

The Creative Process

by Rich Sigberman

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What does it mean to “be creative?” I believe we are all capable of being creative, whether in art or in the way we approach life.

As an artist and illustrator since the early 80's, perhaps I'm qualified to at least share my perspective on the creative process. My first step on the creative path is to go inward to draw from my best and deepest place. This well could be an effective start for many and can proceed from there.

As I approach creating abstract art, the pieces that lack any set rules, I take a few minutes to stare at that cream-colored piece of watercolor paper that's looking right back at me. I may close my eyes a few times too, and start to dig down into my feelings, since this type of work is emotion driven. I'll spend some time deciphering what emotion is most prevalent at the moment, and the one I want to work with. This combines the feeling state with the conscious mind long enough to narrow it down and maybe label it. All the while by now, I've begun to very lightly sketch on the paper with a pencil. Even if the emotion is anger, I continue to very lightly draw, so that parts of my sketch can be easily erased. As I continue, some lines and shapes begin to stand out to me, and those are the ones that seem to provide direction. I'll go over them, strengthening them and gradually something appears to me - shapes, composition and moods which all begin to crystallize on the page.



Art by Richard Sigberman

At that point, I'll often wet an area of the paper, allow the water to soak in and then begin to paint on the damp surface. The paint then spreads in some directions, and I allow it to go wherever it wants to. I'll let that dry and repeat the procedure, all the while working lightly and allowing the whole piece to more or less gradually come together.

If one is used to meditation as a practice, I think the approach I've described will come to you readily. It involves a deep form of concentration, going inward, and then manifesting itself in self-expression. The creative process often begins with no particular ideas or thoughts, and then, miraculously coming from one's own self, art is created. It is, literally, “creation” in its purest sense.