



TITLE: *Light Pillar*
ARTIST: Trevor Bell/ b. 1930
DATE: 1982
SIZE: 186" x 86"
MEDIUM: Acrylic on Canvas
ACQUISITION # : 96.10



ARTIST'S STATEMENT

"For myself, art does not make social statements, but contributes to society on a deeper, less tangible level. I feel that what we should get from art is a sense of wonder, of something beyond ourselves, that celebrates our 'being' here."

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Light Pillar is part of a series that Mr. Bell painted after watching the launching of a space shuttle in Cape Canaveral, Florida. After observing the moon shot, Bell said that he could not get it out of his mind. He wanted to express "...a tremendous lift and at the same time a tremendous expansion of energy." Bell further explained "That's why the angles are so acute and the color radiates from hot to cool at the tip."

Like most of his work from the early 1980s, *Light Pillar* presents a shaped canvas. Bell felt that shaped canvases emphasized the 'objectness' of paintings existing in their own right. Shaped canvases helped him to explore the interaction of the canvas with the entire space in which they hung.

The *Light Pillar* series, along with other paintings created during Trevor Bell's years spent teaching at Florida State University, indicate his response to the brilliant light and color of Florida. During those years, his paintings became increasingly strong in tone and saturation.

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

Trevor Bell, was born in Leeds, England in 1930. While living in Leeds he attended the College of Art and then moved to West Cornwall, England where he developed a reputation as one of the leading younger St. Ives artists. After much success as an artist throughout the United Kingdom, Bell was invited by Florida State University to become Professor for Master (Graduate) Painting. During his tenure at FSU he developed his signature large-scale, intensely colored paintings. Bell and his wife, Harriet, moved back to England and settled in Cornwall in 1996. In 1998 he was honored with an Emeritus Professorship by FSU.

Bell's first major exhibition was in 1960 at the Paris Biennale where he received the International Painting Prize. In 1973, the Corcoran Gallery, in Washington, D.C. exhibited his work in the United States for the first time. Bell's paintings have also been exhibited extensively throughout Florida with selected one man exhibitions at the Cummer Museum of Jacksonville; Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach; and the Museum of Art, Ft. Lauderdale, to name a few.

MEDIA DESCRIPTION

Acrylic Paint: Acrylic paint is the perfect paint for working on large canvases because it dries quickly and can be blended, thickened or watered down depending upon what the artist is trying to state.

Shaped Canvas: A canvas shaped over a frame of an unconventional or non-traditional shape (i.e. not a square, rectangle, or circle).

REFERENCES

* <http://www.lydonfineart.com/bell/>

Palladino-Craig, A. (2003). *Trevor Bell: A British Painter in America. Tallahassee: FSU MOFA*

* Denotes artist's official website

RELATED TERMINOLOGY

Abstract Art - Artwork that is not realistic but is based upon an actual subject.

Abstract Expressionism - Abstract art combined with non-objective art where the artist expresses a feeling or idea based upon color, line or form.

Non-objective art - An abstract artwork not based on a visible subject.



Trevor Bell, *Rift*, 2002, acrylic on canvas

“More Color Than Meets The Eye”

ACTIVITY LESSON PLAN: K–5

Session Activity: When looking at non-objective abstract art, students often mention how simple the art is and say something to effect of “even my baby sister could paint that!” What students don’t recognize is the amount of effort and emotion that the artist has presented them with. In addition to Trevor Bell’s sensational use of color, viewers are often enveloped by his paintings because of their tremendous scale. This art project will encourage students to view non-objective abstract art with an eye for detail. After completion of this project the students will have an enriched respect for non-objective abstract art. Their finished product will provide them with a large scale representation of Trevor Bell’s artwork. This artwork will grace their classroom and serve as a reminder that artwork very often has more to offer than immediately meets the eye.

Materials: Color reproductions of Bell’s art, acrylic paint, 8 “ x 11” white construction paper, brushes.

Objectives:

1. Student will increase their ability to discern color intricacies.
2. Student will learn the essentials of mixing and applying paint.

Vocabulary:

Shade - mixing color with black to darken it

Tint - mixing color with white to lighten it

Tertiary Color - made by mixing a primary and secondary color together

Blending - mixing colors together so that they meld into each other.

Activity Procedures: After a lesson on color theory and color mixing, students working in teams of 4 pupils will choose one of the reproductions of Bell’s artwork. Fold the reproduction in half lengthwise, widthwise, and then one more time to create 8 sections. After cutting each section each student will randomly choose two sections to work with. Each student should carefully look at the two sections of the painting and reflect upon the subtleties of the colors used by Bell. Then, starting with the background colors and working on their own, students should first mix their own versions of the colors in their sections. Students should plan on mixing approximately one pint of each color but should also keep the recipe for their colors in case they need more. Next students should transfer their areas of the image onto the 8” x 11” white construction paper. When all sections have been painted teams will puzzle piece their artwork together and after taping it together, put it on display.

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS: K–5

Strand B: Skills & Techniques

Standard: The student understands and applies media, techniques and processes.

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS: 6–12

Strand D: Aesthetic & Critical Analysis

Standard: The student assesses, evaluates and responds to the characteristics of works of art.

THE MEANINGFULNESS OF COLOR, FORM, & WORDS

ART HISTORY LESSON PLAN: 6–12

Session Activity & Objectives: Abstract expressionism and non-objective abstract art offer viewers much more than they might initially recognize. Trevor Bell’s artwork is based upon his emotional responses to nature and life experiences. Like other non-objective artists (Rothko, Newman, Kelly, Motherwell), Bell’s paintings evoke moods of expressive transcendence. In order to better understand the essence of non-objective painterly expressions students will be given a variety of imagery of Bell’s paintings so that they may hold discussion in small groups. After group discussion students will describe their findings with the class.

Discussion:

- Trevor Bell regards himself as a visual person who is sensitive to space and sensation while being responsive to his surroundings and the subtle and dramatic shifts that occur within nature. ***After reviewing imagery of his various paintings choose one of the paintings that you think best defends this statement and discuss why you think this statement could be true. Think about the location in which the initial response might have occurred and also describe that moment in time.***
- Abstract Expressionistic artists often give their artwork titles that are meaningful. A title also helps reveal to the viewer what mood or emotion the painting evoked in the artist. Sometimes a title makes obvious sense because a word itself has an important emotional meaning. At other times, an artist will leave the work untitled, number the piece or give it a name or title that has absolutely no relationship to anything known. ***Pick one artwork with a title that has immediate emotional significance and discuss how that word does or does not relate to the content of the image. Then, pick one of Bell’s artworks with a title that has no obvious meaning and try to discover what the word means and what Bell might have been relating to when he gave it that title.***

Activity:

- A visit to the Museum of Fine Arts on campus is recommended so that students may experience the size, shape, and intensity of color expressed by Bell in his paintings. Upon viewing the artwork students will understand better how one’s eye shifts endlessly over the surface and one experiences the sensation of being enveloped by color and light.



Trevor Bell, *Yunker* 2002, acrylic on canvas