

George Gavin Zeigler grew up in Franklin, Tennessee, a small farming town in the outskirts of Nashville, where he began his training under the direction of the late Bunn Gray. Mr. Zeigler did his undergraduate work in Art History at Fordham University in New York City. He works out of his studio in Shelter Island, New York.

STATEMENT: GAVIN ZEIGLER

The French word collage, from the verb coller, means, “painting, sticking or gluing as in application of wall paper.” Its invention is credited to Picasso. Other artists such as Matisse and Kurt Schwitters expanded on this invention and have in turn affected my work.

My process involves collage as well as painting and sanding. But, stages in the process also guide the progress of the painting. Therefore chance is a component of my work. To many modern artists, no matter how powerful their imaginations, chance seems infinitely more resourceful and productive, a more creative tool than anything deliberate or willed. For example, Matisse often began a painting with no clear idea of how the final picture would look.

The English critic, Lawrence Alloway wrote, “Objects have a history: first they are brand new goods; then they are possessions accessible to few, subjected, often to intimate and repeated use; then, as waste, they are scarred by use but available again... Assemblages of such material come at the specter as bits of life, bits of the environment.”

Using materials and objects, such as coins, checks and stock certificates, for their own qualities in an artistic context is to invite the observer to see them in a completely new way, divorced from their normal purpose. I find the texture of such surfaces with their strong suggestions of tactile qualities, provides me with a visual experience that is a mixture of sensory impressions. My paintings are notable not only for their tactile qualities but the sculptural textures and vivid colors. This is achieved by building layers upon layers of material, utilizing edges, perforations and crevices, which trap pigment, creating visual excitement while at the same time revealing the inherent beauty of these everyday materials.

These materials are works already in progress: prepared for me by the outside world, previously formed, textured through handling the items, colored, and randomly stamped. Coins for example are unifying, man-made “artifacts” and identifiable. Their collective use establishes grid patterns. Keys on the other hand represent people, in that they are all made out of the same material (brass) yet with individual qualities, histories, secrets and characters. The subject in all of my work is surface and color. Paint is as much an object as the materials are in my work.

I draw sustenance from everywhere: from the totality of moral, intellectual and temporal as well as physical and sensory. My ever-changing environment and my life experiences affect my work. Titles are derived from many diverse sources such as moods evoked by certain paintings while others are taken from the immediate working environment. Everything I see exerts, however unconsciously, an influence on what I create.