

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., xiii.

<sup>36</sup> Umberto Eco, ed. *History of Beauty*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. NY: Rizzoli, 2005, 279.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>39</sup> David Rodgers. “Sublime, the”, *The Dictionary of Art*. Vol 29. NY: Grove, 1996, 889.

<sup>40</sup> Eco, *History of Beauty*, 278.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 278.

It was unknown until a French poet, Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, translated the treatise into French in 1764.<sup>42</sup> He viewed the *sublime* as “the extraordinary, the surprising and the marvelous in discourse.”<sup>43</sup> Later, the sublime acquired the status of “an aesthetic category alongside beauty”.<sup>44</sup> An encyclopedia reported that the British essayist Joseph Addison mentioned Longinus as a source in 1712.<sup>45</sup> But, in spite of the incredibly tiny font size of its text, I read all of his papers in *The Spectator* from the series from No. 411 to No. 421 and could not find the name Longinus.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, analyzing “the pleasures of the imagination”, Addison cited “three sources of all that arise from the vision of outward objects: the great, the uncommon, and the beautiful, or, greatness, novelty, and beauty” in his Paper II.<sup>47</sup> But he considered greatness as the *sublime* because great power is essential to it.<sup>48</sup> He gave examples of what it is: “shapeless mountain passes towering one above the other in wild disorder with their pyramids of ice, the dark tempestuous ocean, and the spatial cosmos.”<sup>49</sup> The author stressed that “the sublimity of space itself, of mere and pure extension or, in plain English, spread-outness, involves a sense of the spreading-out of the space.”<sup>50</sup>

Addison wrote that one could sense of spiritual calm that comes from contemplating the vastness of scenes such as a spacious and varied valley where one

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<sup>42</sup> Alfred Hofstadter. *Truth and Art*. NY: Columbia University Press, 1965, 165.

<sup>43</sup> Hugh Brigstocke. *The Oxford Companion to Western Art*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2001, 727.

<sup>44</sup> Hofstadter, *Truth and Art*, 166.

<sup>45</sup> “Tragedy and the sublime,” *Encyclopedia of World Art*. Vol. XIV. NY: McGraw-Hill, 1963, 270.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Addison, “Paper V”, *The Spectator: A New Edition with Biographical Notices of the Contributors: Complete in One Volume*. Cincinnati: Applegate, 1854, No. 411-421, 497- 510.

<sup>47</sup> Hofstadter, *Truth and Art*, 166.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 166-167.

stands high above looking down to, a clear summer night of sparkingly bright stars, or the Victorian painting of J.M.W. Turner, showing the beaming sunset serenely above the shimmering water. It truly represents a radical departure from the traditional landscape paintings such as John Constable's landscapes. It causes the viewer to contemplate the vast expanse of the environment by means of light against the silhouetted horizon while the shaded figures are calmly attending to what they are doing. This is truly sublime yet there is no terror in it at all. See Figure C: *Flint Castle* by Turner.

In the No. 415 issue of *The Spectator*, his "Paper V" lists the contents of his essay. The first two contents are "Of architecture, as it affects the imagination" and "Greatness in architecture relates either to the bulk or to the manner."<sup>51</sup> He considered architectural works as another kind of sublime consisting "in the grandeur either of the bulk of the buildings or of the style of construction."<sup>52</sup> His "Paper VIII", lists such contents as "Why anything that is unpleasant to behold pleases the imagination when well described", "The pleasure is heightened if what is described raises passion in the mind", and "Why terror and grief are pleasing to the mind when excited by description."<sup>53</sup> It is the pleasure itself that the viewer gets from seeing a terrifying description or picture yet he knows and is aware that he does not need to fear the objects like flaming fire or violent and harsh winds. Addison argued that "pleasure was to be obtained from looking at horrible or terrifying objects."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Joseph Addison, "Paper V", *The Spectator: A New Edition with Biographical Notices of the Contributors: Complete in One Volume*. Cincinnati: Applegate, 1854, No. 415, 502.

<sup>52</sup> "Tragedy and the sublime," *Encyclopedia of World Art*. Vol. XIV, 270.

<sup>53</sup> Joseph Addison, "Paper VIII", *The Spectator: A New Edition with Biographical Notices of the Contributors: Complete in One Volume*. Cincinnati: Applegate, 1854, No. 418, 506.

<sup>54</sup> Robert Newman. *Baroque and Rococo Art and Architecture*. Boston: Pearson, 2013, 400.

Later, a British scholar translated Longinus' treatise into English in 1739.<sup>55</sup> By the second half of the eighteenth century, it became popular throughout the Continent. Several writers took notice of it and wrote their treatises on the same subject. One of them was the Irish-British politician and writer Edmund Burke who wrote his seminal treatise, *An Enquiry on the Origins of the Sublime and the Beautiful* in 1757 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Differentiating two aesthetic concepts, he defined the *Beautiful* as producing pleasurable feelings, such as tenderness and love, while he defined the *Sublime* as evoking fearful feelings, such as terror and gloom. In other words, the pleasure of the *Beautiful* causes the muscles to relax while the terroristic violence of the *Sublime* causes the muscles to tighten up. He uses physiology to explain what those aesthetic concepts are in terms of biological functions and processes of the human body. It is beyond the scope of this paper. But he deals with the issue of perception and explains how the perception affects the human being as the perceiver.

As one of the three categories of aesthetics, the simple definition of the Sublime is “an eighteenth-century term denoting elements of grandeur and the awe-inspiring in works of art, most notably in landscape paintings.”<sup>56</sup> The old *Webster's New World Dictionary* generally defines the *Sublime* as “1. noble; exalted; majestic. 2. inspiring awe or admiration through grandeur, beauty, etc.”<sup>57</sup> Contrasting from the *Beautiful*, Burke wanted to know why the *Sublime* causes the viewer to be drawn to imagery that looks so scary or fearful or so absorbing. Burke identifies the tangible factors inducing the

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<sup>55</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longinus\\_\(literature\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longinus_(literature)) & [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Smith\\_\(scholar\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Smith_(scholar))

<sup>56</sup> Mayer. *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Art Terms and Techniques*, 408.

<sup>57</sup> “Sublime”, *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*. College Edition. Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing Co., 1959, 1452.

experience of the *Sublime*, such as obscurity, power, vastness, silence, privation, emptiness, roughness, blur, immensity, grandeur, greatness of dimension, difficulty, whereas such factors effecting the experience of the *Beautiful* are clarity, smoothness, delicacy, smallness, gradual variation, fairness of color.<sup>58</sup> The *Sublime* is dynamic, obscure, and fearful while the *Beautiful* is serene, well-formed, and static.

Burke thought that the obscurity is far more important than other factors described and that it “had the power to stimulate the imagination” to contribute to creating a sublime work of art.<sup>59</sup> For instance, what he means is that objects can be obscured in the darkness against the light. The “vastness” and the “greatest of dimension” are architectural factors that contribute to the *Sublime*.<sup>60</sup> For example, the huge ancient Egyptian temple in Luxor could evoke fear among the illiterate. The long and void darkness of the temple interior between the high and massive columns is a manifestation of obscurity. That’s sublime. Such “artificial infinity” creates the illusion of the forever supported by the repeating and uniform pattern of columns into the void of darkness beyond. I call it the “ankh” experience—that is, life forever. Such “well-ordered magnificence” the Egyptian temple has as Burke calls it the “architectural sublimity”.<sup>61</sup> Nicolai Hartman thinks the same way as he “considers that the sublime derives chiefly from monumentality.”<sup>62</sup> A temple of antiquity may be considered be sublime as its

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<sup>58</sup> Umberto Eco. *History of Beauty*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. NY: Rizzoli, 2005, 290.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 400.

<sup>60</sup> Edmund Burke. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. J.T. Boulton, ed. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958, 72.

<sup>61</sup> “Tragedy and Sublime”, *Encyclopedia of World Art*, 270.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

interior “whose spatial configuration gives an effect of loftiness and where the appearance of depth is given by the counterplay of the columns.”<sup>63</sup>

A clear example of what the *Sublime* features are in the picture: vastness, obscurity, and darkness is another landscape painting by J.M.W. Turner, *Snowstorm: Hannibal and his Army, Crossing the Alps (1812)*.<sup>64</sup> See Figure D. The uncontrollable and overpowering snowstorm casts over the leading general and the army soldiers at the bottom of the valley under, making them insignificant because the artist wants to draw the attention of the viewer to the swirling and frightening vortex in the sky. He wants the viewer to go through the snowstorm rather than to look at it. The Genesis-like darkness is divided by the light in the sky while the ground is dark, increasing upward the illumination of the sky as if it were a titanic blaze of nature in its wild state. “And God said, *Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.*”<sup>65</sup> The artist does not glorify the general at all because he, like God, puts emphasis on the *Sublime* feature of the sky. The visual fury of the storm overwhelms small and obscure figures. “Sublime, too, is the obscurity that helps to render the object terrible.”<sup>66</sup>

Another sublime feature is the blur aspect. Turner used a sweeping brushstroke technique to blur the sky, producing the effect of hazy and seemingly disordered animation. At that time it was radically innovative that there seems no precedent to it: the traditional landscape usually shows the sky that is smooth, regardless of what kind of

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.artlurker.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/35.jpg>

<sup>65</sup> Genesis 1: 3-4 KJV

<sup>66</sup> Edward Lucie-Smith. *The Thames & Hudson Dictionary of Art Terms*. NY: Thames & Hudson, 2003, 270.

weather it has. Turner's *Snowstorm* painting does not permit the viewer to interpret the picture slowly; he just responds to it quickly. He is in awe of it—so close to danger yet he is safe from it. "The sublime is a phenomenon that is closer to the primal character of what-is than beauty. Beauty is on the side of its final character. Sublimity is the appearance of *power* of being, its initial character." John Ruskin understood why Turner used the blurring technique to create the vagueness in his "sublimely picturesque image" to fit his cosmic vision of the terrifying fury of the storm. The British novelist, William Makepeace Thackeray saw it as a picture of "formless blurs of paints."

Turner was not like the French Impressionists who used colors and light as the "ends in themselves, the subject merely presenting them."<sup>67</sup> The art historian writes,

But for Turner, that was never true. Turner remained dedicated to "the object"; he painted pictures of something, never "just pictures." If he blurred his forms, if what he depicted often seemed to dissolve into shapeless masses of [paint, that was because he knew (as did many other painters, Goya, for instance) that precise delineations and particular descriptions were incompatible with the kind of cosmic or universal ideas he wanted to express, not because he was being subjective, or making things appear as he chose to see them. He blurred his forms by naturalistic means, by painting into the light source, so as never to do violence to the object as it existed; he painted objects as they were. To the end, that is to say, he retained that respect for the beautiful object which is the root of the traditional theory of painting. To the end, the goal of his art remained Beauty—of feelings, and of form.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Alan Gowans. *The Restless Art; A History of Painters and painting: 1760-1960*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1966, 90.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

Turner is truly “the revolutionary discoverer of light as the controlling factor in painting, of light as an instrument to excite the imagination and produce ‘awe and sympathy in the spectators.’”<sup>69</sup> “In place of the precise description and meticulous draftsmanship of his early paintings, he had begun to paint consistently ‘up-sun’—i.e., into the light source—so that all his forms were dissolved into great blobs of yellow, scarlet, orange, and azure, pieced out with splatters of black.”<sup>70</sup> How profound is his cosmic drama of life in his art!

The early nineteenth-century German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel says, “Sublimity involves on the side of man the feeling of his own finiteness and his insuperable remoteness from God.”<sup>71</sup> That is, something beyond the reach of the human. The eighteenth-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant calls the *Sublime* “an outrage on the imagination.”<sup>72</sup> Another contemporary of his, Jean-Baptiste Dubos stresses, “A necessary condition for the optimal stimulation of the mind is a certain irregularity of the work of art.”<sup>73</sup> The *Sublime* is different from the *Picturesque*, “which is pleasingly irregular but does not include awe, and also from the *Beautiful*, which, in the eighteenth-century art theory, tends to please through absolute harmony of proportion.”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Albert Hofstadter. *Truth and Art*. NY: Columbia university Press, 1965, 169.

<sup>70</sup> Alan Gowans. *The Restless Art; A History of Painters and painting: 1760-1960*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1966, 88.

<sup>71</sup> Bernard Bosanquet. *A History of Aesthetic*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1904, 357.

<sup>72</sup> Lucie-Smith. *The Thames & Hudson Dictionary of Art Terms*, 208.

<sup>73</sup> Alexander Rueger. “Enjoying the Unbeautiful: From Mendelssohn’s Theory of ‘Mixed Sentiments’ to Kant’s Aesthetic Judgments of Reflection,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. Vol. 67, No. 2 (Spring 2009), 182.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

The Picturesque was a standard of taste, which lies between the *Beautiful* (pretty) and the *Sublime* (awe and danger).<sup>75</sup>

A contemporary German artist, Anselm Kiefer says, "I am not trying to illustrate religion. I'm a storyteller with a broken history."<sup>76</sup> He was born very near the end of World War II and had to cope with the consequences of the post-war period in Germany. While growing up, he learned about the horrors of Nazi rule, including the Holocaust. By means of allegory, he decided to use historical themes to reflect on what happened before, during, and after the Hitler's Third Reich period to make social, moral, and aesthetic commentaries on contemporary Germany. For instance, he used the Old Testament stories for his art. He created *Departure from Egypt* (1984) based on the Book of Exodus, after he visited Israel a year before. Moses left his staff on the ground so heavily textured, consisting of all kinds of materials, such as dirt, rocks, and found objects. The wavy line pattern converges upward in a central mass of light. It is apt because it represents the aftermath of the flight from oppressors. It can look frighteningly sublime or hopefully sublime. It may mean that it is time to move on for a new life after the war.

But my viewpoint is different from Kiefer's because I have no war and post-war experiences like him. I grew up in peacetime America where I went to good schools and played baseball. I read many good stories with a strong interest in history and geography and mythology. For instance, I read John Steinbeck's novels based on California life in the 1930s. When in the 1980s I visited places in northern California he wrote about, I saw

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<sup>75</sup> West, *The Bulfinch Guide to Art History: A Comprehensive Survey and Dictionary of Western Art and Architecture*, 703.

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.moca.org/pc/viewArtWork.php?id=32>

what the landscapes look just like he described. Last year, I did a small landscape painting of the strawberry field in sunny central California because I want to remember seeing it as Steinbeck did.

A German contemporary painter of his, Gerhard Richter, is the opposite of Anselm Kiefer because he does not use allegory for his work at all. Like him, he uses photographs to work from but he is different from him because his aesthetic approach to his art is detached rather than emotional like Kiefer's. He grew up during Hitler's Third Reich period and in the post-war period. He saw how ideology did to the people on both sides of Germany—that is, East and West. Therefore, he refuses to take sides in the political spectrum. He left East Germany just before the German Communist Party leaders decided to build the Berlin Wall. He views style as violent, and he views himself non-violent. He wants his art to inform the viewer as is.

Considering himself apolitical, he strives to stay neutral in creating his work. In the post-war period the Social Realist movement was prevalent in East Germany and he was forced to conform to it. However, when he came over to the West, thinking he would be “working in a more open environment”, he discovered that he had to do the same thing by conforming to the prevalent art movement, Informel/Tachism.<sup>77</sup> He did well within it, but could not feel connected to it.

It was not until he saw the American Pop Art works in a magazine. He liked the idea of mimicking the reality of life around him rather than coming up with compositions of his own. He decided to replicate photographs exactly. He took four photographs of a

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<sup>77</sup> Daniel Wheeler. *Art Since Mid-Century: 1945 to the Present*. NY: Vendome, 1991, 278.

farm scene and chose one for his painting.<sup>78</sup> As he was completely detached from responding emotionally to the photograph, he painted *Scheune/Barn No.549/1*, using “his carefully distanced and controlled painting technique”.<sup>79</sup> Like Andy Warhol, he appropriated photos from the print mass media as he liked the idea of being free from the constraints of formalist or realist criteria. Painting objectively from photographs represents a means for him to reconnect “his art to the contemporary social world” without being political about it.<sup>80</sup> He uses an overhead projector to blow up a photograph to trace on canvas. His drawings are sketchy and conceptual—detail so minimal—as you can view his drawings on his extraordinary official website.<sup>81</sup> But he is very extremely skilled in using painting techniques for his work.

That is why Richter said, “I love the culture of painting”. He reminds me of Jackson Pollock in the American Abstract Expressionism movement. There is a page that shows a photograph of his 1984 painting, *Untitled* (17”x24”), which consists of only broad brushstrokes of oil skillfully executed on canvas.<sup>82</sup> It is totally abstract yet it conveys a sense of landscape. One can see the visible pattern of long and thin linear strands of the brushstrokes across the canvas—no scumbling and glazing at all—just straight thick stroking vertically, horizontally, and diagonally.

The national and international news is fascinating to read. The same thing is with historical stories. For instance, when I read a historical story with vivid descriptions, I

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<sup>78</sup> <http://www.gerhard-richter.com/art/atlas/atlas.php?paintid=12006>

<sup>79</sup> Hugh Honour and John Fleming. *The Visual Arts: A History*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000, 872

<sup>80</sup> Daniel Wheeler. *Art Since Mid-Century: 1945 to the Present*. NY: Vendome Press, 1991, 279.

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.gerhard-richter.com/>

<sup>82</sup> Duane Preble et al. *Artforms: An Introduction to the Visual Arts*. NY: Longman, 1999, 131.

feel motivated to recapture what they described by drawing and painting pictures. I want to be in the “action” of being there.

When the hundred-fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg arrived in early July last year, I retrieved a copy of a black-and-white photograph of Abraham Lincoln giving a brief speech in the midst of a huge crowd on the sacred ground of the battle. As November approached, I was inspired to create a Chinese ink painting on a very large piece of paper, showing Lincoln reading his notes as he was speaking for “these honored dead” in the “great civil war” on November 19th.<sup>83</sup> After I finished it on the wall, I walked backward and looked at it. I was astonished by the singular sight of it. I felt that I was participating in the event. I call it “living history” because the scale is human—that is, I was standing in front of it mingling with the people moving around. It is incredible that I was there to experience it. It is better than the actual photograph itself. A U.S. Senator from Massachusetts giving a eulogy on the assassinated President, Charles Sumner called the Gettysburg speech a “monumental act.”<sup>84</sup>

Edmund Burke views astonishment as the distinctive emotion with the highest degree of the Sublime with its “subordinate degrees” of awe, reverence, and respect.<sup>85</sup> “The Romans used the verb *stupeo*, a term which strongly marks the state of an astonished mind, to express the effect either of simple fear, or of astonishment.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> “Gettysburg Address”;

<http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/gettysburg.htm>

<sup>84</sup> Charles Sumner. *Eulogy on Abraham Lincoln*. Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1865.

<sup>85</sup> Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 136.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 58

“Astonishment is perhaps that state of the soul, when the powers of the mind are suspended with wonder.”<sup>87</sup> I agree with him.

Later after I did, I discovered that Richter did the same thing as he did a series of fifteen paintings entitled *18 Oktober 1977*. One of them is a very large mural of a common funeral of three killed revolutionaries in caskets parading through the midst of hundreds of attendees en masse as it creates “a sense of distance from the subject . . . which awes the viewer into silence.”<sup>88</sup> That is awesome sublime. The size of *Beerdigung* (funeral) is almost seven feet high by ten and a half feet wide.<sup>89</sup> When asked why he did that, Richter said he had magazine photographs saved and thinking about an idea for a long time; all of the sudden, he said, “I must paint this!”<sup>90</sup>

Before I leave this section, I want to mention another contemporary German artist whose large-size digital photograph of the composed landscape was exhibited at the St. Louis Art Museum in 2012. Beate Gütschow did a photographic series called “LS”, which is an abbreviation of *Landschaft*, or landscape. She uses computer graphics software to do digital montages of cropped images of actual places to reconstruct the contemporary landscapes based on the seventeenth and eighteenth century styles of landscape art. She creates idyllic scenes of pastoral idealism inspired by the classical paintings by John Constable, Thomas Gainsborough, and Nicolas Poussin.

Her approach to classical composing of the contemporary landscape is so innovative. I want to do the same thing in drawing and painting—not in photography. I

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>88</sup> Honour, *The Visual Arts: A History*, 872

<sup>89</sup> [http://www.gerhard-richter.com/art/paintings/photo\\_paintings/detail.php?7699](http://www.gerhard-richter.com/art/paintings/photo_paintings/detail.php?7699)

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.gerhard-richter.com/quotes/subjects-2/october-18-1977baader-meinhof-11>

am so curious how the contemporary landscape would look like by using the classical compositional principles of the ideal landscape. When I see the actual landscape, I compose the picture, using those principles. I would not make it idealistic or bucolic but to make it look natural according to my eyes. It is not a matter of copying the Old Masters or matching them. I want to use the classical pattern of landscape not common today. See Figure E: *LS #7*. Note how the trees are placed compositionally. “Through her employment of traditional pastoral techniques, such as framing the scene with trees and creating a sense of spatial depth, Gütschow conveys a sense of Arcadian tranquility.”<sup>91</sup> She says, “My work is regarded as an antidote to our current stage of media overstimulation—that daily barrage of images on our televisions, computers, and portable media devices.”<sup>92</sup> In that view, I want to show to the viewer that there is more to see beyond the actual reality of visual pollution. The bottom line is how I would view today’s world as a “classical” landscape with all the modern trappings.

I did a similar drawing on purpose last fall. See Figure #21: *East View on the North Side of 1046 Madison Street Lot in St. Charles, Missouri*. I have succeeded in creating a classical landscape. I am always impressed at how those classical landscape artists composed the pictures, which is the reason why I want to investigate how such composing techniques can help me to create the contemporary pictures in a new way. It is a bona fide challenge for me. I have learned how to compose the landscape in drawing but I want to learn more about other composing systems used by the Old Masters. I

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<sup>91</sup> <http://www.wallpaper.com/art/beate-gutschow-monograph/1930#UhfSmqah03sYjMxZ.99>

<sup>92</sup> Eric Lutz. *An Orchestrated Vision: The Theater of Contemporary Photography*. St. Louis: St. Louis Art Museum, 2012, 18.

discovered a book recently: *The Painter's Secret Geometry*.<sup>93</sup> I will borrow it again soon and learn the various ways of composing the landscape. In that book, there are two pages showing how Francisco Goya composed his drawings for the series of *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (The Disasters of War). It is clear to me how efficient he was when he used his successful secret composing technique to execute his drawings of people doing something to each other.

Before I end this Literature Review section, there are many adjectives that describe the Sublime in different ways. Immanuel Kant mentioned two adjectives: the *mathematical* sublime and the *dynamic* sublime. Another writer mentions *material* sublime.<sup>94</sup> One contemporary book mentions the *industrial* sublime.<sup>95</sup> Few more adjectives are such as poetic and architectural but they are beyond the scope of this thesis.

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<sup>93</sup> Charles Bouleau. *The Painter's Secret Geometry: A Study of Composition in Art*. NY: Hacker Art Books, 1980.

<sup>94</sup> J. Jennifer Jones. "Absorbing Hesitation: Wordsworth and the Theory of the Panorama," *Stud Romanticism*. Vol. 45, No. 3 (Fall 2006), 359.

<sup>95</sup> Laura Hapke. *Sweatshop: The History of an American Idea*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004, 129.

## Methodology

For my art work production, the *media* I use are acrylics and oils. The *supports* I use for painting the pictures are ready-made stretched canvas, Masonite boards, and a variety of papers. The *equipment* I use for painting are a variety of paint brushes, a palette knife for mixing the colors and scraping, a disposable waxed paper palette pad, a water bowl, and a palette table, an metal easel, and a corrugated brown box for paint tube storage—nothing fancy. The *supplies* I use are paper towels and one solvent container for thinning the oil paints with brushes and cleaning the brushes, and water and for acrylic painting and for thinning and with a specialized kind of soap cleaning the brushes.

The *painting techniques* vary in applying the paints on the surface. I have not fully developed a range of techniques for efficient painting like the German artist Gerhard Richter. In the first stage of painting, I underpaint the surface with a monochrome paint such as Raw Umber. Using the underpainting technique, I compose the picture before I put additional colors. I usually limit myself to three or four paint brushes, depending on the size of the picture plane: #4 or #5 small round sable brush for fine detail painting, #8 large round sable brush for larger areas, #8 Flat brush for lay-in of large masses, and #40B Bright bristle brush for very large areas or on large canvas. I hardly use mediums for certain applications, such as impasto painting and fast drying.

My technical experience with the paint mediums, such as gel and impasto, is limited as I do not have enough practice to master them, but I know what they are for. The palette of colors is wide and randomized. I usually have before me about 10 or more colors: Titanium White, Ivory Black, Ultramarine Blue, Cadmium Yellow, Cadmium

Red, Yellow Ochre, Cadmium Orange, Burnt Sienna, Raw Umber, and Naples Yellow.

Ideally, I should use a limited palette to be more efficient in painting.

I did all of my paintings in the studio classroom with south windows. It has been rough for me to paint the colors right on canvas correctly in front of those south windows and under the studio lights because of the constant fluctuating of sunlight coming through the clouds, moving cars, and people walking by and the artificial electric light bulbs inside. The major part of the academic year is in the cold season from October to April, and it is not feasible for me to go outside in cold and windy weather. If I use acrylic paints, the cold weather causes them to form tiny globs, preventing me from mixing the colors properly on the palette.

Instead, I sketch a scene *en plein air* with charcoal sticks on paper. I take the sketch inside the studio classroom and put it on the wall. I look at it as the “template” to compose on the canvas surface. I don’t trace it on it. This approach to composing is more natural than from the photograph. But, for color reference, I take a photograph of a scene that interests me, after I make a sketch on paper. I seek for the prominent contrast between light and shadow. The *Ashcan School* artist John Sloan writes, “Painting is drawing.”<sup>96</sup>

Drawing is very important to me because it is a visual problem-solving technique to compose the picture. I use charcoal or Chinese ink as the media because they are fast and efficient in drawing. Acrylic or oil painting does not allow me to do that. Claes Oldenberg says that he understands that style is a visual concept itself that lends itself to

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<sup>96</sup> John Sloan, “The Gist of Art”, *Artists on Art: from the XIV to the XX Century*, 402.

the effective imaging of art as he sees it as “another tool” for mastering form.<sup>97</sup> “His drawings reveal the creative process behind his public pieces.”<sup>98</sup> Like Sol Lewitt, the process could be viewed as ‘conceptual’.

Composing is the process of observing the environment for selecting and eliminating the things for placement on the picture plane for the viewer to notice. To compose involves several steps: observe the environment; note the things for placement on the picture plane; identify large masses; and decide where to put them within the confines of the defined format in a logical and sensible way. “Spacing is the very groundwork of Design.”<sup>99</sup> The artist begins composing the landscape by looking for the horizon in the environment that looks natural to the eye. It is very important that the artist judge the environment and decide how space to be allotted to the top-half part and to the bottom-half part of the picture plane before drawing a light line across the picture plane. For vertical placement, he looks for the prominent aspect that would hold the viewer’s attention and decide how much space to be allotted to the right-half part and to the left-half part of the picture plane for that aspect. Lightly mapping out landmarks for placement of forms on the picture plane in the beginning before shading them is an excellent technique for composing a landscape scene.<sup>100</sup>

The use of chiaroscuro is used to create volume or mass by means of light and dark. It involves distributing the light and the dark tones over the surface of the whole

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>98</sup> <http://www.absolutearts.com/artsnews/2004/05/24/32066.html>

<sup>99</sup> Arthur W. Dow, *Composition: A Series of Exercises in Art Structure for the Use of Students and Teachers*. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1931, 44.

<sup>100</sup> Anthony Ryder. *The Artist’s Complete Guide to Figure Drawing: A Contemporary Perspective on the Classical Tradition*. NY: Watson-Guption, 2000, 12.

picture. Identifying dominating masses as silhouette forms is important before putting light on some parts of them. Its approach enables unifying all elements into a cohesive composition with an expressive look. It requires selecting certain lighting attributes to exaggerate the natural effects to heighten the intended emotion or thought.

For instance, I was doing some charcoal sketches of the construction site east of the First Capital Drive across from the Lindenwood University campus in the spring of 2013. I happened to look around and saw something so striking. Eureka! I really liked the chiaroscuro look of the building—bright light and deep shadow. The structural look is mighty and solid. It is like seeing a monument of significance while seeing the sky below. You just look at it without looking for details.

“The monument diverts attention from the present to the past. The knowledge of past achievement then returns to the present as a **shaped** memory . . . . The essential medium of articulation is the scale.”<sup>101</sup>

The sight of it made me remember the ancient times: the Persian limestone tomb in Pasargadae, the Greek Parthenon, and the towering Temple of Zeus in the town, Pergamon, in western Anatolia region. They are what I was thinking about when I saw the *J. Scheidegger Center for the Arts* building in bright sunlight. I liked the luminosity of light bouncing off the wall. That is the chiaroscuro effect I wanted to show in the picture. It’s awesome. I drew it on another piece of paper and used it in the studio classroom to paint the picture on canvas to show what I was thinking about. See Figure

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<sup>101</sup> Fuchs, R. H. Fuchs. “Monuments”, Coosje van Bruggen & Claes Oldenburg. *Claes Oldenburg: Large-scale Projects, 1977-1980: A Chronicle based on notes, statements, contracts, correspondence, and other documents related to the works*. NY: Rizzoli, 1980, 96.

#24: “*Cyropedia!*” and Figure #25: “*Sarcophagus of Cyrus II the Great*” along with Figure F: the photograph of the actual *Sarcophagus of Cyrus II the Great in Pasargadae*.

To achieve the smooth flow quality, I used oil paints, instead of acrylic paints, to achieve the “monumental” chiaroscuro effect I wanted. The palette was limited to three colors: Raw Umber, Titanium White, and Naples Yellow to create the masses to express the solidity of the volumes of the structures under shadow with a minimal amount of detail. Its day effect bouncing off the wall gives a seemingly mystical glow. It is sublime.

I don’t know whether I may to go to Iran someday to see the actual place where the sarcophagus is. In spite of it, I wanted to experience the history when I saw a similar architectural structure like the J. Scheidegger Center for the Arts. Seeing it was good enough for me.<sup>102</sup> It looks so real to me that I wanted to capture the sublime aspect of the building at the right time when the sun was shining almost directly above. “The sublime is graphic-sculptural because perhaps only in this way to capture the supernatural grandeur of man.<sup>103</sup>” It was so monumental. It was almost like my dream came true as if I came to the tomb to give my solemn respects for this great Biblical hero who freed the People and let them go back to their homeland after sixty years of captivity in Babylon. He was killed in a battle in 530 BC.

“That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.”<sup>104</sup> Coming from the land of Yavan, the he-goat with one horn on his forehead came

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<sup>102</sup>The idea is similar to John 4: 21.

<sup>103</sup> “Tragedy and the Sublime”, *Encyclopedia of World Art*, Vol. XIV, 275.

<sup>104</sup> Isaiah 44: 28 KJV

all the way “from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground.”<sup>105</sup>

When he reached Pasargadae in 324 BC, the Greek military leader Alexander the Great and his Army came to the site and gave their last respects to the great leader before moving on to conquer the rest of the Achaemenid Persian Empire.

An 18<sup>th</sup>-century French Neoclassical architect and draughtsman, *Étienne-Louis Boullée* is best known for his visionary architectural drawings of the grand-scale buildings on a far-off and low horizon. He was inspired by the Classical forms. He focused on the distinctive abstract geometric style, eliminating the decorative ornamentation as he inflated geometrical forms to a monumental scale with repeating elements such as columns in a spectacular colonnade. He made the buildings look bigger than normal by means of forms of regularity, symmetry, and variety.<sup>106</sup> For example, see Figure G: Etienne-Louis Boullée’s *Mausoleum*. They are somewhat akin to Claes Oldenberg’s fascinating and expressive drawings of consumer objects on a monumental scale. Focusing on the concept of polarity, which means offsetting opposite design elements, Boullée created exciting drama by using light and shadow “to bring geometric forms to life”, which is his innovative artistic signature style.<sup>107</sup>

In his important theoretical designs for public monuments, Boullée sought to inspire lofty sentiments in the viewer by architectural forms suggesting the sublimity, immensity, and awesomeness of the natural world, as well as the divine intelligence underlying its creation. At the same time, he was strongly influenced by the indiscriminate enthusiasm

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<sup>105</sup> Daniel 8: 7 KJV

<sup>106</sup> [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Étienne-Louis\\_Boullée](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Étienne-Louis_Boullée)

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/75559/Etienne-Louis-Boullee>

for antiquity, and especially Egyptian monuments, felt by contemporaries.<sup>108</sup>

In the illuminating book, *The Painter's Secret Geometry: A Study of Composition in Art*, there are two passages that must be mentioned:

The artist must always be placing himself in the position of the visitor, of the use, the place where he will be most inclined to stop is the sensitive point which demands his utmost care; it is from there that the forms of the monument must exert their full power over the imagination. The principle of suggestion dominates all monumental art.<sup>109</sup>

Truly appreciating the nature as a source of design, Étienne-Louis Boullée writes in his treatise,

The greatest of all forms of beauty is thus the quality of life that comes from an animated air, but where does the animation come from? From the eyes. They are the mirror of the soul and consequently of life. It is in the eyes that reveal the most beautiful of all beauties, I mean that of the soul.<sup>110</sup>

For my art I would like the viewer to see what I see in the landscape in a special way--the monumental sublimity within the environment of the landscape. I create the visual image to match what I read about or think about.

It is hard for me to explain orally or in spoken words because of my hearing problem. My infernal digital hearing aids don't give me the quality of sound that I always get from the analog hearing aids or from the vacuum-tube hearing aids (they are not

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Charles Bouleau. *The Painter's Secret Geometry: A Study of Composition in Art*. NY: Hacker Art Books, 1980, 13-14 and 28.

<sup>110</sup> [http://davidrifkind.org/fiu/library\\_files/boullee.architecture-essay-on-art.lib-iss.pdf](http://davidrifkind.org/fiu/library_files/boullee.architecture-essay-on-art.lib-iss.pdf)

portable and very fragile) which gives the highest fidelity in sound for my ears. They don't make the last two kinds anymore. My speech is learned and trained—not native. Because of the sound-level limits of my digital hearing aids, it is extremely hard to pick up clear conversations from hearing people to improve my speaking language. I hardly hear the consonants.

John Dewey writes in his book, *Art as Experience*, “Language exists only when it is listened to as well as spoken. The hearer is an indispensable partner.”<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> John Dewey. *Art as Experience*. NY: Putnam, 1958, 106.

## Production and Analysis

Let's begin with my charcoal drawing, *Spellmann Center Entrance Façade*. See Figure #16. The dark figure approaches the massive limestone stone-and-brick arches where he sees the scene across the darkened area under the arches, like the gateway of some ancient castle. The entrance opens into the landscape, so spacious and distant, that, with the clear sky and sunlight shining on the concrete floor, neither the buildings nor the cars and trees can be clearly discerned. The massiveness of the building is awesome to look at and at the same time the landscape is breathtaking. To me it represents the sublime of the visual experience. The compositional look is sort of irregular and maybe unusual. It is like seeing a monument of significance while seeing the sky below. You just look at it without looking for details.

After a long winter was over, I went out and looked for places to draw landscapes. I found one that shows the building with an opening that goes out to the landscape on campus. It met one of my criteria: outside-inside-outside look. I wanted to show the magnificence of the building by making it close-up as the middle ground. First, I viewed the structure as if it was a box and drew likewise. I divided it into four lines in the square and proceeded in shaping them into columnar structures and worked on the arches to make right. I shaded them to create the illusion of depth. Then I worked on the landscape in the background. After finalizing the composition, I added a human figure and drew a silhouette of it to eliminate the detail. I wanted the viewer to imagine himself like the figure—not someone one might recognize or interpret who is. The figure being placed created the space from the building with the entrance opening to the landscape. Without

it, it is just the building itself as it alone doesn't make any suggestion of space. It would have looked too quiet and somber. Wanting to make him look subdued, I had to make the figure dark because I wanted the building to be the interesting visual aspect—the mightiness—while the landscape is out-of-focus, giving off the suggestion of atmospheric space in the distance. It is a Turnerian pictorial technique of making the lightly shaded building side more prominent<sup>112</sup>. I actually saw a guy waking by in dark that I could not discern the details of him because of the blinding light in the sky and the reflecting light on the sidestep under the far arch. It was striking to me because the dark mass makes the background brighter. I did not want to make the lettering of the Spellmann Center prominent and made it faintly legible to permeate the airiness of the overall look. That is monumental sublime while it is picturesque.

My second work is a landscape acrylic painting, *South View on State Route AA near Arrow Rock, Missouri*. See Figure #28. It is a *picturesque* type which shows a variety of objects such as a country road, fences, trees with different colors, the gray sky, a distant hill, and a horizon in the middle. It is a very simple landscape with a normal-eye-level view. There is no sense of drama in it. It is contemplative. In a way it is monumental because of its known history. I used a 4" x 6" color photograph for reference to paint the picture. I composed it painterly as I did not transfer the drawn outlines onto canvas.

North of I-70, I drove on State 41 Road on the way to Arrow Rock in the late summer of 2011. Nearby is the beginning of the ancient Indian Santa Fé Trail officially

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<sup>112</sup> John Ruskin. *Modern Painters: Vol. III-"Of Many Things" and Vol. IV-"Mountain Beauty."* Boston: Dana Estes, 1856, Vol. IV, 23.

established in 1821 long before the railroad came in 1880 from Missouri to New Mexico. I love the delightful ambience of being there out in the country where there are no billboards, no big office buildings, no long lines of cars in the rush hour, no street lamp posts, few houses apart, and few people. It was like living in the frontier in the nineteenth century. I visualize myself as the frontiersman going out to hunt for beavers and foxes for furs to sell in St. Louis and meeting the Osage Indians for trade. The past is so far away from the present yet it is near to me because the landscape along the first part of the old Santa Fé Trail is still the same—unlike the ever-changing city like St. Louis. A nineteenth-century trader on the Santa Fé Trail from 1830 to 1841, Josiah Gregg wrote about what he saw on the trail. He described the prairie view, “From the adjacent heights the landscape presents an imposing and picturesque appearance...the hillcocks spreading far beyond...the serene sky of the prairie affords the most agreeable and wholesome canopy.”<sup>113</sup> So memorable sublime it is as if I were part of the history.

A twentieth-century German philosopher, Nicolai Hartman wrote a treatise on esthetics on the sublime. He notes that the sublime is found in all fields and not only in esthetics as he writes, “The esthetic sublime occurs when admiration is accompanied by ‘distance,’ the calm contemplation of the object admired, without direct participation in its greatness.”<sup>114</sup>

My third landscape acrylic painting is *Sunset at LU Campus in March*. See Figure #31 on page 50. The blaze of light coming from the sun in the late afternoon was

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<sup>113</sup> Josiah Gregg. *Commerce of the Prairies: The Journal of a Santa Fe Trader during Eight Expeditions across the Great Western Prairies, and a Residence of Nearly Nine Years in Northern Mexico*. NY: H. G. Langley, 1844, 20 and 40.

<sup>114</sup> “Tragedy and Sublime”, *Encyclopedia of World Art*. Vol XIV. NY: McGraw-Hill, 1967, 270.

brehtaking. I had to take a photograph right away. I took my painting tubes, two brushes, and a water bowl to the top floor in the Spellmann Center where it has an overhead window roof which gives stable and natural light ideal for seeing the colors right for painting. I did it about 2 hours and fifteen minutes. The artist and author of *Classical Painting Atelier* (2008) writes, "Light itself is the perquisite for value and indeed is a requirement for just about everything . . . From the moment that God hit the switch in the universe and created light there existed chiaroscuro, the distribution of darkness and light."<sup>115</sup>

The expansive space of the grey sky with the beaming ray of light and the darkened building on the right with the dark water tower in the far distance makes the scene awe-inspiring. The figures are subdued but provide the sense of scale to the environment buttressed by the dark mass of the building, which makes the contrast between light and shadow prominent and interesting. The figures are obscured as they are blissfully unaware of its magnificence of light. That is significant. The vastness of the architectural structure on the right with tiny figures below and with such spectacular visual effect behind it can stir "a sense of foreboding and tension that generates the same aesthetic pleasure may be characterized as sublime."<sup>116</sup> According to Burke's viewpoint, the sight of it inspires either a sense of terror or a sense of fascination, depending on how it looks to the viewer. Immanuel Kant divided the *Sublime* into three categories, "the

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<sup>115</sup> Juliette Aristides. *Classical Painting Atelier: A Contemporary Guide to Traditional Studio Practice*. NY: Watson-Guption, 2008, 53.

<sup>116</sup> "Tragedy and the Sublime", *Encyclopedia of Art*. Vol. XIV. NY: McGraw-Hill, 1967, 268.

terrifying, the noble, and splendid, epitomized respectively by great depths, great heights, and great buildings.”<sup>117</sup> The last two categories fit to what the *Sunset* painting conveys.

In the fall of 2013 the instructor and my class went on a field trip to the J. Scheidegger Center for the Arts Building. He gave an in-class assignment: to draw the interior of the Auditorium. The instructor demonstrated with a brown corrugated box and explained how to view the auditorium as if it were inside the box and think that way to draw. Excited, I liked the idea of creating the expansive space in the indoor environment. See Figure #26: *Theater Stage inside the J. Schiedegger Center*.

My thought was that I could produce the suggestion of atmospheric space in the interior that would cause the viewer to respond quickly. I walked around the platform on the stage, looking for a good angle. What I did was to draw a faint outline box of the environment first, indicating the placement of the walls and the floor, perspective-wise. As soon as I established the basic and overall composition, I started to fill in the details all over it. I did not render the background in great detail; otherwise, the overall look would be static and boring. Wanting to make the interior so symphonic in look, I purposely rubbed masses of black charcoal in certain parts from dark to light and then erased the parts to signify light. There are no sharp edges and I made them soft by light erasing some parts like the upper wall to convey the glowing atmospheric space evenly throughout the interior. It is dreamlike and well lighted. It's so mystical.

At the end of the three-hour class period, a lady art student walked over to see it. She said, “Oh, my God!” Her mouth was wide open as she was in awe. I was so happy

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<sup>117</sup> “Sublime”, *The Dictionary of Art*. Vol. 29., 890.

that she had the right and first impression I was aiming at for the viewer—the monumental experience of the sublime. One male student who saw it kept telling me that he liked the drawing because it had natural depth. It was the Alexandrian moment for me!

On Wednesday afternoon in early February this year my instructor assigned me to do a landscape in front of the street from inside the studio classroom through the large window because the weather was so chilly cold. Observing the scene, I composed the picture by under-painting it in brown glaze until it looked right to me. See Figure # 29: *February Winter: South of 1055-1065-1069 1st Capital Drive, St. Charles, Missouri*. Then I painted slowly over the various parts of the picture with layers of colors. The time period was from 3 to 5:30 pm for painting. I came back on Friday and Sunday *at the same time* at 3 pm to finish it. Providentially, the snow did not melt for five days as I painted it directly. I was extremely lucky to preserve what I saw. I did it in a total of eight hours in three days.

I consider the streetscape as a *Picturesque* image because it was the result of direct observation of the environment and it is not dramatic or terrifying. It represents the serener side of nature, for the components of the painted image come together naturally: the bright and fluffy white snow, the gusty coldness of the light gray sky, warm sanguine color of brick walls, and the softness of evergreens and shrubs. The real scene was a ready-made arrangement for me that I thought it was pleasing to my eye. Hence the *Picturesque*.

However, I consider the streetscape as a partial sublime image because there is a prominent part of the composition. For instance, the sublime aspect is the infinite space

between the red house and the gray house, making one wonder what's beyond. The blurred edges of the shrub and the upward dark green mass of the evergreen tree backed by the visual mass of the gray house with its dark roof contribute to the *Sublime* look. The gap between houses is dissolved into a hazy blur.

I studied the streetscape first to determine what I want to compose. I used the Golden Section principle to visually frame it. Note that there is a clear and invisible square on the left side and the right side is ready-made and all set. That is why I use the ratio of 3 to 4 for composing the picture efficiently. I use either two or three or higher to multiply the ratio. For example, I multiply two of the ratio numbers:  $3 \times 2 = 6$  and  $4 \times 2 = 8$ , and the frame format is 6" x 8"; and I multiply three:  $3 \times 3 = 9$  and  $4 \times 3 = 12$ , and the frame format is 9" x 12". I do the same thing for larger frames, such as 18" x 24" ( $3 \times 6$  and  $4 \times 6$ ). The ratio of 3:4 is truly golden. In a way, it is somewhat similar to the Fibonacci sequence of integers. Even Josef Albers used it to frame the arrangement of squares in his famous "Homage of the Square" series.

There was no snow anywhere on that day. The weather was cool and pleasant in the afternoon. I liked what I saw from the Interstate 364: the water. I parked my car on the side and went out of my car to take a quick photograph. Because I was not allowed to stay longer than a minute or so, I did not draw on the spot. In the studio classroom at LU, I used the 4" by 6" photograph to look at and paint on the 18" x 24" canvas sheet. It took me about six hours in two days to finish it. See Figure #4: *East of Maryland Heights Expressway on I-364: Lake Creve Coeur in January*

I was in awe of the expansiveness of space across the lake. I was standing by the concrete wall in front of the lake in view and I would say that the depth between the road level and the surface of the lake was at least six to eight stories below. Burke writes, “I am apt to imagine likewise, that height is less grand than depth; and that we are more struck at looking down from a precipice, than looking up at an object of equal height.”<sup>118</sup> I felt scary yet I knew that I was safe behind the wall. It was an actual *Sublime* visual experience for me. But it is a serene *Picturesque* type with some *Sublime* aspects. I had to modify the photographed scene to fit into the Golden Section format. I composed it directly. The dark island comprises the invisible square section. I purposely blurred the details on the horizon, such as buildings, roads, and trees because I wanted the warm horizon to look far away and faint, giving off an atmospheric look supported by the expansive cool sky with white clouds as the highlights. On the horizon I made the lone and tall building faintly dark in silhouette to signify the great distance.

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<sup>118</sup> Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 72.

## Conclusions

Long, long before this semester, I did not think about defining my objective on paper. I believe that writing down an objective on paper is very important because it is substantial to show what I think in reality and forces me to stick to it. Talk is cheap. It's too late now, but I will write it on paper now. The constant objective I always have up in my mind since I came to Lindenwood University in the spring of 2012 is to keep using the principles of classical composing to do the landscape in drawing and painting. I have met my goal in producing several drawings and paintings selected for the M.F.A. Exhibition in April.

Beyond the exhibition, I have many landscape drawings not shown that meet my objective. I have done well in drawing. However, my skill in painting the landscapes is not yet satisfactory to me, according to my thinking standards. I need more consistent practice with no distractions such as academic courses. Cumulatively, paintings at large have not fully met my objective because I still have trouble with technical issues, such as systemic time, layering, palette use, and tools such as brushes and palette knives. Compositionally, my paintings are good, but the painterly look is not satisfactory to me. Some of them look muddy to me. I need to master the painterly techniques to make the picture better and credibly in clean colors.

My goal is to make the picture more lyrical like the contemporary painter, Jack Vettriano (see Figure I). It is truly sublime. The 16<sup>th</sup>-century Italian rhetorician Giambattista Vico says that a human being is a "poetic creator" who is capable of transforming one observable reality into another reality to relay an intended message to

another person for a reason or purpose.<sup>119</sup> Vettriano makes his colors so alive. It is what I am striving for in my landscape paintings. That is, make the picture look alive by means of right color interaction. It means I must learn how to match the colors for animation effects. I must to learn how to mix the colors on the palette before putting layers of separate colors on canvas without mixing them. I must learn how to keep the composition simple with distinctive masses. Vettriano is really good in creating chiaroscuro effects on the figures against bright sky backgrounds. “Music has been a consistent influence on Vettriano’s work: he listens while he paints.”<sup>120</sup> I can hear music very well with bass-type ear phones connected to an amplifier or a computer.

Nevertheless, several paintings in the exhibition have met my aesthetic goals, the *Sublime* and the *Picturesque*. My latest painting, *Sunset at LU Campus in March*, is truly sublime (see Figure #31). The one of the earliest paintings is *South View on State Route AA near Arrow Rock, Missouri* is picturesque that evokes historical memory (see Figure #28). *Spellmann Center Entrance Façade* is a combination of the sublime and the picturesque (Figure #16) as it gives me the feeling of humble monumentality of education.

I realize that it is necessary to learn new aesthetic words to talk about art and explain what it is. “At its best, mastery of craft is a vocabulary, one that opens possibilities which may be fulfilled by the individual vision of the artist.”<sup>121</sup> It is vitally important to know how to describe my work with clear terms. My speech is trained and

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<sup>119</sup> 15, *Context* (1967).

<sup>120</sup> Quinn, *Jack Vettriano*, 148.

<sup>121</sup> Bernard Chaet, *Artists at Work*. Cambridge, Mass.: Webb Books, 1960, 20.

learned—not natural. I was taught to speak. Therefore, I don't have the native spoken language to start with. I repeat the quotation, "Language exists only when it is listened to as well as spoken. The hearer is an indispensable partner."<sup>122</sup>

I must rely on reading for expressing my thoughts about art. I am impressed by what the writers wrote about theories of aesthetics. I have to read such stuff to help myself to think better and express my thoughts about art. The late outstanding typographer, Paul Rand mentioned the book, *Art as Experience* by John Dewey, so many times that I better read it soon. I want to read more books, such as John Updike's, and journals I discovered in my literature search work for the objectives of developing concepts, contexts, and contents and of articulating about them in writing and, hopefully, in speaking.<sup>123</sup>

Nevertheless about that above, I know a local artist who actually goes outside to paint landscapes—truly bona fide paintings *en plein air*. I have the latest issue of an art magazine, *Plein Air*, which features an article about the "Missouri artist" named M. Shawn Cornell.<sup>124</sup> I think he is extraordinary because as soon as he finishes his outdoor painting, he considers his project complete and refuses to come back another day to continue working on it. He says,

"I don't go back to the same location a second day because I like to follow through with an idea until it is fully resolved. I make it a practice not to touch a plein air painting after I leave a location because I want every aspect

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<sup>122</sup> John Dewey. *Art as Experience*. NY: Putnam, 1958, 106.

<sup>123</sup> John Updike. *Always Looking: Essays on Art*. NY: Knopf, 2012.

<sup>124</sup> M. Stephen Dopherty. "M. Shawn Cornell: Limits That Open Possibilities", *Plein Air Magazine*, Vol. 4, Issue 1 (March 2014), 37-41.

of the picture to be an immediate response to my observation.”<sup>125</sup>

This is what I want to do: complete the picture in one single period of time as I could do that in drawing, but I am not good enough to do well in outdoor painting in oils. I want to be professionally efficient. I plan to attend his weekend *plein air* painting workshop soon. My goal is to be a “musician” in painting.

Alfred Sisley says,

“The animation of the canvas is one of the hardest problems of painting. To give life to the work of art is certainly one of the most necessary tasks of the true artist. Everything must serve this end; form, color, surface. The artist’s impression is the life-giving factor and only this impression can free that of the spectator.”

“And through the artist must remain master of his craft, the surface, at times raised to the highest pitch of liveliness, should transmit to the beholder the sensation which possessed the artist.”<sup>126</sup>

I will use a limited palette of between four to six colors to be more efficient in painting. I always believe that working with a limited palette would put me at a greater advantage to create color harmony. It is necessary to set parameters for the efficiency of working. I never had the time to learn how to set up and use the limited palette. It is my goal that I master this elusive practice soon.

The mastery of known and tested pictorial (painting and drawing) techniques requires lots of practice with drills. For instance, I practiced doing calligraphy drills for many years until I began to feel confident to do the calligraphic works. One dictionary

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<sup>125</sup> Dopherty. “M. Shawn Cornell: Limits That Open Possibilities”, *Plein Air Magazine*, 38.

<sup>126</sup> “Alfred Sisley: An Impressionist’s View”, *Artists on Art: from the XIV to the XX Century*. Goldwater, Robert and Marcos Treves, eds. NY: Pantheon, 1945, 309.

online defines the word, *technique*, as “the ability to apply procedures or methods so as to affect a desired result.”<sup>127</sup> The word “result” can be a feeling or sensation. I am interested in learning more about the advanced painting techniques. I learned that painting with impastos, which is “a pictorial technique that promotes a sense of volume” and requires a lot of practice to master it.<sup>128</sup> It takes “proper planning” and requires careful applying the paints without muddying and blurring<sup>129</sup>. That is why Gerhard Richter’s virtuosity with painting techniques is amazing. He loves painting itself!

My objective is to handle the painting materials and tools better. For instance, I need to know the easel brushes better and learn what they do specifically for painting the pictures. Painting a picture with texture is difficult to master for me. Brushwork is viewed as “the painter’s ‘handwriting’, as expressed by the marks made by his brushes on the paint surface.”<sup>130</sup> I have a large poster, *The Dick Blick Brush Facts*, showing different types of brushes with technical information.<sup>131</sup>

My goal is to set up a working area with north windows and reorganize a working schedule to practice painting regularly. The important thing is the work. I like the idea of practice drill system in Kimon Nicolaides’ book, *The Natural Way to Draw*.<sup>132</sup> It has a tabular chart of the weekly schedule for regular practice with short time periods. It is like

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<sup>127</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/technique?s=t>

<sup>128</sup> Gabriel Martín Roig. *Painting with Oils*. NY: Barron’s, 2006, 26.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>130</sup> Edward Lucie-Smith, Edward. *The Thames & Hudson Dictionary of Art Terms*. NY: Thames & Hudson, 2003, 39.

<sup>131</sup> *Dick Blick Brush Facts* [poster], Galesburg, IL: Dick Blick Art Materials, circa 2000.

<sup>132</sup> Kimon Nicolaïdes. *The Natural Way to Draw*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1941.

setting up a workout program. My objective is to paint professionally. My goal is to master in applying layers of color on canvas.

Nicolas Poussin said, “Nothing but an idea of incorporeal things.” A contemporary classical painter, Virgil Elliott, said that it would be a mistake to put emphasis on techniques and materials to create great art. “Great art depends heavily on content. It touches us emotionally, conveying a feeling directly from the artist to the viewer.”<sup>133</sup> It is possible that I have not yet come with something that could be identified as content that looks consistent. I keep searching for meaningful content. I need more time to read and understand what content is. It One website says “Content is both information and communication.”<sup>134</sup> It is supposed to be a meaning or message in a work, which is distinct from the appearance, form, or style.

One online dictionary has the fourth definition for context: “substantive information or creative material viewed in contrast to its actual or potential manner of presentation”; and it has the fifth definition: “that which may be perceived in something.”<sup>135</sup> For instance, the artist has something in his mind that he wants to put down on canvas: a mental world separate from the real world he lives in. In other words, he transforms one reality to another reality to make a point. From several dictionaries online and printed, the second definition describes the circumstances that are relevant to the event, fact, setting, or something substantial. For example, “We need to look at the

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<sup>133</sup> Virgil Elliott, *Traditional Oil Painting*. NY: Watson-Guption, 2007, 1

<sup>134</sup> <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/content.html>

<sup>135</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/content>

event within the larger context of world history.”<sup>136</sup> Perhaps I look at the scene in the context of history I read about or think about for significance for art. The eighteenth-century allegorical painter Anton Raphael Mengs said that the Italian Renaissance painter Raphael had a taste for significance and expression.<sup>137</sup> It is my goal to find significance for expression in my art.

I look forward to continuing drawing and painting landscapes classically using the interesting aesthetic terms, the *Sublime* and the *Picturesque*. I will read more about aesthetics of art, which is very new to me. I believe that I will eventually succeed in finding content to express my art. How soon I don't know.

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<sup>136</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/context>

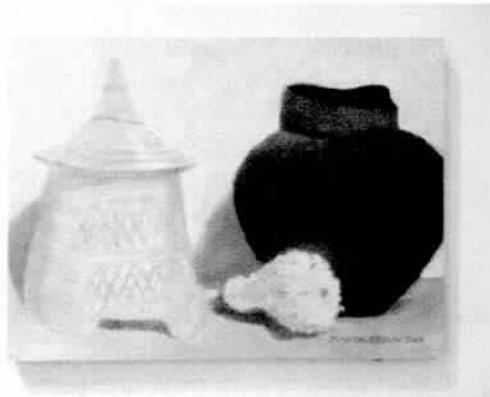
<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

## List of Works on display in the M.F.A. Exhibition

Two genres are landscape and still-life. Two medium categories are drawing and painting. Three format sizes are 18" X 24", 9" x 12", and 4" x 5". Three support surfaces are stretched canvas, Masonite board, and glossy coated poster paper. The artworks on display are in order of the exhibition starting with the first painting in front of the entrance doors of the gallery and ending with the last painting in the far south end of the gallery.



#1  
*Between 1106 and  
1050 First Capital Drive*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2014  
18" X 24"



#2  
*Still Life: Two Pottery Pieces by  
Michael Simon & Thomas Kendall*  
Acrylic on Masonite board, 2012  
9" X 12"



#3  
*Southeast view from Lindenwood University  
Parking Lot*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2013  
24" x 18"



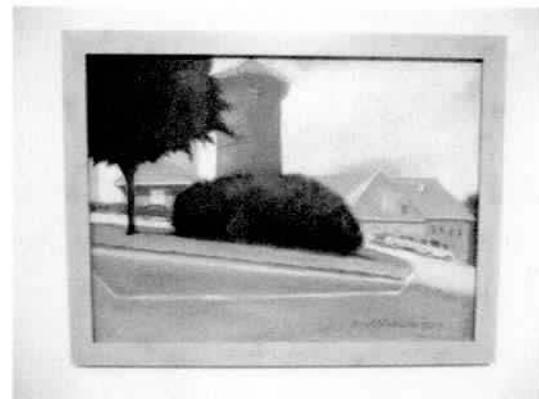
#4  
*East of Maryland Heights Expressway on I-364:  
Lake Creve Coeur in January*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2014  
18" x 24"



#5  
*Between 1100 and 1106 First Capital Drive,  
North Side*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2013  
18" x 24"



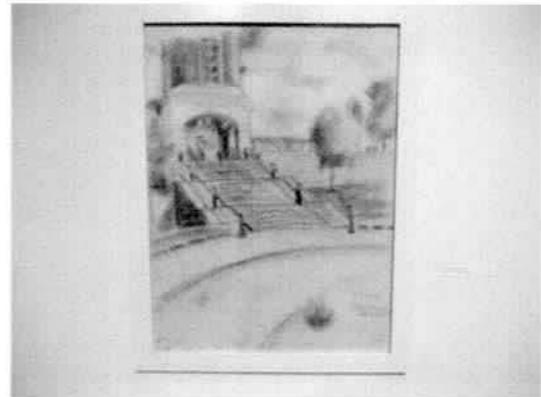
#6  
*"For Rent" on 1012 First Capital Drive*  
Oil on canvas, 2013  
24" x 18"



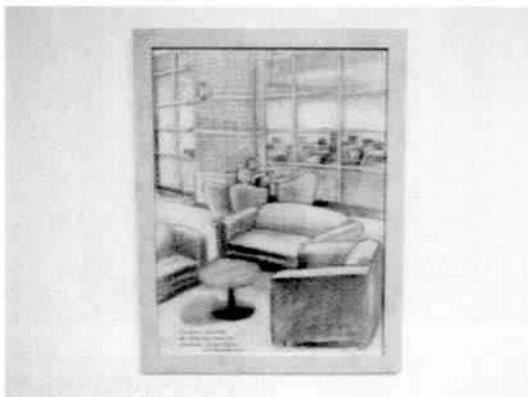
#7  
*Red Water Tank Tower on LU Campus*  
Oil on canvas, 2013  
18" x 24"



#8  
*Roemer Hall Interior, West Side*  
Charcoal on Charcoal paper, 2013  
24" x 18"



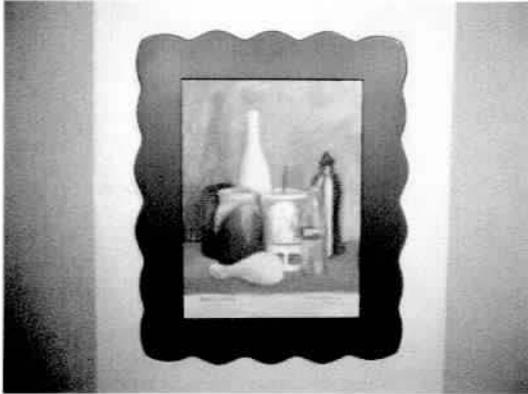
#9  
*Spellmann Center Stairway*  
Blue conté on newsprint paper, 2013  
24" x 18"



#10  
*Spellmann Center Lounge and Computer Lab*  
Charcoal on Charcoal paper, 2013  
24" x 18"



#11  
*Study on Light at Night: Former 'Oreck'  
Store on Clayton Road in Ladue, Missouri*  
Oil on canvas, 2013  
18" x 24"



#12  
*Studio Props*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2013  
24" x 18"



#13 *North view from the LU Pavilion*  
Charcoal on Charcoal paper, 2013  
18" x 24"



#14  
*Butler Library Lounge*  
Brown Pastel on Newsprint paper, 2013  
24" x 18"



#15  
*South Side Interior of the LU Pavilion*  
Sanguine Chalk on Newsprint paper, 2013  
24" x 18"



#16  
*Spellmann Center Entrance Façade*  
Charcoal on Charcoal paper, 2013  
24" x 18"



#17  
*In Memory of the Confederate Armed Forces  
of Missouri in Forest Park in St. Louis.*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2012  
9" x 12"



#18  
*In the Middle of Autumn in t  
he Neighborhood.*  
Acrylic on glossy coated paper, 2013  
13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" x 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"



#19  
*Winter View between Studio  
Buildings, West to East*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2013  
20" x 16"



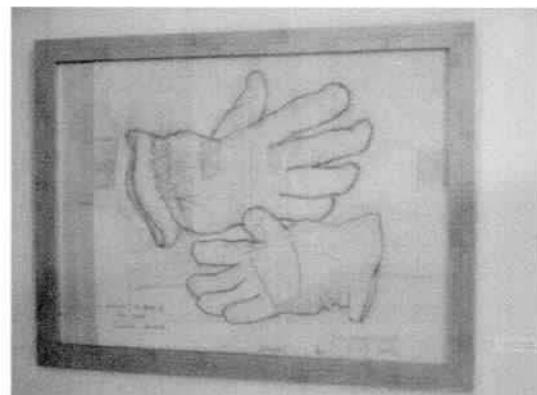
#20  
*Butler Library's Entrance Doors on LU campus*  
Charcoal on Newsprint paper, 2012  
24" x 18"



#21  
*East View on the North Side of 1046 Madison Street Lot in St. Charles, Missouri.*  
Charcoal on newsprint paper, 2013  
18" x 24"



#22  
*Two White Tall Water Tanks on LU campus*  
Charcoal on Newsprint paper, 2013  
24" x 18"



#23  
*Black Wool Glove Study*  
Charcoal on Newsprint paper, 2013  
18" x 24"



*pedia!*  
Charcoal on Co-Mo paper, 2013  
24" x 18"



*phagus of Cyrus the Great*  
Oil on canvas, 2013  
24" x 18"



#26  
*Theater Stage inside them*  
*J. Schiedegger Center*  
Charcoal on Newsprint paper, 2013  
24" x 18"



#27  
*Jewish Cemetery in Ladue, Missouri*  
Acrylic on glossy coated paper, 2013  
4" x 5"



#28  
*South View on State Route AA near  
Arrow Rock, Missouri*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2012  
9" x 12"



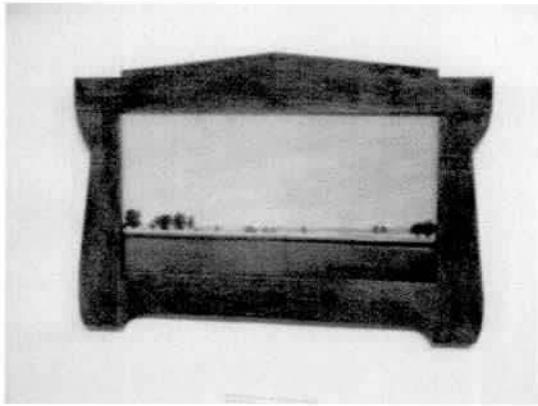
#29 \*  
*February Winter: South of 1055-1065-  
1069 1st Capital Drive, St. Charles,  
Missouri*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2014  
9" x 12"



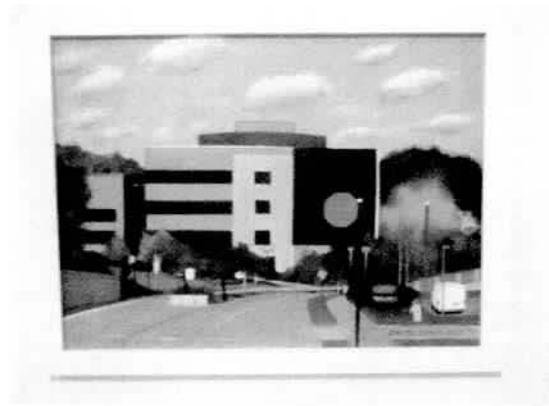
#30  
*Drizzling Overcast at the Des Peres  
Shopping Centre*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2012  
9" x 12"



#31  
*Sunset at LU Campus in March*  
Acrylic on Masonite board, 2014  
9" x 12"



#32  
*Misty Farm Scene on Highway 94  
near east of Augusta, Missouri*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2012  
10 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" x 5 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>"



#33  
*The Fall Season Scene on N. Ballas Road  
at Olive Street, Creve Coeur, Missouri*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2013  
18" x 24"

\* # 29 : "*February Winter*" painting was selected for the Studio Arts Department's Artwork Collection at Lindenwood University.

## LIST OF WORKS BY ARTISTS



Figure A  
Claude Lorrain  
*Landscape with Aeneas at Delos*  
1672, oil on canvas



Figure B  
Ken Zylla  
*Crossroads Motorcycle*  
2012, oil on canvas



Figure C  
J.M.W. Turner  
*Flint Castle*  
1838, watercolor



Figure D  
J.M.W. Turner  
*Snowstorm: Hannibal and his Army,  
Crossing the Alps*  
1812, oil on canvas, 58" x 94"



Figure E  
Beate Gütschow  
*LS #7*  
1999, digital composite photograph

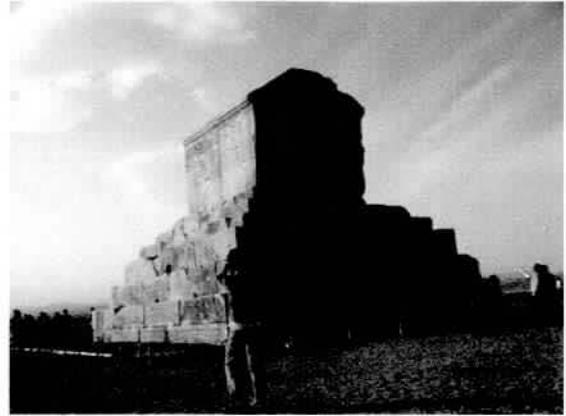


Figure F  
The actual Sarcophagus of Cyrus II  
the Great in Pasargadae, Persia  
(now Iran), photograph

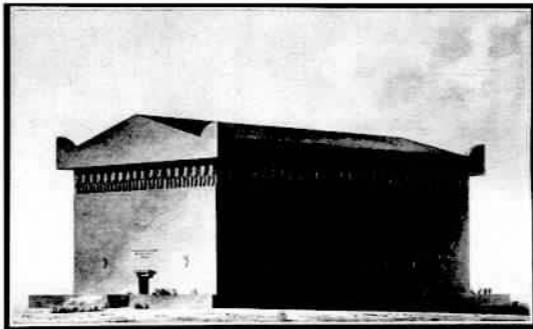


Figure G  
Etienne-Louis Boullée  
*Mausoleum*



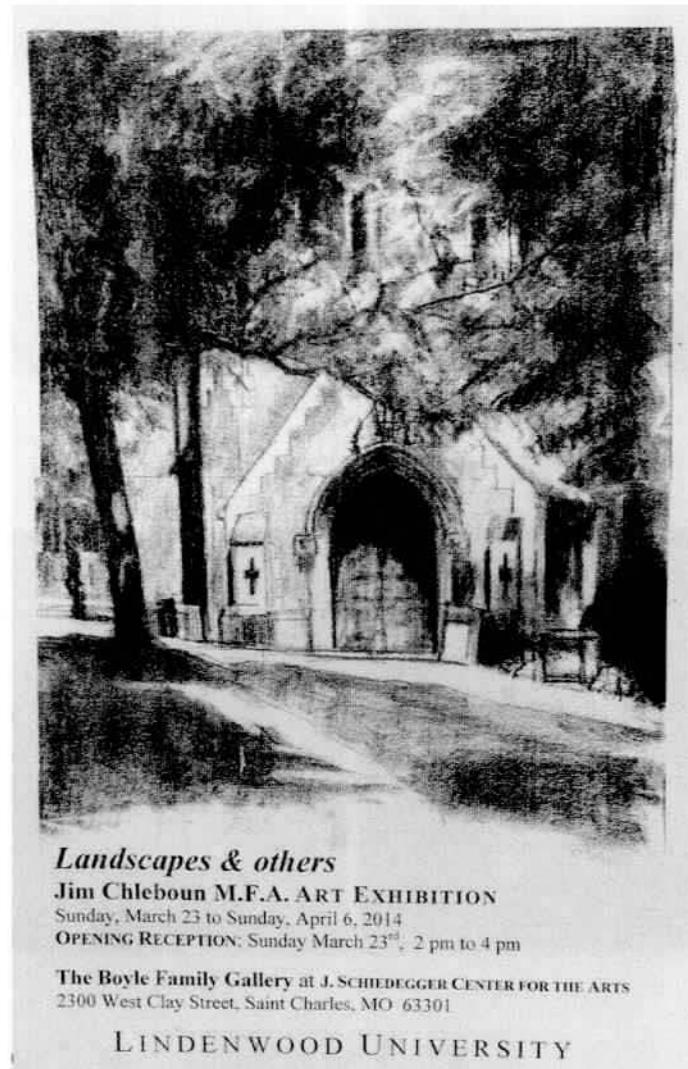
Figure H  
Claes Oldenburg  
*Design for a tunnel entrance  
in the form of a nose on a  
piece of cloth*  
1968



Figure I  
Jack Vettriano  
*The Singing Butler*  
1992, oil on canvas

### Exhibition Collateral:

Lindenwood University Gallery Announcement Postcard 5-1/2" x 8-1/2"



### Gallery Photographs:

The Boyle Family Gallery at J. Scheidegger Center for the Arts  
On Lindenwood University campus



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