



# McLean Art Society - February 2022

## ALLEN BENTLEY

By Palette Editorial Staff

A wonderful benefit of membership in the Society is the Artist presentation following the general meeting program each month. You can look at paintings forever, analyze brush strokes, talk about luminosity and animation, but you still don't know the artist! But spend an hour with them, get inside their head, look at the world and art as they see it, and you have a memory to guide your own efforts.

In January we had such an opportunity with Allen Bentley who also judged the Walker Chapel show. I once had a kindergarten teacher complain to me that in art class my son would not color within the lines. To her horror, I was delighted! Allen Bentley doesn't color within the lines as his art exudes motion, tension, and activity. Whether in charcoal or oil, he seeks a push / pull motion with subjects rarely centered and certainly, not poised. As he paints, he asks, "where is the motion?" Think of the whole, not the parts and paint the motion. Focus on one thing in detail and let all the rest fall away...your brush should not be your camera. He brings punchy colors to his palette and highlights the motion with these intense colors.



He first photographs everything testing angles and lighting but is quick to say painting from photographs is the worst thing you can do. If you try to make your art look like the photograph you don't learn how to build in depth. You also rob your viewers of the joy of connecting the dots in their own mind's eye and taking your works to heights you yourself cannot paint. Allen also does not usually

place a frame on his works but lets the client choose the frame.

His works often start with a charcoal sketch and sometimes the work itself stays in charcoal.



For such works he will blanket an area with charcoal and then brush it down with a 2" brush and carve the image using an eraser. The results are striking!



Allen also gave some tips in marketing and promised to come back to just talk about the business side of being an artist. The problem an artist faces every day is being good doesn't always sell. You need to promote, publicize, display, be in shows, and meet your buyers where they are.

You can visit Allen at his website <https://www.allenbentleystudio.com/>