

Hand to Hand: A Legacy of North Carolina Painters Part II

We are influenced by others, sometimes knowingly, other times even by indifference. Whatever the route by which we find ourselves engaged, it must be the result of a certain measure of allowing ourselves to be open to new possibilities.

In the mid 1960s, Bert Carpenter, as chair of the Art Department at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, exercised a vision by inviting numerous working artists to join the faculty. These individuals were chosen based not upon academic credentials, but rather because of their experience and expertise as artists in a broad spectrum of media. The school was alive with these additions to the full-time faculty and equally so with renowned visiting artists.

Among the most influential of these artists were Peter Agostini and Andrew Martin. Hand to Hand Part II focuses on students who, for the most part, studied at UNCG during the time period when both Agostini and Martin were teaching full time - roughly the years between 1966 and 1983.

This is an exhibition of painting. And while Agostini was primarily a sculptor, his influence upon students of all media was so profound, strict lines simply cannot be drawn. In similar ways, while Martin is most widely known as a painter, his work with the figure through sculpture spilled over into his teaching.

To do justice to both mentors and to those who studied with them, this show rightfully would include many artists who are not represented due to considerations of space, time, and availability. Among these would be sculptors, printmakers, and countless painters.

I know just how well respected (and loved) both Peter and Andrew were. The mention of their names evokes a desire to stand up and be counted in the testimony to their influence. It rekindles an awareness of a particular way of being in the world.

Peter Agostini and Andrew Martin presented us with choices, options. We were free to see the world in whatever way we chose. But it was imperative that we look with eyes wide open; to consider the possibilities before us, and to engage our visions with full integrity.

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