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Artist Statement on Bulgaria Residency

In Bulgaria I discovered a refreshing latitude and longitude with unique vistas in the Rhodope mountains and architecture. The artwork that I saw in the various churches and museums resonated. West may often influence east but on this journey I embraced the light of east & west. The influence of iconographic work spoke on a reverential level. The warm reds and black so pervasive in works in the museums of Bulgaria resonate a rich and serious, almost brooding, influence. Landscapes that are angular and verdant - with a geographic proximity to Greece that exudes a warm and rich Mediterranean light.

The highlight of the experience was the influence and inspiration of Lyubomir Levchev and his brilliant wife Dora Boneva. It is poignant that my guide and sponsor, Bulgaria's preeminent poet, would have been the lead figure who guided my journeys. My Dad, a poet, often quoted from great historic works and it was a joy to be in the presence of a Bulgarian poet.

Experiencing a culture that had adapted, weathered, and triumphed through so many centuries was an important contribution to my work at a time where such contribution was pivotal. The Orpheus and Griffis influence enriched my vision at time when historical values in American society were coming into question in my artistic expressions. I see our society often values turnover and obsolescence to drive economy, yet in Bulgaria I saw centuries of resolute accomplishment refurbishing and refining technique at a slower, quieter pace.

When I returned to the United States I felt as if I had experienced exposure that refined my valuation of culture. Following the loss of my Dad I dedicated an elegiac series in memory of him entitled Trees. As I incorporated the Bulgarian experience into my efforts, I've developed a more cohesive and interrelational palette along with stronger, more grave, composition.

My expression of Two Pines may well be motivated by appreciation for my Dad's love for a lonesome pine. In this motif, I found a pronouncement of synergy and symbiosis. Without overplaying the aspect of an acorn not falling far from the tree, this was about honoring my Dad and wanting to always be near his ideals and stature.

A voice that began much earlier in my artistic endeavors is experiencing a language that now is coming into being.

My heartfelt thanks to:

The Griffis Foundation for selecting me for this program and funding the travel and expenses - the Orpheus Foundation for providing the housing, programs and exhibitions - and finally the Griffis Art Center for the consistent encouragement, professionalism, and caring.