

Steve Hedberg | Artist's Statement

Since painting my first abstract at age 17, I've maintained two genres: realism and abstract art. City scenes and landscapes have been the primary focus of my representational art, and the study of color and texture through geometric shapes have been that of my abstract work.

I've always been drawn to architectural realism, starting with 17th century Dutch landscapes to the modern era's Richard Estes and his photo-realistic and highly involved city scenes in oil. I'm inspired by the colors and textures of our everyday environment, and gravitate toward the ordinary and underappreciated. Subject matter includes weathered objects such as an abandoned vehicle, weeds growing through the cracks of a sidewalk and telephone lines intersecting tranquil settings. I mostly paint with acrylics on wood panel, and I'm fascinated with color theory and lighting. A strong light source, direct midday sunlight in most cases, is central to my landscapes — the heavy shadows help create vivid realism with contrast and a bright color palette. More recently, I've explored variations in lighting and weather, such as overcast skies and fog.

My abstract works have been a therapeutic departure from the articulate nature of my realism. Color theory as explored by artist Josef Albers has been a big influence, and finding unique relationships within a color palette is a constant goal. I'm also influenced by the works of Wassily Kandinsky and Richard Diebenkorn, exemplified by my tendency to find geometry and linear intersections in my compositions.

Until recently, I considered these two styles as separate but parallel. As my work has evolved over the years, a cross-pollination between the two has occurred. My paintings in realism have inherited the textural qualities of my abstract work, as my abstracts have representational line drawings of cityscapes. Within these areas of interest, the evolution of technique and style are vital to my creative process and to my continued renewal as an artist.