



*Ephraim Rubenstein: Recent Paintings and Drawings*

October 9 - November 14, 2021

Stone Tower Gallery

Saturday & Sunday 12 pm - 6 pm

## **Artist's Statement**

Because of the way I paint, I have always been intrigued with my paintings in an unfinished state. I generally paint in what is known as the "color-spot" method, a process highly antithetical to the way most realist painters proceed. Traditionally, painters tone their canvas with some sort of neutral value (imprimatura), that allows them to establish a middle tone, and then work down into the darks and up into the lights. They then proceed to cover the canvas quickly in more or less general tones, getting increasingly more specific with their colors in subsequent layers. A 'traditionally' painted oil painting is built up in layers, like a layer cake, and can frequently have a dozen or more layers.

Color spot painting is radically different. Color spot painting was developed and codified in the early decades of the twentieth century by Charles Hawthorne and later by his student and assistant, Edwin Dickinson. As a method, color spot painting is distinguished by its freshness and directness. This freshness is the result of hitting color/values right from the start, rather than arriving at them slowly, as in more traditional painting methods. A color spot is a piece of color, large or small, that has been observed and abstracted from the appearance of nature and applied directly to the white canvas in discrete notes. These 'spots of color' make a network of colors out of which the painting is born and developed. Using a white canvas, there is generally no underpainting in value, or other intermediate foundations.

Consequently, while in progress, parts of the painting are fully developed, while the rest of the canvas remains blank white. As the painting progresses, these white areas are covered and the image takes over, and eventually covers the whole canvas. But I have always been intrigued by the paintings in progress, when they are partially finished, and partially unfinished. It can be thrilling to see how the image emerges from blankness; how it looks so real, but is also just pieces of paint. But no matter how intriguing, I never felt able to leave the canvases in this unfinished state.

But when the Metropolitan Museum in New York moved its Modern and Contemporary Department into the old Whitney Museum building, they inaugurated the new space with an exhibition entitled "Unfinished", a survey of paintings that-

whatever reason- were left uncompleted. It was an absolute revelation to me. Unfinished paintings were beautiful and valid. All of a sudden, I decided to try and purposely leave some of my paintings in this state, something I had thought about doing for years. In the "Unfinished" exhibition, Alice Neel was quoted as saying that she always left some of the blank canvas in a painting, so that the image had "room to breathe- to escape". This really appealed to me. You will see three of these unfinished paintings in this exhibition: "Semour en Auxois", "Semour en Auxois III" and "Nataliya II".

## **Artist Bio**

Ephraim Rubenstein was born in Brooklyn New York in 1956. He received his B.A. in Art History from Columbia University and his M.F.A. in Painting from Columbia University's School of the Arts. In addition, he studied at the Brooklyn Museum Art School, the National Academy of Design School of Fine Arts, and the Art Students League.

Mr. Rubenstein has had twelve one-person exhibitions in New York, including shows at Tibor de Nagy Gallery, at Tatistcheff & Co., and most recently at George Billis Gallery in Chelsea. He has exhibited at the Butler Institute of American Art, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Maier Museum of Art, and the National Academy of Design, where he won the Emil and Dines Carlsen Prize in painting. His work is represented in numerous public and private collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Exxon Corporation, and Deloitte & Touche. As both a painter and a draftsman, Mr. Rubenstein has been featured in American Artist Magazine, American Heritage Magazine and Architectural Digest, among others. Many of his paintings have been on loan to the United States State Department as part of its Art in Embassies Program.

Mr. Rubenstein is an active teacher and writer. He has written numerous articles for American Artist Magazine, American Artist Drawing, The Artist's Magazine, and American Heritage Magazine, among others. He was Associate Professor of Art at the University of Richmond from 1987-1998, where he won the Distinguished Educator Award from the University, and the Outstanding Faculty Award from the Commonwealth of Virginia. He has been a Visiting Professor at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), and on the faculty of the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) and at Columbia University in the Department of Narrative Medicine. He currently teaches at The Art Students League of New York.

For more information, please visit his website: [ephraimrubenstein.com](http://ephraimrubenstein.com)