

MAXON: Yea, which art is it's a therapy. It's certainly a therapy for artists. Art may be a therapy for the viewer, as well.

JM: Therapeutic in the sense that it brings understanding?

MAXON: Therapy in the sense of talking with oneself. The better that you are at going to that inner voice, the closer you are to the center of yourself. This is what I am talking about when I say that I'm working toward something that is truthful in my art.

JM: As a teacher, is this truthful interaction something you want to encourage in students, to cultivate?

MAXON: The best thing I can do is to help them understand that they have an important inner vocabulary and to find a way to get in touch with their inner creative voices. I know a lot of techniques that can be very helpful when someone is trying to convey a visual statement and is frustrated by the process. I can encourage them not to stay in the frustration. Within that moment of us working together in a visual art situation it's awakening their inner spirit. I try to allow them to recognize those moments of lucidity. Those are the moments when joy - a thoughtless, more experiential state - actually takes place. If we can learn how to stay more and more in touch with those moments, joy can become a daily activity.

JM: You are describing a philosophical stance that speaks to a bigger purpose for the art-making process.

MAXON: The purpose is to live life with as much joy and care for other human beings as possible, to paint the struggle, paint the joy, above all paint the truth.

John Maxon is represented by Ellis Crane Gallery in Durango. His paintings also are on display in a two-person show with jeweler Peggy Maloney through Feb. 18 at the Fort Lewis College Art Gallery. An artists' reception takes place Fri., Feb. 4, from 5-7 p.m.
