

Artist's Notes

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It is my hope that the pair of paintings created and hereby donated to the Linfield community for Melrose Hall entitled **Brinded Arc** (the largest) and **Rampant Arch** (over the steps) might focus attention on the recently renovated Ice Auditorium, and coincidentally create a sense of place, and a warm, even luminous greeting for those first passing through the arched portals.

Arc, Arch, and Milton: The arch was adopted as a motif in reference to existing architectural features. It was also chosen because I find the form uplifting to paint, allowing broad sweeping gestures and, importantly, a soaring armature on which to hang the sort of cellularized and layered complexity I most love to paint. The word *arc* comes to us in part from old English via old French, meaning *bow* and the path of the sun, from horizon to horizon. Dynamic asymmetrical arches in architecture are known as *rampant* arches. The term *rampant*, in the sense of luxuriant exuberance, intrigued me as I worked, especially when I found this passage from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) in Book IV, from line 466, which deals with Creation mythology:

*"And rampant shakes his brinded mane: the ounce,
The Libbard, and the tiger, as the mole
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks: the swift stag from under ground
Bore up his branching head; scarce from his mould
Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaved
His vastness; fleeced the flocks and bleating rose..."*

I found added pleasure in noting the mention of *brinded* (or *brindled*) referring to grey, mottled surfaces, much like the duotone *grisaille* black and white palette I used in this work.

Golden Mean: *Brinded Arc* was structured using geometry based on the golden mean or ratio, 1:1.61803399, drawn on the floor of my studio using simple (and ancient) geometric construction methods, including the Egyptian 3:4:5 right triangle and charcoal snap lines common to field carpenters even today. As has been common practice since the Renaissance, the various subdivisions one may create based on the golden proportion provide subliminal structure and impart (it is believed) near mystical harmony consistent with the famed *phi* and Fibonacci numerical series discovered to permeate aspects of biological morphology. Though I had not planned to leave visible evidence of the underlying geometry in the painting, in process I elected to do so. A bridge linking and integrating art, mathematics, and science interests me and seems appropriate vis-a-vis the mission of the college.

Pareidolia: Non-representational, particularly organic visual fields invariably provide opportunities for viewers to imagine they see figurative images, like the clowns, faces, or parades of elephants such as we "saw" in the clouds as kids—or images of the Virgin in a burned tortilla discovered by the devout. Even Leonardo da Vinci gazed at water stains on the ceiling for inspiration. This phenomenon is properly called *pareidolia*. As I rule, I don't look for such things as I work, though I find delight in what others see. I prefer to hold such temptations in abeyance in favor of entering into a reverie of pure potential. I can't categorically deny the possibility that on some subconscious level I intend to imbed images in such field, only that they are more reflective of the observer's imagination than my conscious artistic intent. All interpretations are therefore valid. I claim only to provide the *prima materia*.

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