

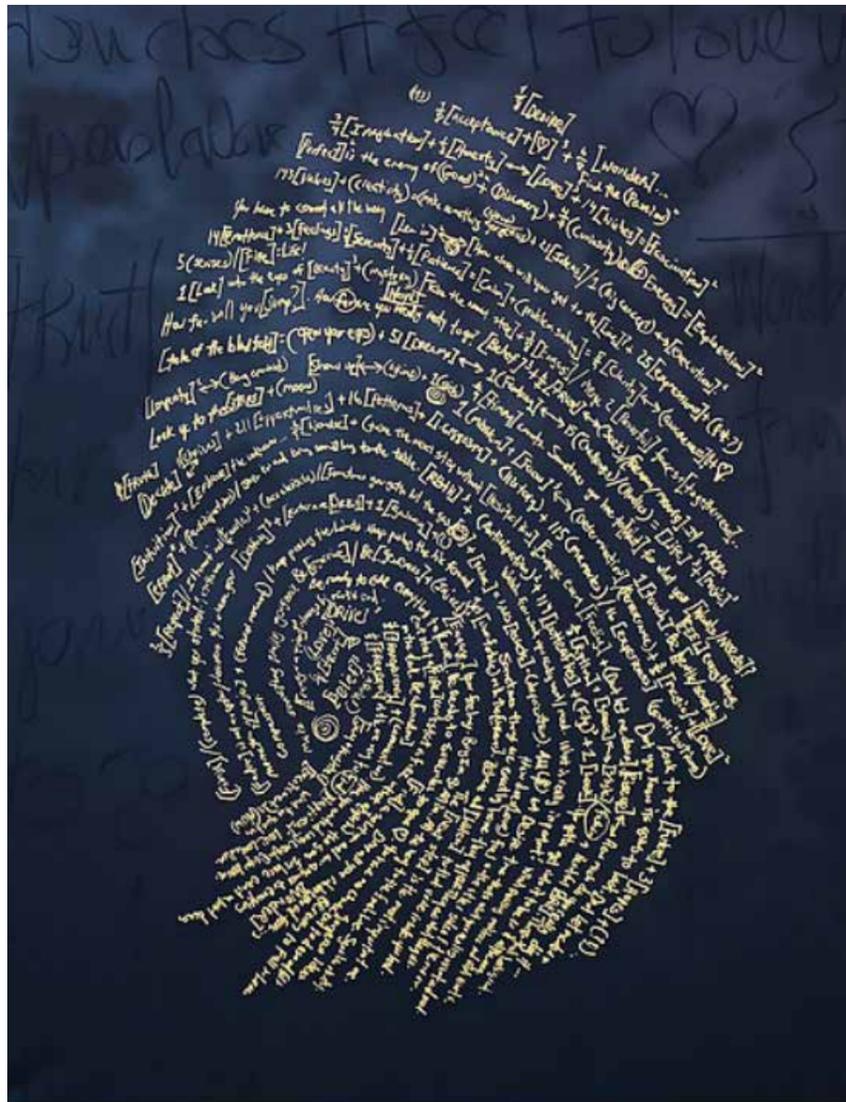
BRENDAN MURPHY

Brendan Murphy, an American artist and former trader, explores in his work the potential of art to transmit positive energy, and the effect it has on society as a whole.

FR *Brendan Murphy, artiste américain, et ancien trader, explore dans son travail le potentiel de l'art à transmettre une énergie positive, et l'effet que celle-ci a sur la société dans son ensemble.*

ES *Brendan Murphy, artista americano y antiguo bróker, explora en su trabajo, el potencial del arte para transmitir una energía positiva, y el efecto que ésta tiene en la sociedad en su conjunto.*

Until September 30, you will find his works at the Elka Bronner Gallery in Guéthary.



What is your background? You were a trader, you became an artist, it's not a classic course.

I've done a lot of different things in my life, so you can say that I'm a generalist, and I think my body of work reflects that. I was actually a professional basketball player, I played in Germany, before I started working on Wall Street. I did all these different things but at the back of my mind I always knew that I'm a creative person and it was just a matter of time I guess. I think the tragedy of 9/11 was a key moment - I knew some people that lost their lives that day and it made me look at life differently, it gave me that push and courage to listen to my inner voice. Having said that, taking that first step and pursuing the creative path was not easy - stepping into the unknown is exhilarating and scary at the same time. My Boonji spaceman sculpture I think perfectly embodies the concept of taking the next step and facing your fears.

What link can be made between your previous life and your art?

As I already mentioned, I think my body of work really reflects all my past experiences and what you see on the canvas and in my sculpture work is a reflection of who I am as a person. Sports has been a huge part of my life and I'm greatly inspired by top athletes - their mindset, drive and determination. I have done paintings and sculptures of top athletes like Novak Djokovic and Grigor Dimitrov, who are my friends and collectors of my work. In 2016, I did an 18 feet fiberglass and steel scul-

ture of Novak Djokovic, titled 'Nole IV', which was unveiled at the Rio Museum of Modern Art. My most recent work, the graphic Chalkboard series, which has been my most successful to date, I predominantly use formulas, symbols and figures to translate the abstruse nature of emotions and capture the human experience, one can say it also connects to my past.

You worked under the aegis of Erich Fischl, David Salle and Ross Bleckner. How did you meet them?

I've been very lucky - you know being at the right place and at the right time - to meet these great artists and observe how they work. Once I became aware of my desire to become an artist, and felt determined to pursue the creative path, you can almost say that stars have aligned for me to embark on that path as there were all these signs like meeting the right people who became my mentors.

Why them? How did their work resonate with you?

It's not so much their work, I don't really paint like either one of them, it was more about learning how to be a professional working artist, how to approach the studio and lastly what it looks like to be a successful artist. I don't think a lot of young artists really get to see that and seeing how a successful artist lives gives you a clearer vision that you can also live that way.

You express yourself in different ways, painting, sculpture. What does each technique bring you?

Each medium is a different creative outlet. I think the sculptures require a level of craftsmanship and detail whereas the works on canvas really need to be done in a free flowing, fluid manner. Both require detail of course but I think the approach is a bit different. With the sculpture I'm trying to create something with an impact, with the paintings I think it's more lyrical process and poetic.

Can you describe the beginning of your work? What is the starting point? Is there an intellectual process before approaching the canvas, the sculpture?

I feel like my work is and can continue to be a reflection of the "moment" being in the moment, an experience which is quickly sliding away from us. Damien Hirst likes to explore death and how we relate to death, I like to explore awareness and how we continue to create distractions that take us away from the moment. How we process emotions, how we generate a feeling and how we actually communicate that feeling is something that works best when one is present, when you are not present, those things don't come easy. So it really inspires me to explore awareness as by doing that I feel like I hold up a mirror to beauty and magic and hopefully encourage people to walk through life with eyes open rather than closed.

What emotions are you trying to create?

I hope that my work forces the viewer to be in the moment, brings them into that exact

place, triggers the process of figuring things out internally. My aim is to encourage and invite the viewer to shed distraction, even if for a short time, and be present in the moment which is the most pure form of existence. So if I can anchor you in the present moment and trigger a cascade of emotions, which can help you better connect with yourself and people around you, then I've done what I intended to do and I'm happy.

What are your inspiration sources?

Apart from being inspired by exploring awareness, my greatest inspirations are relationships and the spectrum of human emotion which I like to translate into formulas and equations. I also like to explore the interplay of beauty, power and the need to understand the energies of life. Another thing that inspires me is art's potential to transmit positive energy, and the effect that the positive energy has on society as a whole. When it comes to other artists, I love Hans Hofmann's colors, Basquiat's script the impact of Clyfford Still's work.

Your paintings are rather abstract and your sculptures very figurative. Is this on purpose?

Technology has offered me more tools and helps me get my sculptures closer to the image that I have in mind. I am honestly not that talented of a technical painter and I have trouble executing my vision perfectly.

Some works are monochrome and rather dark, others on the contrary very colorful. How important is

the color to you?

I love color, I use color to create a mood and a feeling. It's very important for me, either way, dark or full, it's a deliberate choice and meant to create a vibe.

You are full of projects, what is your next challenge?

I am working on some beautiful works for this year's winter shows, really powerful but balanced work, that's the best combo for me. And I love to touch on sports and movement as well, so the sculpture work will really lean towards that this year.

Elka Leonard

