

important than the art object itself. For a while I tried making heady art, but it didn't fit my personality.

In graduate school at UC Davis, my interactions with my instructors, Wayne Thiebaud, William T. Wiley and Roy DeForest, were influential in giving me a strong awareness of the dedication and strength that it takes to make a career as an artist.

JM: As an artist, you have said that you "paint from your heart."

MAXON: Yes, for me, art serves as a reflection of my own spirit and its interconnectedness to all things. Leonardo da Vinci wrote, "Where the spirit does not work with the hand there is no art." I am interested in what people get moved by and in trying to find honesty in my own process. As an artist, I am doing the best I can to react to my environment, working with things that are important to me by putting love into them and struggle into them. Hopefully not so much struggle that it becomes awkward to look at. As an artist, I work through the struggle, and there's a release and then a freedom that I, myself, feel through the process. Hopefully the viewer will feel the same thing, and that's where the human connection is made.

JM: Beauty is something that hasn't been talked about much in academic institutions since the '60s. Is it important to you?

MAXON: I am interested in beauty as a description against something that is totally intellectual, that beauty is something connected to the heart. Beauty is subjective, obviously; what I find beautiful may not be what you find beautiful. For me, nature can stimulate this sense of beauty, and things get awakened when I am in nature. I go into nature for thoughtful interaction, to encourage deep thoughts to come. It is spiritually quieting and uplifting.

JM: Are you trying to express the beauty you find in nature through your landscape paintings?

MAXON: I am interested in moving someone to the core of their being, not that they have to be knocked off their feet, but that they pick up on that vibration that is awakening something in them. When that happens, that particular piece of art is probably doing what it should be doing, which is communicating.

MAXON: I am interested in moving someone to the core of their being, not that they have to be knocked off their feet, but that they pick up on that vibration that is awakening something in them. When that happens, that particular piece of art is probably doing what it should be doing, which is communicating.



John Maxon's oil on canvas "Summer Showers."/Photo by Todd Newcomer

JM: What do you see today's students trying to communicate through their art?

MAXON: I think that when you are young, finding different avenues of expression is part of what is becoming important to them and to find their greater place within one's community.

JM: Perhaps they are trying to find unique and meaningful ways to express themselves?