



DAVID FEBLAND

Common interactions

David FeBland says, “I don’t observe then describe. My paintings are about the world of ideas. Many fine painters are dealing with similar subjects but don’t go beyond depiction. They, in my view, don’t say anything about the world we inhabit or the way we interact with one another as human beings. My best work, if I’m successful, is about the common interactions of life that go unnoticed but are essential to life. My paintings are a series of small stories. Over time, they’ll tell a much larger story. The span of my career is a novel. Each painting is a word.”

He continues, “I’ve given a great deal of thought to man’s reaction with the physical environment.” He recalls that in the ’70s when he was working toward his master’s degree in landscape architecture at the University of Virginia, architects were intent on creating buildings that would change people’s lives. They built spaces either “to successful or disastrous ends.” He cautions that he doesn’t draw conclusions. He observes.

With no formal training in painting, he wants “to always develop my process to achieve the highest level of mastery of materials as possible.” His goal

has been to “say something about the world. I knew I could learn about process and handling materials from other fine artists.”

The qualities of light in his paintings reflect his keen observation as well as his development of the skills to portray them. Often the light is a low, warm, late afternoon light silhouetting or illuminating the people who inhabit and animate his stories.

“I tend to be the end of the day guy,” he explains. “That coincides with observations around sunset. I like the quality of light. It’s less bleached out. I can see the internal value of objects when the sun isn’t high in the sky. I think about light in all of its forms.”

The qualities of the light are apparent even viewing his paintings digitally. His painterly surfaces, however, have the most impact on the viewer when they are seen physically. When asked if he wants to teach people to see or to see differently, he replies, “My work has a different meaning if people’s perception is altered in some way. I want to affect the viewer in a personal way.”

He says, “Beauty is a prop for me—beauty as an actor in a play, a device that has a function. Beauty is found

1
Wild West, oil on canvas, 24 x 30"

2
Thunderbird, oil on linen, 18 x 24"

3
Dervishes, oil on panel, 11 x 14"

4
Virtue & Vice, oil on canvas, 36 x 66"





2



4

everywhere internally. Describing beauty in something ugly is a more interesting project. I like finding something beautiful where you don't expect to find it."

He concludes, "Being surrounded by beauty is no small thing. I live in an ugly, man-made environment. But it's a great source of inspiration and reference."

His latest work will be on view at George Billis Gallery in New York, May 24 to June 25. ●

