

MAX GOLD:

The Father of Fusion Art

Max Gold blends digital art, handpainting and spirituality into a new art form



"Flag,"
30" x 50" x 2",
artist
embellished on
canvas

By BILL BEGGS JR.

Van Gogh wasn't well known until after he'd sliced off his own ear, whereupon he achieved only infamy... his fame, a critical appreciation of his vision, not to mention his work's value, were not to gather momentum until after his death. Monet, Renoir, Seurat... all painted within a revolutionary art movement to be called Impressionism. It was to affect all that came afterward, but not to be truly appreciated while the paint was still wet.

Then came Picasso, the cubists and other abstract artists, to further challenge the aesthetic status quo, to raise and leave unanswered questions about beauty, expression and person-

al truth. All profound, timeless questions, indeed, but since the early 20th century mostly relegated to art history volumes, textbooks and college lectures.

As society changes, technology changes, and vice versa: The digital revolution has presented the artist with a new set of tools, as well as its own range of knotty problems.

Max Gold is at the forefront of the digital art revolution. "Fusion Art" is his merger of digital art and painting by hand, a medium he employs both to create beautiful images and to make heartfelt statements about world events and his own spiritual quest.

We managed to catch up with the self-styled

Father of Fusion Art after he'd returned home to Los Angeles from the late-February frenzy of Artexpo New York.

DECOR: How did this show compare to previous such exhibitions for you?

GOLD: When I introduced Fusion Art at Artexpo five years ago, there were lots of ooohs and ahhs, lots of finger pointing, but when I mentioned "digital art," people would give me a funny look. I didn't sell a single piece. Every year it gets better. This year I sold over 40 originals and a stack of limited editions on canvas and paper.

D: Well, what do you mean by "originals"? Can't you produce as many copies of an image from a computer file as you could, say, from a photographic negative?

G: My reverse glass paintings are originals! All you see are my hand-painted strokes on the glass; the digital influence comes in long before I start painting. For the limited editions on watercolor paper and canvas, there is no original. Using the reverse glass paintings as a foundation, I manipulate them digitally.

But digital art can be too perfect! I go out of my way to introduce imperfections by hand. Fusion Art combines the best of both worlds. Without modern technology, this work could not exist.

D: What should a gallery considering carrying your work know about Fusion Art? What are some selling points?



G: Through symbolism, I've introduced many layers of meaning into my work. Yes, it's new and exciting today, but it was created to have significance for generations. I believe this work is collectible and important: Fusion Art is still in its infancy... it's a new genre, and will appreciate in value. My prices are reasonable, but I've been forced to raise them recently because supply can't keep up with demand. This isn't about the money, though. I hope for this to be my legacy.

D: The digital revolution has certainly presented new challenges to artists and publishers intent on preserving copyright.

G: Of course... so does a camera. Serigraphs and lithographs are like records and tapes. Giclées are CDs.

Above:
"Spiritual Quest,"
36" x 36"



MAX GOLD

Ensuring my work's authenticity is an ongoing challenge: Before I start a reverse glass painting I put my fingerprints on the glass. Painting over them seals them in forever as my special signature.



D: Do people come by who just really don't get what you do, and can't keep it to themselves?

G: It was the same for the Impressionists 100 years ago. Digital art has gained much greater acceptance in the last few years. I love the kids! Some of my biggest fans can't speak; they can only point. They just see it for what it is. Adults have a filter... they believe what they're told to believe. So, to some people, what we've created is not "true" art. Today, some shows won't accept any form of digital art.

Well... what's not to "get"? An artist doesn't create with his hands, but his mind. The com-

puter is the greatest tool ever created for an artist wanting to communicate his vision. I believe digital art will be the foundation for almost all future artistic expression.

D: We hope this is a meaningful comparison: Hip-hop music was revolutionary just a few years ago, but it's almost mainstream now.

G: It takes pioneers, true believers and fans to really get a new art form off the ground, and all in the face of loud, negative critics. I love it! I'd rather be an innovator fighting for acceptance than just another person knocking off Renoir and Warhol.

D: How did you get started? What brought you to where you are today?

G: Well, it wasn't easy. Twenty years ago alcohol and drug abuse almost destroyed me. At one show in L.A., I sold every one of my pieces... then tore up all the checks. After that I lost



"The Lion's Face,"
36" x 36"

"9 Hearts,"
36" x 36" x 2",
artist embellished on
canvas

"Weeping Woman,"
30" x 40",
3-dimensional

everybody and everything... I became a drifter, homeless, without hope. I created nothing. I stood at the gates of insanity and death, but I was given a second chance.

D: What do you mean?

G: I haven't had a drink of alcohol or taken drugs since Dec. 10, 1987. That day was the turning point, the beginning of a spiritual awakening for me. When I began to create art again, it was bright, full of hope. Before I got clean and sober, my work was dark, depressing and reflected a disturbed soul, but some people loved it!

D: Part of your recovery is illustrated by L.A. Foods, a multimillion-dollar operation that also donates tons of goods to charitable organizations. How do you manage to squeeze in your art?

G: I started L.A. Foods as a “day job” while I was searching for my original idea. It’s become a great success, an essential link in this nation’s food chain. We work with food banks securing large quantities of food to feed the homeless and impoverished. I paint at night and on weekends when not doing a show.

This is how I look at it: I’m living on borrowed time. I really shouldn’t be alive. Art is the very core of my being. I don’t have a choice about being an artist. It’s like asking why my cat licks her fur. If I were stranded on a desert island, I’d have to make art out of coconuts, shells and flowers.

D: Who are your influences?

G: I worked very hard to develop a style all my own. I didn’t go to museums, to galleries, to art shows, for over 10 years. I insulated myself. Then I traveled the world, soaking it all in. At the Picaso museum in Madrid, I was overwhelmed... I walked out, embarrassed to call myself an artist. I was extremely moved by Michelangelo’s “David,” its perfection. Then with Van Gogh, I really connected with his madness, his need to

purge his demons through art. Today, I’m blown away by everything. A sunset, a crowd, even when I’m on the freeway... the motion, the colors... my mind can convert a traffic jam into art.

D: But you might have trouble putting it in words, when putting pen to paper, right?

G: My poetry, my philosophy all need serious proofreading. The spell-checker on the computer doesn’t quite cut it. My mother helps review my writings. In fact, she’s a member of DAM: Mothers Against Dyslexia. (Laughs.) Not only am I dyslexic, but I have A.D.D., too.

D: How do you manage?

G: I know that my mind works differently from most people. I don’t think in words, I think in pictures, in shapes. Dyslexia isn’t a burden to me... the way my mind works is a gift. I harness that gift and use it.

D: What’s the process like for you, then, when transferring an idea to paper, canvas or glass?

G: I see the art before I paint it. My emotions and feelings combine to create images so clear, it’s beyond photographic; it’s like virtual reality. I manipulate them in my mind... even with my eyes open, sometimes I can’t even see what’s right in front of me, the image is so clear in my mind’s eye! It can be so vivid that I have to pull over to the side of the road and snap out of it. Like a computer file, I save the work partway through and reopen that file later to finish it.

D: Your work is vibrant, almost boisterous. What does it say about your concept of beauty?

G: There are two levels of beauty. One is overt beauty, which has little to do with the eye of the beholder. It’s eye candy. The other is an educated sense of beauty... it’s learned. It’s an acquired taste, like for a pickle or caviar. This is a sense that develops over time and, ultimately, may be more rewarding.

I seek beauty on both levels. My use of color and form is inherently beautiful. I use symbolism to express deeper meaning; it’s natural for me to use symbols to communicate my thoughts. A lifetime of aspirations and desperation has formed a unique individual, created a unique artist. □



neschen

**gudy mounting adhesives.
no heat, no bubbles, no troubles.**

Neschen introduces a trio of pressure sensitive mounting adhesives designed for photos, inkjet prints and other heat sensitive media. Easily applied by hand these acid and solvent-free adhesives provide a fast and safe way to achieve professional looking and lasting results.

- **gudy-870** high tack transfer adhesive, sans carrier.*
- **gudy-831** super high tack, double coated non-woven paper center*
- **gudy-804** double coated clear PVC film, one side permanent one side removable.

*These products have passed the P.A.T. (per ASTM J19-10) making them ideal for permanent archival mounting of photos.

gudy mounting adhesives are available in the US and Canada through select authorized distributors. Call or write for samples and a listing of distributors.

Neschen USA L.L.C.
9800 W. York
Wichita, KS 67215
www.neschen.com



Information 800-434-0293

filmo@earthlink.net