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Kent State alumnus wows audience at museum anniversary celebration

Rachel Campbell Feb 6, 2012

KentWired Video

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Music filled the Akron Art Museum Sunday as local artist and Kent State alumnus Al Bright let patrons witness his artistic process.

Bright filled a blank canvas with paint as the Jesse Dandy Band played alongside him. This dual performance marked the beginning of a yearlong celebration of the Akron Art Museum's 90th Anniversary.

"The musicians are talking about harmony, rhythm, balance and tonality and I'm talking about the same thing, but I'm painting in color," Bright said. "Both of us are working improvisationally and not working from anything that's fixed. We don't know what's going to happen until it happens."

The Alpha Phi Alpha Foundation was one of the many groups that aided in bringing Bright back to Akron after his last performance there 35 years prior. Foundation member and longtime friend Malcolm Costa said that because Bright is a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity they were interested in helping with the process.

"We are so pleased and happy that it could come together," Costa said. "This is overwhelming and just so exciting. There's so much energy here."

Bright was also thankful in terms of the turnout. He spoke with audience members after the show and expressed his support of Kent State.

"I just want to thank you for coming and being a part of my Kent State experience," Bright said. "It's Kent that had a magnificent impact on my continuing to strive to do anything that I'm doing now in my work."

Bright earned his bachelor's degree in art education from Youngstown State University in 1964 before obtaining a master's degree in painting from Kent State in 1965. Since graduating he has taught art education at Youngstown State University.

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