

Early Spring - painting from three sources

*Edward A. Burke*





Early Spring



Early Spring Unpainted



Early Spring Cubed

My paintings evolve from the following three sources: direct observation of the external world, my mind's eye, and my id/ subconscious. Direct observation is the most easily understood and forms the basis for most representational art. The mind's eye is the store of observed images which each of us collects throughout our lives. Works using this source will have recognizable images or symbols but will distort and manipulate them into new visual experiences. Finally, works from the id strive to completely shut down the first two sources and rely totally on the stimuli from the subconscious coupled to an aesthetic reaction to the marks and forms accumulating on the canvas. This source generates visceral and spontaneous abstract paintings that grow organically with little reference to the external world — either observed or remembered.

In 2007 I completed a series of paintings “Early Spring” which embodies creating from these three sources. The content for these paintings comes from a tradition in our home. Every year in late winter my wife Lorraine arranges a bouquet of yellow tulips and places it in front of a window framing winters stark scene. She creates our own “Early Spring” helping us fend off the doldrums of winter as we begin to anticipate the warmth of spring. I have interpreted this simple content in five paintings utilizing the three different sources. Although I did not start out to paint a series, as the work progressed I began to see that the works were forming a narrative of how I think and create. These works range from representational to abstract. The ends of this range are theoretical and not so neatly defined. It is clear that representational paintings are in some ways abstract as they represent a three-dimensional world on a two dimensional surface utilizing a myriad of personal choices that drive the creation of the work. Many of these choices are driven by the artist's subconscious even when working from direct observation. Likewise works derived primarily from the subconscious are influenced by the artist's internal collection of images and responses to the real world.

A majority of artists find their voice by working across this range and eventually settle on a narrow segment to produce their main body of work. My creative process has not and possibly never



Early Spring Espresso-ism



Early Spring Yellow and Blue

will settle down to a small segment of this range. I draw from combinations of direct observations, the mind's eye and the id producing works that fall across a wide range from representational to abstract. The resulting works are bound together by my language: that of brush and color.

The paintings included in this folio are listed below in the order in which they were painted:

**“Early Spring”** was painted from direct observation as a representational interpretation of the vase of yellow tulips in front of a window framing winter outside.

**“Early Spring Unpainted”** began from direct observation and was a fully realized representational painting. I allowed my mind's eye to reinterpret the composition by un-painting the highly rendered forms and reshaping the overall composition to create a different visual experience.

**“Early Spring Cubed”** is drawn from my mind's stored images. I abandoned all direct observation of the external scene to create this painting. This process forced me to access these stored images and filter them through my own aesthetics thus reinventing the composition.

**“Early Spring Espresso-ism”** was painted using energetic color and paint movement. The idea of winter versus spring is articulated in warm and cool colors. The objects are painted as symbolic representations and disregard the observed truth of the forms, lights and darks, and subtleties of color.

**“Early Spring Yellow and Blue”** comes primarily from the id/subconscious yet maintains some trace relationship to external stimuli and the mind's eye. This painting draws on my intuitive reaction to the idea of “Early Spring” versus the images that comprised the original still life. Moreover, yellow and blue assert the fundamental concept of early spring as warm and cool.



Early Spring  
36" x 36"  
Oil Canvas



Early Spring Unpainted  
36" x 36"  
Oil Canvas



Early Spring Cubed  
36" x 36"  
Oil Canvas



Early Spring Expresso-ism  
36" x 36"  
Oil Canvas



Early Spring Yellow and Blue  
36" x 36"  
Acrylic Canvas

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