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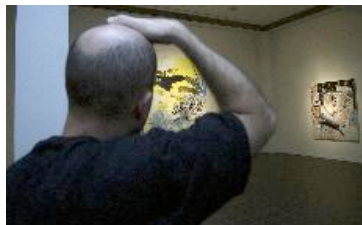
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'Eating Friction' artist shares all

By **JANE MCBRIDE**
October, 29, 2008

Howard Sherman's in-your-face art leaves no room for ambivalence. His new large-scale canvases, often nine feet tall or more, explode from the walls, forcing the viewer to engage.

Unlike many artists who find a large scale overpowering, Sherman, 37, felt "liberated."

"I was so ready for this scale," he said, walking around the gallery at Art Museum of Southeast Texas as the last of the 14 pieces in his new solo exhibition was being hung. "The timing of this show worked out perfectly."

Sherman, who drew a syndicated comic strip from 1993-1998 before turning to painting full time, recently left his studio at Commerce Street Artists Warehouse in Houston and moved to a new studio downtown with 20-foot-high ceilings and 1,000 square feet of floor space. The airiness of his new digs helped define his style, which draws from "a bunch of 'isms'" to create something he unabashedly predicts will influence upcoming artists.

"It's very post-modern," he said. "I was trying to find a new way to be bombastic and powerful. The new space played a role in it."

Sherman found a new palette as well. The hot pinks and scorching yellows of his previous works now share space with a new hue for him.

"There is a lot of green in this new work. I always avoided green in my previous work. It seemed like a difficult color to work with. It's such an organic color it could be misinterpreted."

Emotional content figures prominently in Sherman's work, as it does his speech. He sees his visual language as akin to taking a sentence and jumbling it into something unrecognizable, yet cohesive, "chopping up the vocabulary in a new way and re-presenting it."

"This is just the way they come out," Sherman, who was heavily influenced by Irish-born, British artist Francis Bacon (1909-1992), said. "I'm interested in humor and emotion, hard edges and graphic marks added to abstract expressionism. There is a sense of rebellion in this work. This is the best stuff I've ever done."

McMurtry Gallery in Houston and Gerald Peters Gallery in Dallas represent Sherman. Many of the works in the AMSET exhibit are available for purchase.

"People should come buy them while they are reasonable," he said, smiling.

AMSET Executive Director Lynn Castle, curator of the exhibit, said she knew the work was strong when she viewed the transparencies while preparing for the show. Seeing them live brought a jolt.

"To see the pieces in person is a totally different experience. It takes your breath away," she said.

Sherman, who likes adding an occasional "gaudy" or "slightly cheesy" touch of shimmer to his work, delights in the exaggerated response his work often elicits.

"One day I will make mellow work, but not today," he said, drawing a laugh from Castle.

"Maybe when you're 90."

Artist Howard Sherman was in Beaumont Friday October 10, 2008 as the Art Museum of Southeast Texas hung his work in the main gallery for his up coming exhibit. Here he walks around the gallery looking at the placement of the different pieces on the gallery walls. Dave Ryan/The Enterprise

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Art Museum of Southeast Texas
'Eating Friction' with Howard Sherman

Howard Sherman

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