

INTERVIEW WITH JUSTIN WHEATLEY

Justin Wheatley is an artist with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Utah State University with an emphasis in drawing and painting and a Master's in Education from National University

When did you decide to become an artist? What struggles did you encounter along the way?

For as long as I can remember, I wanted to make and teach art. I'm fortunate that I get to do both. The struggles have all been on a personal level. Art is definitely something that is self-driven and there is no room for getting tired or taking a break. If you do that, no one stops to wait.

Tell us about a piece you painted that was important to you.

One Way" is an important piece for me. I love the idea of an all-white work of art and this one was a challenge. It's much more conceptual than most of my work and I enjoyed the challenge of getting to the point where I was happy with it.

Which artists are you inspired by?

On a local level, Namon Bills from Spanish Fork has been a huge mentor and inspiration. He taught me a lot about the processes I use. Caitlin Connolly, Colby Sanford, and Leslie Duke are also good friends who I have learned a lot from. On an art rock star level, Lyonel Fieninger, Mark Rothko, and Richard Diebenkorn are all artists I look at when I need some inspiration.

Tell us a little about your process for creating a work of art.

My process is very intuitive. Probably too much. I usually have some sort of idea of what I'm going to do before I start, but the final product is almost always something that I hadn't envisioned. I've been trying to do more studies and sketches before putting paint on the canvas, but I'm always so eager

to get started that sketching is just something that gets in the way of painting.

What questions do you hope people ask themselves as they look at your art? What's your advice for how to interact with and appreciate art?

Most of my work revolves around the home. I mean this in the sense of home vs. house. The paintings aren't houses. They are portraits of places that a small number of people create their own little existences in. My advice for people who want to interact with art is simple. Ask yourself what it means to you. Don't be concerned with what the artist is thinking.

Many of your paintings at the library draw from architectural shapes and use striking, bright colors that look unnatural. Do these shapes and colors have a special significance to you?

I have always been interested in the way man-made structures relate to nature. The bright colors are a way to reflect the idea that lots of what we do as people is an abrupt front to the beauty that can be found in our natural surroundings.

