

Nathan Bertling transforms people, places into calming art

Melody Cuenca/Staff · Apr 25, 2019



Painter and draftsman Nathan Bertling captures the personalities of people and places in his artwork. Photo by Will Crooks.

Scroll, double-tap, scroll, “like,” scroll — that’s how much of our free time is spent. But, Greenville painter and draftsman Nathan Bertling gives his viewers a break from their virtual lives.

“As fast as social media and technology have us moving, it seems like now more than ever still images can have a calming effect,” Bertling says. “They can slow us down and help us to pace ourselves and tune into what we’re missing around us.”

With an affinity for communication and a deep appreciation for life, Bertling creatively reflects both in his portrait and landscape art.

“When I slow down and make room for creating art in my own life, it feels healthy,” he says. “It feels like it’s enabling me not to be so self-absorbed.”



Bertling's works include oil paintings and fine drawings. Photo by Will Crooks.

Seeing the value of the people and places surrounding him, Bertling says art allows him to not take those entities for granted.

"If a person or a scene moves me in some way and I can make contact with that through my art and honor it," he says, "then hopefully that can encourage other people to slow down and listen, as well, and make contact with what's important."

Therefore, people and places permeate Bertling's portfolio.

"I just find people fascinating," he says. "I also like tuning into their personalities and then trying to capture that through drawings and paintings."

Having a different fascination with landscapes and interior spaces, Bertling enjoys the break from figurative work and the alone time. He looks for an interesting angle by tuning into the location's mood.

"Especially if it's some combination of a natural environment with some human-built structure, I love that dialogue – an old building [with] its own history that's obviously in some way a memorial to human presence there, but also interacting with the beauty of the nature around it."

While labeled a visual artist, Bertling considers himself a visual listener. Art allows him to mix up the senses and make contact with reality through his curiosity.



Bertling enjoys transforming feelings into tangible pieces of art. Photo by Will Crooks.

At a young age, art appealed to Bertling because of those qualities. “When it came to my visual arts classes, I loved it – the geometry of it, the design, the colors,” he says. “To me, it was, in a way, beautiful mathematics.”

Bertling has recently returned to Greenville from a [weeklong art residency at Dacia Gallery](#) in New York City made possible by a grant from the [Metropolitan Arts Council](#).

You can find Bertling working in [his Taylors Mill studio](#) or assisting fellow artists part-time at [Suburban Paint Co.](#)

[Cuenca, Melody: “Nathan Bertling transforms people, places into calming art,” Greenville Journal, 26 April, 2019, p. 27-28](#)