

Ripon Alum Bringing Exciting Art and Personality

By: Phil Mack

As April approaches, Caestecker Art Gallery will be cleared to make way for artist, and '84 Ripon College alum, Lon Michels and his art opening.

On Friday, April 6th, at 7:00pm, Michels is to bring his exciting and inspirational paintings to Ripon.

Michels, who is currently pursuing a M.F.A. in painting at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, will not only be displaying his paintings, but his inspiring personality.

"The thing that is so amazing about Lon is that he is so spiritual and passionate," says Professor of art, Evelyn Kain. "He's such a beautiful human being, and he wants everyone to feel beautiful."

When Michels was a student at Ripon he studied under Kain, who noticed his talent for painting and his zest for life.

"He was just one of those people I noticed from the start," Kain affirms. "He's a larger than life person, and so are his paintings."

Kain is very excited about Michels' art opening and paintings, which she describes enthusiastically.

"His painting really relies on immediate visual pleasure," says Kain. "His paintings demand to be looked at."

According to Kain, Michels' personality shines through in his paintings, revealing his passion and intensity for life.

"It's hard not to be cheerful in front of his art," says Kain. "His paintings have a life asserting intensity about them."

Another of Michels' former professors is Paul Axelrod, Professor of anthropology, who shares Kain's excitement for Michels and his upcoming opening.

"I think his use of shapes to make images is key to his work," says Axelrod, on Michels' art.

Like Kain, Axelrod is aware of Michels' contagious personality and wholehearted outlook on life.

"I think he enjoys being flamboyant," says Axelrod. "I think he likes to shock by saying things you wouldn't expect."

Axelrod also acknowledges that Michels' personality filters through into his artwork, "his art is rich and complex and in that way it reflects his personality."

It is evident that both Kain and Axelrod are excited for Michels' art opening, but it is Michels himself who expresses the most anticipation.

"They can expect their jaws to drop," says Michels. "There are a lot of surprises I have in store and it should be very exciting."

Michels looks to capture the gazes of art opening goers, and if they tune in to his paintings they will find themselves enveloped with good feelings.

"I look to inspire people," explains Michels, when describing his own artwork. "They should expect to feel happy, joyous, and free."

The stylistic elements of Michels' paintings are unique and allow the viewer to experience depth, shapes, and vibrant colors.

"I use pattern and color to create different planes that create a sense of symphony on my canvases," explains Michels. "They are as individual as I am."

Commenting on his personality, Michels explains that he has a gratitude for life and he tries to illustrate that through his paintings.

"I really love and believe in what I do," says Michels. "I believe in living life to the fullest and I display that on the canvas."

Michels filters his many influences into his paintings from personal experiences to the humanity of others.

"I'm influenced by love and kindness," says Michels. "Inspiration comes from everyday life."

Displaying his artwork gives Michels a great sense of contribution because he simply wants to share his happiness with others through his paintings.

"As an artist, I feel I was given a gift, and I want to share that gift," states Michels. "When you look at a Lon Michels painting you see Lon Michels."

As April 6th approaches and Lon Michels is in town, be prepared to meet an inspiring man with equally inspiring artwork.