

Gallery 2

January 7 –
March 11
2007

RESPOND!

In the RESPOND! Series, the Art Center asks visitors to tell us what they think about the work in the exhibition:

The artist stands outside alone in the dark. His paintbrush poised, he waits for the sunrise in an empty lakefront park. The rest of Chicago is oblivious, asleep, but the artist is present.

The rest of us miss what the artist does not. He throws everything he's got—linocut, watercolor, acrylics, oil paint, collage, pens, pieces of wood, even a can opener—at the task of showing us what we otherwise would not see.

Jill Riddell
Director of Conservation
Notebaert Nature Museum

Hyde Park **ARTCENTER**

5020 South Cornell Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60615 773.324.5520 www.hydeparkart.org

The Hyde Park Art Center is a not-for-profit organization that presents innovative exhibitions, primarily work by Chicago-area artists, and educational programs in the visual arts for children and adults of diverse backgrounds. The Center is funded in part by the Alphawood Foundation; The Chicago Community Trust; a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council; The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; The Lucius and Eva Eastman Foundation; The Field Foundation of Illinois; Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; The Leo S. Guthman Fund; The Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Joyce Foundation; The Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation; Kraft Foods; The MacArthur Foundation; The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; The National Endowment for the Arts; Polk Bros. Foundation; The Clinton Family Fund; South East Chicago Commission; and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; and the generosity of its members and friends.

Dale Washington: *Sunrise*



Sunrise
2006
oil on board
30 x 24 inches

Drivers regularly heading south on Chicago's Lake Shore Drive during the early hours of the morning have long known about the beautiful sunrises that rise and break over Lake Michigan. Acting as an alarm clock, the yellow, orange and red sky wakes up the apartment towers and industrial sectors of the South Shore to a new day. Working from his South Shore home and studio, Dale Washington has built an enormous series of paintings, ink drawings, assemblages and sketches, which he creates from personal photographs and drawings, that capture the sunrise with a multitude of emotion and meditation.

The sunrises over Lake Michigan can be overwhelmingly colorful and many have attributed this striking range of hues to the air pollution from the East Chicago and Northwestern Indiana steel mills. The metal and concrete of a city being illuminated in the morning only adds to the strangeness of this altered natural phenomenon. The unnatural and near ethereal washes of color on a clear day provide a perfect well of inspiration for the visceral and gestural style of Dale's work. As every sunrise changes so too does each piece, ranging from warm washes that weave through the dark shapes of the city, to brisk strokes of ink that freeze the sun's movement as it passes through the window of Washington's paper.

Sunrise references the dichotomy between city and nature with its heavy reliance on form and movement. Building on the stylistic techniques of modernism and abstract expressionism, Washington explores the drama of a sunrise with an attitude of immediacy and spontaneity. In these artworks we see the echo-like natural forms of Arthur Dove, the swift paint splatters of Jackson Pollock, and the multilayered assemblages of Robert Rauschenberg that incorporated everyday found objects from the artist's studio. Washington's devotion to an unfettered style of art-making is in perfect balance with the unpredictable Chicago sunrise and also the ever-changing and quick pace of city life.

Washington creates a language of his own to describe a sunrise. Although methodical in his subject matter and his discipline of painting daily, he improvises with a rhythmic and sometimes visceral collection of forms that transfers the massivity of the sun onto works that welcome contemplation. We are able to read this language of color, shape and line like a journal, experiencing each sunrise with the same mood and sight as Washington himself.



Sunrise Through Park Tree
2004
oil on canvas
24 x 36 inches

Dale Washington has been exhibiting his work in Chicago and the Midwest for over twenty years. He received a Bachelor of Arts from the Columbia College and was recipient of the 2003 Artist of the Year award from the Southside Community Art Center. In addition, Dale is a member of the Hyde Park Art Center faculty, where he currently teaches Abstract Painting & Drawing (Monday nights). He champions experimentation with unexpected colors and utensils (using stick or feathers instead of a traditional brush, for example) and teaches students to work collaboratively on drawings and paintings in order to achieve multiple perspectives within the same composition.

Philip Nadasdy
Exhibitions Assistant