



TITLE: *Fishing Jackson by Night*
ARTIST: Onery C. Weathers
DATE: 1968
SIZE: 49 1/2" x 49 1/2 "
MEDIUM: Acrylic and Enamel
ACQUISITION # : 68.2
Additional Works by Artist in Collection?
Yes X No ___

Artist's Biography

Onery C. Weathers attended Florida State University in the late 60s. His painting, *Fishing Jackson by Night*, entered the Florida State University collection in 1968. It therefore became a part of the permanent collection when the Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts first opened its doors in 1970. It seems, for this piece, Weathers may have been influenced by abstractionists like Arshile Gorky. His painting shows similarities to Gorky's *Abstraction with a Palette* created in 1930. Arshile Gorky was one of the painters whose work pre-figured the Abstract Expressionist movement. Weathers's work was also similar to color field painters such as Paul Terence Feeley who made a reputation in the 1950s and early 1960s. His painting, *Maia*, created in 1963, is a good example of this form of painting and illuminates the techniques used by Weathers. In addition Weathers seems to be influenced by hard-edge painting that emerged in California in the 1950s but is often associated with New York painters like Ellsworth Kelly.

About the Art

Onery Weathers created this piece, *Fishing Jackson by Night*, in Tallahassee, Florida. This body of water, Lake Jackson, is located just outside the city limits. Lake Jackson seems to have been an influence on his painting. The dark natural forms in the piece reference the lake. The blue field in the top left and the black area reference night. The red perhaps references the hot moonlight of summer. This painting was created as a color field work, incorporating flat colors which overlap one another in an organic way. The perfectly smooth lines surrounding each layer of color are due to the fluency of acrylic and enamel. The medium was used by other painters such as Jackson Pollock.

References

- Mark Messersmith, in person interview with the author, April 13, 2010.
- http://painting.about.com/od/colourtheory/a/Pollock_paint.htm
- <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/acrylic-painting.htm>
- http://www.ehow.com/about_4618401_what-enamel-paint.html

What is Acrylic and Enamel?

What is acrylic? It was created in the 1940s and is a new form of paint. It is fast drying and synthetic, made from acrylic resin, a water-based plastic. The paint is very similar to oils but it is cheaper and faster to create/dry. Acrylics are versatile and can be cleaned up with soap and water, but when dry they become water resistant.

Enamel is a term associated with a hard glossy surface application of paint. It is a difficult term to define since "enamel" can be anything from nail polish, to car paint, to wall paint. It can be oil based, or water based. It simply must be hard and glossy and is often used in the home environment. The well-known Abstract Expressionist, Jackson Pollock, started to use household enamel as it became more readily available in the late 1930s and 1940s. The texture was smooth and easy to work with.

Weathers decided to incorporate both types of paint in his piece to give it a glossy fluid flat look. Although oil-based enamel can be painted over dry acrylic, it appears that Weathers mixed the acrylic and water-based latex enamel together to create his flat color fields. He probably used this method because it was a fairly new painting technique and it provided ease in achieving a hard-edge line.

Abstract Nature Landscapes

Activity Lesson Plan: K-5

Session Activity: Onerly Weathers's *Fishing Jackson by Night* is a painting influenced by color field painters or pre-abstract expressionists like Arshile Gorky. This style of painting uses very flat color areas and abstract images. His painting references Lake Jackson in Tallahassee where he attended school. The students will create their own pieces of art that reference the style in which Weathers painted.

Materials: paper, tissue paper, glue, and scissors

Activity procedures: After discussion of Weathers's paintings as well as discussion of parks or woods or other natural sites in and around Tallahassee, direct each student to create a collage image of a favorite place in nature. Students will use organic and abstract forms, similar to those in the Onerly Weathers painting. Tissue paper will be cut and overlapped, to create flat, colored, abstract scenes. Students will choose descriptive titles, like Weathers, so viewers can understand the inspirations for the abstract images. Works will be displayed and students will verbally share their "favorite places in nature."

Objectives:

Students will learn to create and use organic form to portray ideas and scenes within an abstract piece.

Vocabulary:

- **Organic forms:** Forms that are not geometric and show a similarity to nature. Any shape that resembles a natural form, similar to the example on the right, part of the Weathers painting.
- **Abstract:** Forms that can be recognized but are not realistic.



SunShine State Standards: 3-5

Arts: Visual Arts

Strand: Creation and Communication

Standard 1, #4: Use the elements of art and the principles of design with sufficient manipulative skills, confidence, and sensitivity when communicating ideas.

SunShine State Standards: 9-12

Arts: Visual Arts

Strand: Creation and communication

Standard 1, #2: Understand that works of art can communicate an idea and elicit a variety of responses through the use of selected media, techniques and processes.(VA.B.1.4.2)

Compare and Contrast: Color Field Artists'

Activity Lesson Plan: 9-12

Introduction: Onerly Weathers's work bears a similarity in style to paintings of the color field artists. Some also participated in the Abstract Expressionist movement. Look at Onerly's painting and then other color field or hard edge painters, like Arshile Gorky, Barnett Newman, Clyfford Still, Mark Rothko, Paul Terence Feeley, or Ellsworth Kelly to name a few.

Session Activity: Direct the students to select an historical work by an artist, who can be identified as a color field or hard edge painter. Each student will compare and contrast the selected work to Weathers's painting, *Fishing Jackson by Night*, according to the following features of the work.



Marathon
Paul Terence
Feeley
1962
57.9" x 41"
Oil based
enamel on
canvas

Vocabulary:

Color Field Paintings: Abstract paintings involving large fields of flat, solid colors.
Hard edge paintings: paintings with immediate or abrupt transition between color areas.
Abstract Expressionism: A movement of abstract painting that emerged in America in the 1940s. It featured nonrepresentational or non-objective art.

Comparison & Contrast Points:

- Over-laying of organic or geometric shapes
- Smooth hard edge lines
- Flat fields of solid colors
- Visible or invisible brush strokes
- Extremes of abstraction
- Non-objective?
- Message to viewer
- Any other elements and principles emphasized