

Foreword

Lydia Janssen is a painter I encountered more than a decade ago at the Art Students League in New York City. Her work had a particular appeal that made me take notice. She was clearly serious and committed to painting. Her intelligence and sincerity were apparent, and this was reflected in her approach to painting.

Realistically, I respond to a student's work as if it were my own and consider what I would do to it. It is more a suggestion than an instruction and it is up to the individual to interpret and utilize those ideas, to make them personal. As a painter who observes other painters (students), I can only hope the message gets through.

Some say that I am a difficult teacher, but being an artist isn't a walk in the park (and sometimes it is!). I remember shouting at her in class to stop looking and just paint. This is very important for students to learn from the get-go. An artist must paint without letting anything get in the way. Paint until you finish and then "wash your mouth out" and start another.

As she began to bear down, Lydia's colour sense changed. The application of colour must be paramount. Lydia figured out how to use that notion and this differentiated her from other students.

Lydia took this to heart. She was challenged by the notion of ego and observation, of allowing 'mistakes' to play a part in her work, to make her art better. Now when I look at her paintings these notions still influence her work in an important way.

It is a pleasure to welcome this first monograph on Lydia's painting which will introduce many people to what I call a 'natural artist'. There are exciting turns of colour throughout her output that point to an artist of original talent.

Larry Poons

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